

## How to Be an Excellent Disciple, Fidelity

Luke 6:46-49

November 19, 2017

J.C. Ryle wrote, "It has been said with much truth that no sermon should conclude without some personal application to the consciences of the listeners." That's what we've been getting from Jesus week by week. What Ryle continues by saying, he calls it a "solemn and heart-searching conclusion to a most solemn discourse." I have certainly found that in my life and I believe that all of you have as well.

We also find here some great comfort, which we're going to find today. A lot of rest for the true disciple comes from the verses in front of us at the conclusion. In Christ' soul-searching conclusion to this sermon, as he does press the implications of the Sermon on the Mount upon our consciences, we have taken some time to identify four principles of discipleship, Christian

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discipleship: authority, humility, fecundity or fruit-bearing, and fidelity.

We've been walking through each one of those principles week by week. Authority in verse 39 to 40. Watch who you follow. Don't follow blind leaders. Humility in verses 41 to 42. Make sure you can see clearly, so that you can see who you're following and who's following you. Fecundity in verse 43 to 45, which speaks to the necessity of fruit-bearing, the principle of life that is found in all of God's work. Whether in a teacher you're following, you ought to see fruit born, or your own life.

Finally, for today, the word fidelity. That's verses 46 to 49, the final part of the sermon. And that is what Jesus' conclusion is all about. He's taking the principles of his sermon and he's pressing them on us, demanding obedience, pressing home the implications on our consciences so that we would conform to his image, to his truth.

We want to look at those verses. I know I just read some of that but want to read it again. And in the context of the entirety of

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the conclusion. So let's just look at the conclusion starting in verse 39 where it says, Luke says, "He also told them a parable." And then it continues. "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.

"Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.

"For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil

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treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

“Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of the house was great.”

So those are the principles: authority, humility, fecundity, and today, fidelity. The principle of fidelity. And that’s at the heart of Jesus’ fundamental concern in the question he asks there in verse 46, Why do you, why do you profess to follow my authority but you’re not faithful to me? is really what he’s saying. His concern there is a concern about fidelity.

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The word fidelity is synonymous with faithfulness. That's what this is all about, this section here at the end. Faithfulness to Jesus Christ. Faithfulness to the very end. That is foundational in this issue of Christian discipleship. It's absolutely critical. I looked up the word, *fidelity*, in my copy of *Roget's Thesaurus*. Every pastor should have a copy of *Roget's Thesaurus*. And as I read the entry, I found the synonyms of fidelity are really quite useful in helping us to better understand Christian discipleship.

Let me read this brief entry to you. And as I read, just think about your own relationship with the Savior. Think about your week. Think about your priorities, your interests, the way you spend your time. Think about your fidelity to him. Fidelity entry in *Roget's Thesaurus* is synonymous with faithfulness or devotion to a person, a cause, obligations, or duties. Fidelity is allegiance, constancy, faithfulness, fealty, loyalty, steadfastness. I like that. Devotion to a person.

That's the very essence of Christian discipleship, isn't it? Allegiance, constancy, fealty, steadfast loyalty to the very

end. That is what we mean by fidelity. And if we can call anything chief among Jesus' concerns for his disciples it's that we live lives of faithful obedience to his Word. Not just a general obedience, a once-a-week attendance at a service. But a lifestyle of obedience, a daily walk. Something that is part of your moment-by-moment decision making. Sets priorities.

It's so important because, this issue of obedience, because Jesus loves us. He wants us to follow his teaching for the rest of our lives. He wants no other love to be first. He wants no other use of time and priorities to come in front of him. If we examine our lives, we all have to admit that sometimes we get off track, don't we? Sometimes we find ourselves pursuing things that keep us away from obedience to him.

That ought to be an exception in our lives, not the rule. But it has become quite common in many circles in evangelical Christianity today, to avoid any demand for obedience. To really mute the biblical call to holiness. To ignore passages of Scripture that demand effort, that demand striving. This is a demonic spirit, really, of antinomianism. Anti-nomos, anti-law.

