

# Can You Really be Like Jesus?

a sermon in the series  
The Apprentice: An Analysis of What it Means to be a Disciple

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Matthew 10:25

*It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they call those of his household!*

Luke 6:40

*A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.*

Our last text comes from Luke's rendition of the Sermon on the Mount. In verse 39 we find Jesus is talking about the blind leading the blind. This is a term Jesus used for the Pharisees; you could say it is somewhat of a rebuke. The principle is if the Pharisaical Rabbis could disciple their students to be just like them, they would be blind as they were. Blind like them in every respect. This is a negative way of stating the principle that if a disciple is perfectly trained he will be like his discipler.

In Matthew 10:25 we have that principle displayed in the positive. Jesus says that those who are His disciples, who sit at His feet and observe His teaching, actions, and life, will be perfectly trained to be like Him. It ought to be that the disciple be like the discipler.

The question before us is this: can we really be like our teacher, Jesus? No one really believes they can be like Jesus in every respect. In the end, we will never be exactly like our Lord, not even in heaven since He is God and we will never be God. We will never possess the attributes of omnipresence (being everywhere at once), omnipotence (all power), and omniscience (all knowledge). Those are attributes of God alone. But possessing divine attributes is not what Jesus is meaning when He says that a disciple can be like his teacher.

What does He mean? I submit to you this is one of the most important questions you will ever ask. What does it mean to be like Jesus? And is this attainable? Can we truly be like Him in whatever way He meant?

Most Christians don't know that this is the very meaning of salvation—**to be like Jesus**. This is in large part why discipleship is a forgotten art, a forgotten skill, a forgotten command in most

evangelical churches. We do not understand that salvation is God's project of restoring us to Him, and then, through the power of that relationship with Him, He makes us like His Son. This is the proper and most biblical answer if someone asks you what it means to be saved, or what it means to be a Christian. It is to be no longer separated from God but joined to Him and by the power of our union with God we are conformed more and more into His likeness until finally we are like Him. That is what salvation is and any other definition is sadly short of eternal life.

I believe one of the severe problems, if not the most severe, facing the Church today is that we have reduced salvation to merely the forgiveness of the guilt of sin and living in heaven when we die. This is an example of reductionism, a simplicity too simple. If that is your definition of what it means to be a Christian, you will be a most frustrated Christian, if a Christian at all.

If you see being saved as nothing more than the penalty of your sins being removed and getting to go to heaven when you die, then my dear friend, I say to you that is not the biblical answer.

So what did Jesus mean for a disciple to be like the teacher, and is this possible?

## **I. The Definition of Christlikeness**

What does it mean to be like Christ? We have eliminated that He meant the perfection of deity. What else then could it be?

First and primarily:

### **A. Character.**

You can be like Jesus in His character. The very characteristics of His temperament, the very way you would describe Him as a person ought to be the way you are like Jesus Christ, and that is most possible.

Character is not about what you do although what you do reflects your character. Because of this we often confuse character with actions. We want to define Christianity by what we do or do not do. This is exactly the problem of the religious people of Jesus' day called the Pharisees. They deemed salvation and goodness by what a man did or didn't do and therefore they believed if they were mostly good they would have eternal life. But while Jesus dealt with people's behavior, He did so only to reveal their heart. His ultimate goal was to deal with the heart.

When you look at the Beatitudes, Jesus isn't dealing with behavior; He's dealing with attitudes of the heart, from which character flows. What is character? Character is who you are when you're alone. Character is who you are on the inside, what you love and what you hate, it's about your affections and desires. For example, trustworthiness is a trait of character. Are you an honest person, a person of integrity, are you dependable? These are all issues of character. Are you quick to forgive, are you merciful? The Beatitudes aren't a list of actions for you to perform, yet we often

read them that way, do we not? The religious look at it that way. I remember before I was truly converted I would see that list and read them: "Poor in spirit." *Ah. I've got to do that.* "Blessed are they that mourn." *I've got to be mournful.* "Blessed are the meek." *I've got to somehow be meek. I've got to swallow my pride and be meek.* "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness." *I need to do that. I need to be pure in heart, and merciful, and rejoice when I'm persecuted. These are the things I need to do in order to be approved by God.*

That is a complete misunderstanding of the Beatitudes. Jesus is not saying you must do these things to get into the kingdom; you do these are things and they are who you are because you're already in the kingdom. This is a description of the heart and character of those who are already in the kingdom of God. These are the ones who are favored by God and have a character that is like Jesus.

