

The Cost of Discipleship

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[0 : 00] Thank you. You may be seated. I want to turn your attention this morning to several verses in Luke chapter 14.

You can turn there, if you would, and follow as I read those verses in just a moment. As I've had occasion to preach from time to time the last number of months, I've been looking at some of the hard sayings of Jesus Christ.

The New Testament scholar F.F. Bruce wrote a book on the hard sayings of Christ and identified 70 things that Jesus said that were both hard to accept, hard to understand, hard to implement.

And this phrase, of course, hard sayings, is taken from John chapter 6 and from the Bread of Life discourse when Jesus said, you must eat my flesh and drink my blood or you cannot be my disciple.

And the disciples that heard that, the followers, said that that was a hard saying. And the value of these hard sayings is that they provide us with strong, concentrated summaries of the teachings of Christ and what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

[1 : 13] So follow as I read in Luke chapter 14, verses 25 to 27. Familiar words, but very powerful words. Large crowds were traveling with Jesus and turning to them, he said, If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, even their own life, such a person cannot be my disciple.

And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. Let's again pray and ask for God to open his word to us.

We come, Lord, confessing our dependence upon the work of your spirit, that you must provide illumination for us. You must plant the truths that we find in this passage deep within us and cause them there to bear fruit and to transform us.

And we are utterly dependent, as we have just sung, on the work of your spirit. Your spirit must work in ways that we cannot. And we pray that you would do that for each of us, both for me as I speak your word to your people, but for your people as they hear your words.

May your spirit work in us and call us to radical discipleship, to be followers of Christ. Christ, we ask, Lord, that you would help us. We need your help, and we pray for your grace in Christ's name.

[2 : 39] Amen. Almost everyone acknowledges that Jesus was a great teacher. He knew how to communicate truth and how to bring truth home to people in very powerful and persuasive ways.

And he did it sometimes through these shocking statements that just snap your head back and make you say, wait a minute, what are you saying? Very incredibly intense teaching and very brief statements.

And this is one of those passages. If anyone comes after me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

This is a hard saying. It's hard to understand. What is it that Jesus is saying? It's hard to accept what the master is saying in this passage.

It's hard to figure out how to apply this. And, of course, questions abound. They instantly flood our minds. Isn't Jesus the one who stood for peace and love and gentleness and kindness?

[3 : 47] Doesn't he call us to love our enemies and do good to those who mistreat us? Why would he call us to hate the people who are the closest to us?

It doesn't make sense. At first blush, it seems to contradict so much that Jesus said in his ministry. And as I was preparing for this sermon, I was looking at some articles from people who are enemies of the cross of Christ and who do not believe Christianity or the gospel.

And for those who want to lampoon Christianity, this passage is one of the passages that they seize upon. And they wax eloquent in condemnation of Christ and Christian faith over this difficult saying. This is outrageous. Jesus would say you should hate even those the closest to you. Well, what is it that Jesus is saying in this passage? How are we to understand this statement?

What is the power of this teaching for us who are here today? What's the meaning of this? And I have five implications of this I want to look at with you that will help us to work through the meaning of this saying.

[4 : 59] But if you look at the passage carefully, you can see very clearly that the passage is a passage about discipleship. It's a call to discipleship. That's the topic. It's not a passage about hatred of your family.

Secondly, discipleship is the obvious theme. And even at the end of the passage, it calls us to take up our cross and to follow Christ. And so this passage is a teaching about discipleship.

And there are five things that I think it teaches us. The first is that discipleship is mandatory. Many of us have this idea that there are two categories of Christians.

We wouldn't say this doctrinally, but we have this concept in our idea, in our mind, that there are some Christians that are Christians. They love the Lord. They come to church, and they're Christians.

But then there are those Christians that are the zealous, really active people. They're in pursuit of Christ in every aspect of their life. And there are those two types of Christians. And this is not the vision of the passage.

[5 : 59] Jesus says, Anyone who will come after me, whether it's the 12 who are following him or the crowds to whom he was speaking at this moment, he says, If anyone will come after him, he must take up his cross and follow me.

Jesus is saying in this passage, I must be first. I must be number one in your affections. I must be ahead of everything else, ahead of your family, ahead of your career, ahead of your success, ahead of your delights, ahead of even your own life.