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It's a lawless attitude that calls Pharisees those who press the demand for obedience among Christians.

That spirit may be common today; that is not biblical Christianity. And it's certainly nothing Jesus taught. In fact, he taught us exactly the opposite of that. Jesus told us repeatedly that we must expect pain and suffering and self-discipline in the battle to mortify the flesh and to put on righteousness. There's a very real agony in denying self and taking up a cross and in following Jesus Christ.

I could cite many instances of Jesus' demand for our obedience, but just one example will do for now because it's so powerful. In Luke 13:24, Jesus said, "Strive to enter the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able." The word, strive, it's the verb *agonizomai*. That's just to get your foot in the door. It requires agony. We're to enter by the narrow gate.

The narrow gate is the constricted way, the confined way, the way that you just barely squeeze in. And you can't squeeze in

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holding onto any of your sin and your self-righteousness, your loves, your pursuits, all your hobbies. You squeeze in and there's nothing else but your soul. The gate is wide, the way is easy that leads to destruction. Those who enter by it are many. And keep in mind that wide gate, it's not the worldly secularists; it's the religious people. It's the churchgoers. That's the wide gate.

Matthew 7:14, Jesus tells us, "The gate is narrow, the way is hard that leads to life, which is why those who find it are few." Those are not seeker friendly words coming from our Lord, are they? This is not the just-add-water-for-an-instant-megachurch approach to evangelism. He actually seems to be turning people away at the gate.

That's interesting because he's kind of opposite of a lot of evangelistic strategies you find today and church growth strategies you find today. Because Jesus is here, he's not keeping anything in fine print. He's actually taking that fine print and he's blowing it up to 20-point font. This is full disclosure on the demands of discipleship. He's taking the



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commitment to obedience in Christian discipleship and he's plastering it up as it were on a freeway billboard. So it's just in plain sight, plain view so that you cannot miss it.

That's why it's such a pity today that so many are missing the message because you know what else they miss? They miss the joy of Christian obedience. They miss out on the secret of the easy yoke. Jesus said to a weary people, people enslaved to their sins, Matthew 11:28 to 30. He says, "Come to me all of you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, learn from me," because he says, "You can trust me. I'm gentle and lowly in heart, promise me," he says, "you'll find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Beloved, that's what faithfulness to Christ means. That's what fidelity is all about. It's about devotion to a person, this person, who gave his life for us. Represented in the elements in the communion table before us. His body broken. His blood shed for us, for you and for me. And he described himself here. He very rarely drew attention to himself in some ways. He very

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rarely said this, but he drew attention to his character here and described himself as “gentle and lowly in heart.”

He’s a meek soul. You’re going to be yoked to something in your life. Either it’s the sin nature that you were born into, the enslavement of the sins that have held you captive since birth, the chain that’s held by the cruel hand of the murderous devil, the evil one. Or you could be set free from him. You could be set free from your sin. And you can submit yourself to a new master. You can be yoked to the loving, kind, gentle, tender authority of the meek and lowly Savior who wants to order your life for you.

For all who profess Jesus as Savior and Lord, we want to know how to follow him faithfully. How to follow him in obedient fidelity so we can stand firm to the very end. And these verses, verses 46 to 49, Jesus is going to teach us what fidelity means so that we can walk faithfully before him in joy and in the security and the assurance we find in Christian obedience.

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So first point for this morning, first point, number one, fidelity to Christ means personal accountability. Keep in mind that our personal accountability, yours and mine, we're not accountable to just anyone here. We are personally accountable to a sovereign, to an eternal king, the king of the kingdom of God. Look at verse 46 and think about this question that Jesus asked here.

In fact, imagine, this is kind of terrible to consider, but imagine if he asked you this question. "Why do you," fill in your name. "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?" If I translate that in a wooden literal sense, he's asking according to the order of the grammar, but why me are you calling Lord, Lord, at the same time not practicing what I'm saying. In other words, why the incongruity? Why the obvious contradiction? What gives here? That you would say one thing and do something completely different.