The Bible says in Galatians 5 that God has made you with a new heart and within that new heart has been placed the fruit Paul calls the fruit of the Spirit. This is what the Spirit produces within you and me and it's the very character and personality of Jesus. Love is at the head of the list and I truly believe you can look at the following eight and they all spring from this first one. God is love. So what God does in the life of a disciple is that He pours His love in him or her. This is what Romans 5:5 says, "Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." In 1 John 4 the apostle John says the love of God has been perfected in us. In the next verse John says it's the Holy Spirit who has been given to you. That's no accident. The love of God is the very person of the Holy Spirit and He is in us, therefore the character of Christ is in you. What God is now doing is training you to develop that personality and character.

But unfortunately, we measure goodness by actions. *So long as we are mostly good...* But Jesus first measured goodness by the heart. That's why He said, "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." He also said, "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

The Pharisees read the law and determined, "I've never laid hands on anyone, either in hate or lust, therefore I've kept these commandments." Jesus said, "I'm not interested in your actions, I'm interested in your heart, because if I have your heart I'll have your actions."

We're always clipping at the branches when Jesus wants to get to the very root. And so we say, *Well, if I'm mostly good that's enough because nobody can be like Jesus all the time.* All right then, are you saying to me if you *mostly* don't lie then you're okay? If you *mostly* don't cheat? If you *mostly* don't lust, you're okay? Is this how we measure salvation? Not at all.

You might argue and say, "I'm getting a little fearful, pastor, that you're moving into error because it almost sounds like you're saying salvation is perfection and that I must be perfect, and if I'm not, I have no hope of eternal life." My stringency on this matter is not mine, it's God's. I'm not the one that said, "Be ye perfect as I am perfect." I'm not the one who said, "Be holy as I am holy." I didn't establish the standard, He did. And yes, perfection is the standard. You heard me right. Do you want eternal life? You must be like God.

But we know we can't, can we? None of us can and none of us will be on this side of heaven. Therefore, Jesus was sent. Perfection was given to us. My sins were taken in a transaction and given to Christ, and in return I was given His perfection, righteousness, and obedience. What a blessed transaction. I've never made a greater deal. There's no better deal to make. It's a great offer; everything to gain and nothing to lose except your sins.

But let me ask you this question: Do you think since God has established your perfection in the person of Christ and has justified you that He deems that enough? Do you think He looks upon you in the perfection of Christ and is happy saying, "Oh, it doesn't matter how you behave now, I've given you the perfection of Christ. I've taken care of your imperfection so we'll just let you go until you get to heaven"? Not at all. That would be a greatest insult to the death of His dear Son. The moment you trust upon the Lord Jesus Christ, God begins His work not just to consider you perfect but to complete this work until one day you stand faultless and blameless before Him. If you're a Christian that process has already begun. This is why the argument that says, "As long as I don't tell too many lies I'm okay" doesn't hold up.

*Well, pastor, I have another problem. It seems like God is quite unfair to expect this out of us. Does He truly expect us to obey every commandment He's ever made? Surely you know better than that because there is no way we could do that, so He really doesn't expect us to do it.*

This is the problem with trying to define Christianity in this reduced way that grace is only sufficient to remove our guilt of sin. Such a view leads to this carelessness, if not complete apathy concerning commandments. I tell you He expects you to obey every command. In fact, He said if we love Him we *will* keep His commandments. He didn't say "most of them" He didn't say "90 percent of them," He said, "You will keep My commandments."

*But who can do this? Do you mean if I break one of those commandments I'm in trouble?*

Let me ask you this question, how would you like it if somebody was *mostly* honest with you? How would you like it if they came to your house and were *mostly* good and only took one thing? Would you not from that moment on consider that person with suspicion? What if they only told you one lie? Would it be easy for you to listen to them and never again question if they were lying to you? Beloved, we don't do that with one another, why do we expect God to do that with us? We demand honesty all the time. How can I know you're telling me the truth, how can I know if you're not telling me another lie? We demand integrity of others all the time, why then can't a holy, perfect God not demand it of us? He does! The trick of the devil throughout

the centuries has been to tell the church that God doesn't require obedience. He tells them God doesn't expect holiness and that somehow grace minimizes the responsibility for it. He's been very successful in that lie. I'm here to tell you that Jesus said His work of discipleship will make you like Him and it will make you like Him primarily in character.