You must value me more than even life itself. It's mandatory. Full discipleship is not optional. It's not the deluxe package.

It is essential. It's the essence of what it means to be a follower of Christ. If anyone comes after me and does not hate his father and his mother, his wife and his children, his sister and his brothers, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

That's a radical statement. It ought to rattle us when we read that. We shouldn't read it, la, la, la, la, la, la, la. Christ is calling us here to full-on pursuit of Christ.

[7 : 20] And Christ is very honest with his followers. He's very honest about the fine print. He doesn't tell the crowds of the great blessings of following him and being his disciple and then later disclose to them the fine print.

It's not like a TV commercial advertising some medicine that at the very end, in rapid speech, they list the whole list of possible side effects and hope you're not listening too carefully.

He's very honest. He's very forthright, right from the very beginning with them. Christ is exclusive. It's exclusive to follow him. The cost of being his disciple is total devotion to him. Nothing, not even the most precious human relationships can come before him.

When push comes to shove, in any circumstance where loyalty is demanded, Christ must be first. That's what he's telling us. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian, the first half of the 20th century, you may have heard of him.

[8 : 28] He was a theologian during the time of the Third Reich under Hitler. He wrote a book called The Cost of Discipleship. And in that book, he said, when Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.

These are not ivory tower academic ideas. Bonhoeffer understood the cost of discipleship.

He paid the price of discipleship. On April the 9th, 1945, just weeks before the end of the war, he was put to death. And Bonhoeffer had been one of those few pastors in Germany during the Third Reich who opposed Hitler.

And he, in fact, he was part of a group that in 1943 tried twice, unsuccessfully, to assassinate Hitler. And standing up as Christ's disciples in a radio broadcast, he bravely rebuked the German church for having allied itself with the Nazis.

And he said, there can be only one furor for Christians, and it's not Adolf Hitler. And at that point, the radio address was brought to an abrupt halt, and Bonhoeffer was arrested, and it was really a prologue to what was to come for him.

[9 : 49] It cost him his life only weeks before the end of the war. Bonhoeffer understood the mandatory nature of following Christ.

Discipleship. There can only be one furor for Christians, and it isn't Adolf Hitler. And it's not anything else in your life. Not even those people who are the most precious to you.

The second thing I think we can say about discipleship from this passage is that discipleship is unpredictable. I've thought about this, and I hope you'll forgive me for this, and it's not too cheesy, but if you think about the Forrest Gump movie, you never know what you're going to get in a box of chocolates.

Discipleship is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're going to get. Discipleship will take you places that you did not anticipate and did not know, and that you cannot control.

And the call of discipleship means that you lose control. You lose control over your life. You go wherever the master leads you. Your life belongs to him.

[10 : 58] It doesn't belong to you anymore, and you follow him. And when Jesus calls his disciples to hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, the radical nature of this call, I think, is somewhat lost on us in our modern era because we live in a time of great independence.

We live in a time when family connections, especially intergenerationally, are not nearly as strong as they were in earlier times. But for a person in the time of Christ, in this mid-Eastern culture, father and mother, sister and brother, sons and daughters, they were the person's life.

Life was organized around these family members. It was this tightly knit community that you were part of. You couldn't think of your life outside of that group of people.

Your sense of calling, your sense of identity, your roles, your place in society, your personal significance, your callings in daily living were all tied to family, to being a son, a husband, a father, a brother, all those things.

It was not like our modern individualistic Western culture where people possess great mobility and life is not organized around family. And people drop and move to the furthest ends at a moment's notice.

[12 : 21] But Jesus is saying, being my disciple must define your life. It must define your priorities. Your life has to be organized in radical ways.

Don't bring your personal identity to following me. Don't bring your agenda to following me. Don't ask me to go to work on your agenda. Being my disciple is going to redefine and restructure everything about your life.

And I won't fit into your predetermined life and your predetermined notions of what life ought to be like for you. Don't come to me because you think I will enhance your family life.

I will be your family. Don't come to me because you want a better family or a better husband or a better wife or better children or a better life.

I will be your life. come to me for me. We can put it this way. Don't come to me for what I can do for you.

[13 : 28] Come to me for me because I will be your joy. I will be your life. I'm your savior. I'm the one you long for. I'm the one you desire. Come to me for me because you're committed to me because you want me above all things.