Would you consider yourselves in the crosshairs of that kind of a question? Does that make you uncomfortable? It does me. Is Jesus really talking to us when he asks this question? Is he

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talking to his true disciples here? Or is he aiming at false professors who hideout among sincere believers? Is Jesus confronting actual false disciples who are standing on this occasion right in front of him, hearing this sermon? Or is this more like preventative language, proleptic language where, where Jesus speaks of a future reality like tares among the wheat.

As he speaks about that future reality as if it were occurring right in the present. Is this some kind of preemptive strike that kind of smokes those people out? Just to tell you where I land, I think that Jesus is taking aim at those false professors. Tares among the wheat. Even as he knows that his words are going to provoke among the faithful, self-examination. He realizes that and that is a good thing for us, beloved, to examine ourselves.

Jesus is calling to mind in his own mind the history of redemption. He remembers how, and we should too, how the people of Israel, they told Moses, and remember when they told Moses this, what I'm about to say, they had just experienced the Exodus. The mighty power of God. God's miraculous salvation to

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extract a slave people from the heart of the greatest superpower that was enslaving them, on the earth. Incredible power, supernatural revelation. Supernatural salvation. Miraculous!

They had just come out of Egypt across the Red Sea, saw the dead bodies of the Egyptian army scattered all over the place. Made their way through the wilderness, came before Mount Sinai. And they had just witnessed fire falling on Mount Sinai. Ear-splitting trumpet blasts. Terrible scene. The, the mountain trembling. You ever seen a mountain tremble? Mountain trembling in the presence of the Almighty coming down, engulfed in smoke. God came down in thunder.

And the people had said to Moses, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do." That is, they said, "Lord, Lord," but did they practice obedience to the law of Moses? It was within a very short time that they were dancing around a golden calf. So certainly not. God sent prophets over and over to confront them and their outright contradiction.

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Isaiah 29:13, "The Lord said: 'This people draws near with their mouth, honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me ... their fear of me is a just commandment taught by men.'"

God said, "These words that I command you today, they shall be on your heart," Deuteronomy 6:6. Though they took God's name on their lips, they didn't honor him in their hearts. Adulterous desires led them astray. Desires in the hearts that were unchecked. They didn't watch their heart with all diligence, did they?

So as Jesus speaks to the disciples on this occasion standing right in front of them, he realizes there are many on that day who are one day going to depart from him. Who are one day, though they cried, "Hosanna to the King," they're going to cry, "Crucify him! Crucify him! Let his blood be on our heads and the heads of our children."

He realizes there are many who are going to depart at his harder sayings, misunderstand him, misinterpret him, misread him.

They'll walk away. You read at the end of John 6, well before his crucifixion, it tells in verse 66 that after this, "many of

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his disciples," same language here. Calling them disciples.

"Many of them, though, they turned back and no longer walked with him."

So Jesus is anticipating that here on this occasion that there are many who will say, "Lord, Lord." The repetition, by the way, indicates this emphatic profession like you hear some people today, don't you dare question my Christianity. I know my life is completely out of step and doesn't match anything written in the Bible, but don't you dare question my Christianity.

"Lord, Lord." It's emphatic. It's confident. They don't follow through with the implications of lordship. They say, but they do not do. What counts to the Lord is obedience. What counts to him is faithfulness. James, no doubt he is reflecting on this obedience emphasis in Jesus' teaching. James wrote this, James 1:22 to 25, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. And he looks at himself, goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect

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law," get this, "the law of liberty," the law of freedom, fill in joy, peace, confident, happiness in Christ, assurance. "The one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty and perseveres in it, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts," a doer who does, "he will be blessed in his doing."