How so? Because you will love what He loves. You will love holiness. You will love the things He loves. You will love righteousness, the kingdom of God, and the advance of the Gospel. You will want to see Him magnified and enjoyed by all peoples.

Therefore, if a man or woman says to me, *I can't hear that. I will not accept that God demands obedience and wants us to walk before Him in holiness*, I will warn them as kindly as I can that they have not had a heart change. If you're *mostly* good and do good *most* of the time and when you sin all you say is, "Jesus, You took care of that at the cross and I'm no longer under its penalty and everything is okay," having no sense of grief or mourning over that sin, well, you've not had a heart change.

I don't know how a Christian sins and can go to God as if nothing happened. I understand the doctrine of justification and I preach it. I understand I can go to God boldly, but even in that I have something of a loss felt in my soul when I sin. I feel something disrupted; I feel the grief of the Holy Spirit.

I want to make this very clear. When you and I sin, the moment we sin, there is a disruption, something takes place in the heart of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us that has to be dealt with. He doesn't wink or close His eyes to it. It must be dealt with because He loves you.

How can you be like Jesus? In character. Will you be perfect? No. Thank God we do have a Gospel that deals with the guilt of our sins, but when I'm not like Him in character my heart is broken and I will mourn. Thankfully, I have a Savior who died and rose again and I can go to Him and confess it, agreeing with Him about that sin. Every time He is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse me.

## **B. Lifestyle.**

You can live like Jesus live. I don't mean we are all going to become itinerant, homeless preachers, that's not what I mean by lifestyle. Look at 1 John.

*"He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked." (1 John 2:6)*

John once again explains what genuine conversion and Christianity is. The word *walk* in the New Testament certainly does mean putting one foot in front of the other and getting from point A to point B by no other transportation than your feet but it also means your conduct and lifestyle. That's the way John wants us to understand the word *walk*. If you claim to be in Christ, which every Christian does, then you ought to walk just as He walked. You ought to live and conduct

your lifestyle in a way that is just like Jesus'. What does it mean to have the same lifestyle as Jesus? It doesn't mean that you have to sell your home, start wandering around the countryside, find 12 people to follow you, and do miracles. Aren't you glad? But it does mean that you adopt the kind of life Jesus lived.

For example, He lived a simple life. We could say Jesus' lifestyle was not plagued with materialism. He practiced certain disciplines that helped Him to be able to communicate with and serve God like meditation, prayer, getting alone, studying the Word. These are practices in the life of Jesus Christ that He adopted in order to grow in the knowledge of God. And if you are going to overcome sin and temptation, you've got to start learning to live your life like Jesus.

Why would Jesus require His disciples to be with Him and observe His life if He did not mean for them to learn to live as He did and live likewise?

Our text from Matthew 10 is the call of the original twelve. After praying all night long and seeking God the Father's wisdom and direction, Jesus chose twelve men and said to them, "I've called you to follow Me; learn not only what I teach but also learn the way I maneuver life, how I approach it, My philosophy, and then duplicate that." You see, the religious want to follow a checklist, but those who are truly hungry for Jesus Christ want to live the way He lived because they love Him and want to be like Him—it is completely different.

This is the problem with most of us and the reason we have undisciplined disciples. Most of us in this room, I pray, have been truly converted—but you still are not mature in that you can disciple someone else. If you're going to achieve spiritual maturity you have a responsibility. There are certain things you have to do. You have to observe the way Jesus lived and start putting those practices into your everyday life.

If you try to do what Jesus commanded in a specific situation without the training and practice of lifestyle, you will most always fail. We're going to talk more about this in the days to come. Our problem is that we get to the moment of challenge, and then we say, "Okay God, give me power to face this" but we haven't lived everyday practicing the same lifestyle that Jesus lived, therefore nothing happens. The power doesn't come because we haven't done what's necessary every single day for the power to come.

It's like a boy wanting to be like his favorite ballplayer, trying to imitate him in the game. He wears his hat like the professional, he stands at the plate like his hero stands, he grips the bat in the same way as his favorite player. He stands at the plate and swings just like the professional but he does not perform like the professional. Why? Because he has not yet developed the lifestyle and training that the professional has. If he would start to live like the great ballplayer lives, practice as he practices, eats what the star eats, and trains like he trains, well then, he may very well one day play like that professional.