So Jesus is saying to us clearly in this passage it is costly to follow Jesus Christ. It doesn't just dictate what will happen on Sunday morning when it's time for worship.

It dictates every moment of every day of your life. and Jesus says it will cost you to follow me.

And going into it you won't know fully what the cost is going to be because I'm the Lord and you can't control me. You can't manipulate me.

I don't work on your schedule or on your agenda. I don't work for you. You belong to me and you're going to take my hand and follow me wherever I take you.

[14 : 37] and if we understand the implications of that it's scary. Do you remember that section in C.S. Lewis' Narnia stories where in The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe I think in the first one Lewis introduces this Aslan character the kind of a Christ figure in the stories and the children are afraid when they're told that there's a lion and they question Mr. Beaver about the lion and they say they're afraid and Mr. Beaver laughs and he says if anyone can appear before Aslan without his

knees knocking they're either braver than most or just silly.

And Lucy replies then he isn't safe? Mr. Beaver laughs. Safe? Safe? Who said anything about being safe? Of course he's not safe.

But he's the king I tell you. That's true of God. He's the king. And following him is risky.

It's glorious but it's risky. And he's God. He can't be leashed. He can't be domesticated. He can't be made to come when you whistle.

He's God of the universe. He's the Lord of lords. He's the king of kings. He's the one who's revealed himself to us gloriously in his son the Lord Jesus Christ.

[16:15] Certainly Jesus is not safe. We risk everything every time we encounter him. I was thinking about this. Even when we come to worship if we come to worship God and we sing God's praises and we sing God you are all you're what I want you're all I desire you're all I live for we sing those kinds of things.

Those are dangerous words to sing because they they set us at risk. If we really mean those words then we are open for whatever the master says.

And it's scary to put yourself in that situation. You're vulnerable. You're vulnerable before one who is infinitely good but you're vulnerable. We can't put him on a leash.

We can't ask him to endorse our favorite cause or our political parties. He can't be our genie in a bottle that we rub and we get our wishes.

He's God. And we are not. He will love us. He will enter into relationship with us.

[17:27] He will be near and dear to us near and dearer than our next breath. But he is God. He's majestic. He's awesome. He's infinite. He's incomprehensible.

He loves us. He offers relationship to us through his son Jesus Christ. But there's a cost to being his disciple. And that's what this passage is calling us to. Here's one way to think about it.

There's always a temptation for us to switch means and end. And Jesus says don't make me the means for the ends of your life. Well you've selected the ends that you want and I become the means to help you find those means.

Your life is the means and I'm the end. I'm the end. And true disciples say to Jesus Christ I am with you.

You are my Lord. You are my Savior. I'm with you. No caveats. No questions. I will do what you ask. I will go where you want me to go. I will be what you want me to be. I will serve you any ways you call me to serve.

[18:31] No matter how painful or how difficult. No matter what the cost. I am yours. Full stop. That's what we're called to in this passage. Third observation is there's an emotional component to discipleship.

It's interesting to me that Jesus uses the word hate in this passage. Because hate is a word of emotions. Now obviously we can dismiss the usual meaning of the word hate here.

God is not God says love your enemies even from the cross. He asks for forgiveness for those who have sinned against him and are killing him.

And Jesus is the one who calls us to honor father and mother. Clearly he can't be calling us to personal animosity against family members. But what he is saying in this passage is that our passion for him must be so great that ordinary loves seem like hatred in comparison.

And you notice there are different types of loves in this passage. I think it's significant that Jesus doesn't say you must love me more than family members.

[19:49] He identifies different types of love. There's a certain love that is love of father and mother. A special sort of love. It's very precious. It's different than the love that you experience even in your nuclear family where your relationships are even closer than those that you had as a child to your father and mother.

And so there's that next description there of wife and children. Husband, wife, children. That too is a very precious relationship. And of course there's a relationship of brother and sister.

That too is a special very precious relationship. It's different than the relationship between father and mother. It's different than the relationship you have between your husband, your wife, your children. It's a very precious relationship and there's a sense of camaraderie and joy that brothers and sisters have with one another.

But what Jesus is saying in this passage is that he must be more. That passion for him must be more profound, more life shaping, more foundational, more essential, more urgent, excuse me,

more pressing, of greater priority than even any other relationship.