Look that's what Jesus intends for all his disciples, that they be blessed in their doing. You want to see a happy Christian, it's the one who's obedient to Jesus Christ. Obedience to the Savior is pure joy for the Christian disciple. So this question in Luke 6:46, it's first and foremost a warning to false disciples.

They're going to stand one day before Jesus, before the righteous judge, who's going to judge the entire world in righteousness. And they're going to have answer this same question, but then at that time, they're going to be looking back in time. "Why did you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and yet you did not do what I told you?" You know what? At that point, it'll be too late. No opportunity for repentance on that day.



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So this warning here at the beginning of his ministry is a gracious warning. It's a tacit reminder for all of us, faithful disciples as well, that we will all stand before Christ, the only sovereign, personally accountable to him for all of our actions. We will give an account for the consistency, or the lack of consistency between our profession, between our practice.

For us who are faithful disciples, true believers, we'll stand before the *bema* seat, not the Great White Throne judgment. That's been taken away in the cross. We'll stand before the *bema* seat where it says in 2 Corinthians 5:10, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each one may receive what is due for what he's done in the body whether good or evil."

That word evil is the word *sapros*. We talked about that with the, the rotten fruit, the rotten trees, right? That's where we're all going to stand. Our lives are going to be exposed. No longer for the faithful Christian, for the true Christian, I should say. No longer for the true Christian in judgment to

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condemnation to hell. That's been done away with in the cross, all of our sin forgiven in the cross. We all are going to stand before Christ to give an account of our life.

I asked you to imagine if Jesus asked this question of you. And perhaps by imagining that question posed to you, you feel just a bit uncomfortable, as I have repeatedly. If it provokes you to self-examine, if it prompts in you the fear of the Lord, then take heart, beloved. That is a good thing. Because it probably means that you've got a spiritual pulse. It probably means that God is at work in you, that you're alive and not dead when you can sense the fear of the Lord when you should.

Because it's the hypocrites, it's the spiritually dead and blind, it's those who are dulled in their sensitivity to, because they're harboring secret sins and practicing them. As a matter of their character, a matter of course, they become hardened. Their consciences are no longer sensitive. And they, in imagining that scene, they either feel nothing, or their discomfort is very short-lived. It's set aside by other distractions, by self-justifying thoughts.

But true believers, they're tender souls. They truly do love Jesus Christ. And it pains them to think that anything in life would be out of step with him. When someone points out any inconsistency between their profession and their practice, it causes 'em sorrow, even tears, and mourning. It raises serious concern. And once they can see that inconsistency and identify it biblically in the words of the Lord, it provokes thoughtful self-examination, repentance, a renewed pursuit of holiness.

And beloved, that's evidence, we're truly his. When we appreciate the loving confrontation, it promotes holiness in our lives. Those who hate that confrontation and avoid confrontation, well, this warning of Jesus' question stands. But those who love that confrontation, they come to Jesus. They look to Jesus and his cross as a reminder of their forgiveness. They listen to his words. His teaching leads them to greater faithfulness, to stronger fidelity. They strive to obey him, not because of craven fear, but because they love him. They hate to be out of step with him.

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This brings us to a second point. Second point here in your outline, fidelity to Christ means, it means complete loyalty. Complete loyalty, if you like, complete devotion, total devotion. And for the rest of the sermon here, Jesus wants to show us something. He wants us to see what a faithful Christian looks like. And before he shows us, he states his point just rather simply before illustrating it.

Look at verse 47. It says, "Everyone who comes to me hears, and hears my words and does them, I will show what he is like." The faithful Christian is the one who comes to Jesus, who listens to Jesus, and who obeys Jesus, that's very, very simple, isn't it? Can't mistake his point. There are some, though, who can hear the word, everyone, and they envision this, this mass of professing Christians, this mass of people who you know, vote conservative, this mass of people who are all in this big, grab box, of grab bag of Christian, self-identifying Christian.