I remember when my oldest son, Shelby was in between his junior and senior year, we went out back every single day and I taught him how to properly approach the ball and hold the bat and at least a hundred to a hundred and fifty times he would hit off a tee. I made him do that everyday and his hitting went from a batting average of two hundred something to more than four hundred. He received a college baseball scholarship. Why? Because everyday he practiced. He didn't wait to get up to the plate and hope for the best. He practiced that regiment everyday so that when the pitch was coming, he knew what to do with it. Muscle memory took over and he didn't have to stop in order to think about it, it just happened. Isn't that why musicians practice the long hours?

Trying to do it on the spot in the game will not produce the results desired. Neither will trying to be like Jesus in the moment of temptation or challenge produce the same response as Jesus. We live out of the heart not the brain. That is why character is so important. Character shapes lifestyle, but lifestyle also shapes character.

We need to learn to live like Jesus lived and in the days to come that's what we're going to deal with. We're going to show you exact things that need to be in your life if you're going to experience being like your Teacher, Jesus. I pray this is your desire because if it is and you apply yourself to pursuing Christ, following the Teacher, and watching Him, and not just what He said but what He did, God will fulfill it.

### **C. Works.**

Not only can we be like Him in character and lifestyle but also in work. This does not mean working the miracles but the serving of God and man. Not meaning God won't use you in miracles, He can do that of course, but you can primarily be like Jesus in the way you serve God and in the way you serve man. Jesus wanted to be like His Father and wanted to glorify Him, and He loved people and wanted to serve them. Can we not duplicate that; can we not replicate our Lord in this manner? Yes. Especially knowing that He lives within us and He's given us the same heart He had to glorify His Father and magnify Him and love people even at the expense of our own selves. Yes, we can be like Jesus this morning.

Why then are we not? Most likely because of wrong definitions of what it means to be a disciple.

## **II. The Wrong Definitions**

### **A. Agree With Jesus About Sin.**

I believe the majority of the evangelical world is in a dire strait simply because most are not truly converted and they're not truly converted because they don't have a clear understanding of the Gospel. For most, the wrong definition of the Gospel is this: simply agreeing with Jesus about my sin. *If I agree with Jesus, that He died for my sins and I accept that as the truth then I am a Christian.* My dear friend, that is not the Gospel. The Bible nowhere tells you that Jesus died for your sins and

if you will believe that you will be saved. It's nowhere in your Bible. Rather the Bible says, "Believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved." It's completely different. You do not believe just one thing Jesus said but believe Him for everything He said. Why do you believe Him for everything? Because you believe *in Him*. Believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved.

A Christian is not somebody who only agrees with doctrine. Here is the sad case—we've got people who are doctrinally knowledgeable but equate knowing the truth as the same thing as doing it. But it isn't. People who say, "If you just believe Jesus died for you..." will die and fall into hell believing that Jesus died for them. The devil believes Jesus died for sinners! He was there, he helped put Him to death, and he believes it. Jesus is saying that those who follow Him trust Him—not just parts of what He did or said, but everything He said—therefore they do all that He says. "If you love Me you will keep My commandments." All of them.

## **B. Be Like Jesus in Heaven.**

Another wrong definition of Christianity is that we will go to heaven when we die and *then* we'll be like Him. This wrong definition says we cannot be like Jesus until we get to heaven. That is absolutely false. Another successful lie from hell. Satan has been successful in getting Christians to believe there is no way on this side of heaven they're ever going to be like Jesus. But it is a lie! Why? Because Jesus said He would live His life through us. Paul said that his life was lived in the power of the resurrected Savior, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

So what we have is a gospel that prepares you to die. We have a lot of people who are ready to die and go to heaven, but what if they have a lot more years on this earth left? What are they going to do in between now and then?

*Ahh, but I'm ready to die, pastor. I'm ready!*

Yes, but are you ready to live for Him?

I hope you're ready to die, because we never know the hour or the minute, but what about now? I want to be ready to serve Him *today*. I want Him to use me today so that His eternal power will have impact on someone. *I can't do that, I'm not eternal, I don't have that kind of power.* No, but Jesus does and He lives in us and He said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do." Jesus said that! The same Jesus that said that if we trust Him for forgiveness of sins He will forgive us also said that the same things He did as a man on this earth we could do. Why don't we believe that?

I want a Gospel that is stronger than just getting me ready to die. I want a Gospel that helps me to live.