He's taking every other love that we have in our lives, those primary loves, father, mother, husband, wife, children, brother, sister, and he's saying what I want for you is I want for you to bring to me a love more profound, more deep, more life shaping, more altering than even those precious loves.

[21 : 40] In fact, so much so that those other loves seem like hatred in comparison to the love that you have for me. Think of the joy of father and mother. Think of the delights of love between a husband and a wife and children.

Think of the camaraderie of love that's enjoyed between brothers and sisters. Think of the delicious teenage-y joys of romance and romantic love between a husband and a wife, a lover, a soulmate for life, all the filial warmth and delights that you experience in the memories of life.

Excuse me. I know you're praying for me. Thank you. All those delightful things that we think of, Jesus says, I must be more than that for you, profoundly more than that.

I must be your driving emotions. I must be your passionate center of your life. You must love me and embrace me and delight in me so much that all those other relationships seem like hatred in comparison.

I must be your passion. I must be your priority. I must be your joy and your delight. I must be more than every other kind of love. I find this to be profoundly searching.

[23 : 14] and if it's not rattling to you and to me, then I haven't adequately described what Jesus is calling us to in this passage. Because it's not enough just to give myself to the duties of Christian life.

I ought to do that. I must do that. That is an element of discipleship, is to walk in obedience to him. If you don't obey me, you cannot be my disciple, Jesus says. But we're being called here to love him. He must be our passion. He must be our joy. He must be our delight. He must be our reason for living. Our awe, our love, our loyalty, our devotion must belong to him.

Let me ask you. When I wrote this, I was hoping for a sunny Sunday. But did you ever leave your house on a warm, sunny, early fall morning?

And as you walk out of the house and the sun is shining so beautifully, you look up in the sky and you say, those stars are so beautiful. You don't see the stars on a sunny day, do you?

[24 : 27] Why don't you see them? They're there. They're not only there at night. They don't actually come out at night. They're there all day. Why don't you see them? You don't see them because they're obscured by a more glorious light.

light. And the light of the sun washes out the light of the stars. And so the light of the stars are not even visible to us. They're flooded out by a vaster light.

light. And that's what Jesus is saying here. Romans 5 talks about that. It talks about how the love of Christ has been poured into our hearts.

That idea of just overwhelming our hearts, pouring and overflowing within. in. And don't let yourself think of this call to discipleship as just a poetic language about priorities.

One of the essential keys to a transformed gospel life is rightly ordering all the loves of your life. Augustine, the fifth century theologian and church father, wrote brilliantly about this in his confessions.

[25 : 36] And if we think about it, some of you know your parents are disappointed in you. It hangs over your life like a black cloud. You feel the shame of it every day.

And you're always trying to do better and trying to make them love you or somehow see that you're really worthwhile. Or maybe for some of you, you have a friend that you were once very close to and whose company you enjoyed and treasured but they've distanced from you and you can't understand why.

And you feel the pain of it and the loss of relationship. Or maybe there's a brother or sister who seems to have rejected you and you can't be close to them anymore and all your interactions are superficial and surfcy.

anxiety. Or maybe there's success that has eluded you and it seems like an illusion that's always been just out of reach and more and more it seems to be further and further out of reach than ever.

And it fills you with anxiety and sense of failure and sadness. And Augustine says, the reason you're so full of anxiety and a sense of failure and disappointment over the passions that you cannot control and that drivenness leaves you empty and sad.

[27 : 06] And he says, in each of those cases is that there's something too important in your heart. some love, some desire, some passion, some relationship, something that you've allowed to be over all other loves and it robs you of your joy and it keeps you overwhelmed and unhappy.

And when the approval of your parents, the problem sometimes is the approval of our parents is too important or the love of your friend is too important. Your career success is too important and has a grip on you.

And what's the answer to that? And Augustine talks about ordering your loves. He says the only way to solve this problem is by properly ordering your loves. You have to love God more. The thing that will empower you to live with joy is to love God more than all other loves.

It's to his goodness, his glory, his smile on you, your delight in him, the grace of his acceptance and love and the sacrifice on the cross and his life for you and the fact that he cares for you each day.

It's being overwhelmed with the glory and goodness of that that eclipses all other loves. And Augustine says what this, what Jesus says in this passage, Christ must be your love.

[28 : 31] He must be the one who makes life for you, who gives you life, not just eternal life, but life today.