## **C. We Create a Gospel of Life That is Not Discipleship.**

Sadly, it is not just unsaved people but Christians who create a less than biblical gospel, including many people here at Oak Grove. We've remade Christianity to fit us. Over the last two years God has really shown this to me. We don't even know we're doing this, but we learn a system that is moral and good but not the Gospel. We make the Christian faith about coming to a church service and following a certain pattern or routine. We learn how to pray, we learn to sing hymns, and we learn correct doctrine. But that doesn't substitute for true discipleship.

We bring someone into the church where he gets converted and we start discipling him but, unintentionally, we don't teach him how to live like Jesus, we teach him how to be just like us. But the problem is that we are not very astute disciples of Jesus ourselves. The new Christian doesn't know any better because he thinks if he can be just like the pastor or a brother whom he greatly respects *then* he would be a real good Christian. But what he doesn't know is we too have modeled our life after the system we learned. We are not so good ourselves. We perpetuate this system of what *www* think Christianity is and we call that normal. It isn't normal! It's abnormal. It's sick, diseased, and weak at best.

*If I hear what you're saying today, that means there is going to be a great cost involved and I don't know if I can do that. I'm thankful to be forgiven of my sins and to have the hope and assurance that when I die I will go to heaven. Can't we just leave it at that? Because I don't know if I have what it takes to get out of my box and really believe God and trust Him like that, that He could do that in my life and make me like Jesus.*

Let me just make sure before you make that decision that you understand all the cost involved because the cost of not pursuing discipleship is also very costly.

### **III. The Cost of Not Pursuing Discipleship**

In fact I would say the cost of not pursuing discipleship is more than pursuing it.

*"... the way of the transgressor is hard." Or as the NKJV says, "... the way of the unfaithful is hard." (Proverbs 13:15)*

In other words, God says, "Yes, please, count the cost. Definitely know what I'm asking of you. Yes, you will have to deny yourself, you will have to be willing to suffer for My sake, yes, you will have to follow Me and do what I tell you to do even when you don't believe it's possible or have the comfort that you would like to have, yes there is a cost involved." But God is saying to not be faithful to Him is a lot more costly. The cost is much more severe. The cost of not pursuing discipleship is a price no one in this room wants to pay.

It's true that all of us, saved and unsaved, have trials and tribulations but the man, woman or young person who will not pursue Christ in the way I have presented Him today is destined to have a

life of misery, one misery after another. It's a snowball effect of tragedy. Your life is going to be nothing more than a soap opera of heartache and difficulty.

But, in contrast, the life of a disciple is much better. In fact, it's what every man really wants but is not always willing to pay for. Listen to what Jesus said, "*Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light*" (Matthew 11:29-30).

Is being a disciple of Jesus hard? Yes and no. Yes, because it goes against the tide of the culture but no, because Jesus said it's a place of rest. Jesus described the Christian life as a place of experiencing rest in your soul. You see, as a believer I have hope when going through a difficulty. When God appoints me to go in such a direction where I know suffering awaits me I know I have a stability, an anchor, a certain hope that not only will I survive this but I will be the better for it. I have a confidence that my Father truly has appointed this to me because He loves me not because He hates me. But if you're not pursuing discipleship you will not have that assurance. It will elude you. You can sit and talk to yourself all day long but talking to yourself will not make something happen that is imaginary. You will be like the wave of the sea—wherever life takes you, that's where you'll go. How many of you are in that situation today? You don't live life, life rules you. The cost of discipleship is hard.

You plead, "I'm still not sure I can live this way." Do you trust Jesus? If you've truly believed Him for the forgiveness of your sins, then you will trust Him in every area of your life.

Somebody is arguing silently within your own soul saying, *Discipleship is for people who are like you, pastor. You have a special calling. I don't have that calling. I don't have the time like you to do all of these things and pursue God.* Let me tell you about the twelve men you see here in Matthew 10.

The twelve men Jesus picked were not the kind of men you would have characterized as successful. They were very ordinary. Most were Galileans, which meant they were considered less sophisticated than someone from Judea. Today's equivalent would be comparing someone from the Ozarks or Eastern Kentucky to someone from New York or Chicago. Somebody extremely educated and sophisticated with someone who may not be as much. This is what a Galilean was: a hillbilly, which is a term of derision in my opinion.

But Jesus did this purposefully. If He had chosen executive types, high achievers, and academicians we would be quick to say they were successful in their ministries because they were type A personalities who were extremely talented leaders and with the power of the Holy Spirit could do anything Jesus commanded. And before we had those words out of our mouths, we would immediately think we could not be used by God like they were because we are not like them.

Therefore, because you would present that very argument today, Jesus chose 12 very normal men, men who would not be considered achievers by their generation's standards or by ours. He did this to prove that His discipleship method, plus the power of the Spirit was the key and not the person, proving He can do the same with you and me.

You must trust in Jesus. You must believe that He can make you like Him because you are His workmanship. You must believe that He invites you to participate in that process by working along with Him by trusting Him enough to do everything He says.

There is a reason I began the service with Mark 6. More than just to encourage us to worship, I wanted you to note that for 30 years of Jesus' life, He lived a very normal, ordinary, routine—if not mundane—life. He lived life pretty much like you and me, not in the headlines but in obscurity. He lived a quiet, simple life, just earning a daily income.

Some of you say, “I can't be like Jesus because He's not normal. He's extraordinary.” You're only looking at the last three years of His life. Look at the first 30. He was a simple boy in a village who became a teenager and then finally a craftsman by trade. He was a man that worked with His hands. He wasn't normal in that He is God in the flesh; I will grant you that. I'm sure He didn't make mistakes measuring and cutting the wood too long or too short. But did you notice the response of the people in His hometown when He did begin to preach? “Who is this guy? Isn't this the carpenter?” Do you realize what that one simple question, “Isn't this the carpenter?” implies? It means all they knew about Jesus was what He did. All they knew about Jesus was His trade and it was a very normal, ordinary trade. There was nothing special about this man.

It's just like it was with Samson. They were all surprised at Samson's strength because he didn't look like Arnold Schwarzenegger or Charlie Atlas or some muscle man. They couldn't figure out why he was so strong—he was normal looking man. Jesus was a normal looking man living a normal looking life for 30 years. All this means is that Jesus knows what it means to live a normal, ordinary, mundane life.

The very thing you're accusing Him, of not being able to relate to, He says, “What do you mean? I did it for 30 years. I know what it's like to have a normal job and to work everyday in order to eat.” In those times you worked a day for a day's food. You didn't get paid at the end of the week you got paid daily. That means that Jesus really knows what it's like to be a factory worker or a teacher or a homemaker, He knows the ordinary, He knows the normal. Jesus is saying, “Let Me live your normal life in your ordinary days and I'll show the world what it looks like if I did that.”

That's discipleship. We're not talking about becoming itinerant, homeless preachers, we're talking about you believing God for your normal ordinary life so that He can live it through you in an extraordinary way that will attract people to Jesus.

Some of you are afraid to do this because you're afraid to fail. I answer that failure is part of learning. Failure is part of the training of the apprentice. Jesus set the disciples up several times to fail. Do you think that day when He said, “Let's get in the boat and cross over to the other side,” and when He fell asleep and the storm came, that it was an accident? I believe He caused the storm to occur. The disciples woke Him up and said, “Lord, don't you care that we perish?!” What does He say? “Oh you of little faith.” He exposed their faith failure in order to teach them that they needed to learn how to trust. He set them up for that.

What about when 5,000 people were listening to Jesus and He said to the disciples, “You feed them”? If that’s not set up for failure I don’t know what is. All they had was five loaves of bread and a few fish. The very next day after watching that miracle they crossed the sea and He said to them, “Beware of the leaven of the Scribes and Pharisees,” and they think, *Did He say that because we don’t have any bread with us?* And He said, “O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread? Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up?” He set them up for failure. Failure is a part of learning. The public school system that makes sure nobody fails, nobody gets second place is wrong—you don’t learn that way! You don’t learn that way in the spiritual realm either. If you’re afraid of failure your problem is not failure your problem is pride. That’s the issue. You don’t want to be associated with failure so you never try but you don’t realize the lack of trying is the worst failure and it’s a charge of unbelief against God.

Can you really be like Jesus? First you have to believe that’s possible. If you don’t believe it’s possible you won’t try, but it is because He said He would do this in you. He made a covenant with us and said, “I’m going to conform you to My Son’s image so that when you stand before My throne with the Son standing beside you, I’ll look at you and I’ll look at My Son, I’ll look at My Son and I’ll look back at you and I’ll say, ‘Perfect match.’” That’s God’s promise! Let’s step forward and believe it. Let’s follow Him in discipleship. Amen.