Life that is full of joy. Life that is contented and happy even in the midst of difficulty. The fourth thing I want us to see is that discipleship is positional.

I'm taking this in the direction of theology here. I want for us to think about taking up the cross.

Jesus calls in two ways. Jesus calls us to take up the cross and follow him at the end of this passage.

We'll look at that in a minute. But if we're honest, we realize that taking up our cross every day will crush us. We cannot do it. We cannot love him well enough.

We cannot seek him faithfully enough. We cannot do it. And we have to remind ourselves daily that Christ took up the cross for us. That not only does he call us to take up the cross and lay down our lives for him, he has already done that for us.

[29 : 40] He did it ahead of us. He took up the cross for us and laid down his life for us in sacrifice. Thank you, Mark. And I was thinking about how he teaches us that in Colossians 3.

Let me just read a couple passages. Colossians 3, 1 to 4. Since you've been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things.

For you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, you will also appear with him in glory. Or Galatians 2, 20.

I've been crucified with Christ and I no longer live. But Christ lives in me. And the life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

Or Romans 6, 5, the passage I alluded to a moment ago. If we've been united with Christ in his death, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We have to remind ourselves each day that God sees me through the perfect life and sacrificial death and glorious resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[30 : 58] And being a follower of the cross means I have nothing to defend, nothing to work off, nothing to earn, nothing to prove. I've got to remind myself every day my life is hidden with Christ in God.

And when Christ, who is my life, appears, I will appear with him in glory. And that he is life. And so life for us is lived in the shadow of the cross. Your life, your sacrifice, your service, your laying down your life every day is living out the fullness of relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ who first laid down his life for us.

His life for us gives us the capacity as well as the calling. Now I'm reminding you of the calling to be discipleships here, but the capacity to be his discipleship, the grace to be his discipleship, the forgiveness even when we fail in the walk of discipleship has been given to us in Christ.

We have been crucified with Christ. And when Christ, who is our life, appears, we will appear with him in glory. And so you can live your life in confidence and joy, free from guilt.

You can live with emotional wealth because of your identification with Christ in his death and burial and resurrection. And because of his glorious perfection and marvelous sonship and absolute glory, we can reorder our lives and I can put to death all the things I need to put to death.

[32 : 33] And it's interesting how that Colossians 3 passage that says, when Christ, who is your life, appears, you will appear with him in glory, follows with put to death therefore. And I'm talking to

you about the put to death therefore aspects of this, the discipleship, the following Christ that he calls us to.

But remember, positionally, it's always rooted in what Christ has done for us. So the imperatives of the gospel are always rooted in the indicatives of the gospel.

Christ has come for us. He's lived for us without sin. He's died as a sacrifice for our sins. He's been raised to the glory of the Father. And like, because we're in him, we too can walk in newness of life. The hope of discipleship, the hope of being transformed by God's word, even by this sermon today, is found in Christ and his work for us. So there's hope.

But I want to remind you, finally, I think this is finally, the discipleship is unconditional. Jesus says, the cost of discipleship is to take up your cross daily.

[33 : 45] What a metaphor. The cross, as Jesus wrote this, this cross was not just this gilded, perhaps jeweled things people wear around their neck.

It wasn't an ornament. It wasn't jewelry to finish off your ensemble. It was an instrument of death. It's like saying, if you're going to be my disciple, you must eat your last meal, speak with your pastor, climb into the electric chair, and wait for them to throw the switch.

You must don the hood, stand with your back against the wall, and wait for them to say, ready, aim, fire. It's an instrument of death.

When you saw a man carrying a cross, you knew his life is over. And since he's in the midst of suffering, sooner rather than later, he was condemned to death, and the sentence was being carried out.

[34 : 55] And Jesus is, what Jesus is telling us is as disciples of Christ, we are no longer independent people whose lives belong to them. We are his people, and our lives belong to him.

And this is absolutely subversive of our individualistic modern culture. It's subversive of ancient traditional cultures.

It's subversive of any notions of independence. You must even hate your own life, or you cannot be his disciple. You live as someone condemned to death.

Alexander Solodinityn, in his book on the Gulag, tells about prisoners who were fearless in the face of death and who survived.

And he tells how they survived, because he saw some men broken by what only made other men stronger. And he writes this, forgive this long quote, but he says, so what is the answer?

[36 : 04] How do you stand your ground when you're weak and sensitive to pain, when people you love are still alive, when you're unprepared? What do you need to make you stronger than the interrogator and the whole trap?

From the moment you go to prison, you must put your cozy past firmly behind you. At that very threshold, you must say to yourself, my life is over.

A little early, maybe, for sure, but there's nothing to be done about it. I shall never return to freedom. I'm condemned to die now or a bit later, but later on, in truth, it'll be even harder, so sooner better than later.

I no longer have any property whatsoever. For me, and those I have loved have died, and for them I have died. From this day on, my body is useless and alien to me.

Only my spirit and my conscience remain precious and important to me. Confronted by such a prisoner, the interrogator will tremble. Only a man who has renounced everything can win that victory.

[37 : 15] Jesus is telling us in this passage that it's all or nothing. If you have any reservations, if you hold back anything, you cannot be his disciple.

Back when communism reigned in Russia and the underground church would surface from time to time, there's a story that one particular Sunday a group of believers had gathered.

They had gathered while it was still dark in the early hours of the morning before daylight. They had gathered quietly, and when day was beginning to dawn, they were gathered together inside this room with the windows closed and the doors latched, and they began to sing a hymn quietly.

Suddenly, the door was pushed open, and there were men that walked in with AK-47s, and they lined everybody against the wall, and they shouted to them, if any of you will renounce your commitment to Jesus Christ, leave now.

And two or three people left, and after a few more seconds, some others left, and finally, a couple more slipped out into the outside, and after a few minutes of complete silence, as these people

stood against the wall with their hands raised up, the men who had come in with the AK-47s said, okay, keep your hands up.

[39 : 03] Let's praise God. We, too, are Christians, and we have learned that anyone who's not, not to trust anyone who's unwilling to die for their faith. I want to ask you this morning to evaluate your life in terms of Jesus' radical call to discipleship.

What interests do you place ahead of Christ? What loves captivate you and control you?

What desires and passions do you return to when your mind goes to neutral? What other loves other than Christ preoccupy you, give you joy, make life sing for you?

What slights and hurts do you meditate on and think about and are shaped by more than you're shaped by the gospel and the power and the grace of Christ?

What things do you obsess on? What hurts do you ruminate on and rehearse to yourself again and again?

[40 : 42] What do you meditate on more fully and think about with greater delight than the beauties of Christ and the glories of his salvation?

What moves you? What is Jesus calling you to forsake so that you may be his disciple?

You know, as I prepared to preach to you this morning, I found myself just raked up by this passage of scripture.

I look back at my life and I think of my catalog of failures, of bad decisions I've made, the times when I was enamored with things other than Jesus Christ, my cowardice at times when I should have spoken, or my passivity when I should have moved forward and done something to serve others for Christ's sake.

Times I've skillfully avoided the necessity of laying down my life so that I could save it for myself.

Times that my words have been dismissive of others and arrogant and prideful.

[42 : 20] this passage convicts me. I trust that it convicts you and I trust that it will bring us all to repentance, bring us all to identifying those things in our lives that get in the way.

There are things we must hate in order to be his disciple. Even those things most precious to us like father, mother, husband, wife, children, sister, brother.

My prayer is this will bring us to repentance. Jesus is calling us here. He's calling us to follow him because he did this for us.

He walked away from the father in the sense that he left his glory in heaven and came into our broken, fallen world and lived as a man without sin for us.

And he lost the father's love for us. He didn't count his own life dear. He laid his life down. Jesus is calling us to what he has done.

[43 : 54] Our masters walked this path before us. He's not calling us to something that he has not experienced. He's calling us to what he has experienced. He took up his cross to provide a sacrifice of atonement for our sins and he calls us to follow him through suffering glory.

Listen to his voice this morning. Listen to his very words. If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, even their own life, such a person cannot be my disciple.

and whoever does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. I want to sing a hymn together.

I want to change the hymns in the bulletin. It would have been an excellent one to sing. There are a couple others we could have sung. In fact, I had at least a half a dozen we could have sung, but I want to change it to 493 and to a hymn of confession.

And I want you to sing this with me. this morning in sincerity of heart and praying even as you sing that God would deepen your insight into the truth of these words and make you a follower of Christ.

[45 : 23] Number 493, We have not known thee as we ought. Let's confess this together. Please stand. for the Christ.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.