And all of them come to Jesus, many of them listen to Jesus. Some of them maybe even obey Jesus. But they're all in the same group. That's the kind of evangel, evangelicalism that I grew up

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with. One that made no demands for obedience, but basically taught that someone could be a Christian by naming the name of Christ. They can pray a prayer, walk down a church aisle to go forward to get saved. In Baptist circles, to get baptized, too.

But in broader evangelical circles, even baptism was, was strongly recommended, but not even really necessary. Those people were all, if they came to Jesus, they were assumed to be Christians because they said they were Christians. And they said it very emphatically. They said it very seriously. They had prayed the sinner's prayer, deep in their heart of hearts. They invited Jesus to come into their life and they meant, at that time, they meant every word.

Their initial excitement. Their new believer zeal, running around doing things in the church while those older, wiser, Christians, I put wiser in air quotes, assured those younger zealous types, Oh that'll eventually wear off. And indeed it did. Many who made eager sincere professions early on had their come-to-Jesus moment over the years. Their church attendance

would start to wane and taper off. They soon stopped listening to the regular ministry of the word.

And any early signs of true heart change, that is studying Scripture, a hunger for understanding truth, zeal in obedience. All of that came to a sad end. Now, if those people attend church at all, it's usually a weak church with weak preaching by some unspiritual person who's more like a life coach or a motivational speaker; Patterns of disobedience set in, quiet self-will, all of that characterizes their lives.

And Jesus would have them return to verse 46 and listen to that question yet again. But some would have us believe that those people, they're just baby Christians. They're accustomed to drinking milk from a bottle, so don't press 'em. You know, just let 'em go. They'll eventually grow. Or, or worse, this unbiblical category of carnal Christian, which has created for all those people who still love their sin, but they want Jesus, too because he's their ticket to heaven. What is that? You don't find that here.

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And I want to show you with just a couple points of grammar. Don't roll your eyes, but pun, couple points of grammar. That's an untenable position. It's not biblical. You cannot defend perpetual infancy or perpetual carnality of a true Christian from the Bible. And especially from this text here.

In verse 47 the word everyone, that's not to be seen as some amorphous nebulous group of people. This a, like a conglomeration of the all who came to make a profession of faith, along with the many who heard Jesus, at least for a little while. And then the some or the relatively few who end up obeying him. The grammar here that's used here will not let us see the text that way.

Rather, it's the, the one who comes and listens and obeys that is the true Christian. The one who evidences lifelong loyalty and devotion to Jesus Christ as Lord. Again, just a couple of grammatical reasons to show why that must be so. First, what appears in verse 47 to be three separate verbs, so the verb come, the verb hear, the verb do, those are actually, verbs, ah, verbal forms, they're called participles. And participles have

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both verb-like qualities. So when you think verb-like qualities, think action, action words and then also noun-like qualities. You remember noun from grade school, right? Person, place, or thing. Okay? So they have both those qualities, participles do. They're kind of like Reese's Peanut butter cups, right, oh my chocolate got in your peanut butter. Oh your peanut butter got in my chocolate. That's that kind of thing. Reese's. Participles. Great words.

You see how relatable grammar can be to your everyday life? Now when a participle, this is where it gets good. When a participle is governed by a definite article, definite article: The. Indefinite article: The word a, A, an. okay? Definite article the word, the. When a participle has a, the, in front of it, then the noun part of the participle, the person place or thing, that becomes the dominant part of the participle.

So here in verse 47, we're talking about not just a, any, anybody, we're talking about, the person. The person who comes and hears and obeys. So that's easy. But further, when a participle is governed by a definite article, the word, the, the



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verb part of it, becomes something that characterizes that person. So we could translate this as, the one who is characterized by coming, the one who's characterized by hearing, the one who is characterized by obeying.

Got that? It wasn't so hard, right? But there's more. I feel like that guy in the commercial, But wait, there's more! There's a second grammatical reason that we can't see it as a grab bag. We can't see it as this all-inclusive group. If Jesus were referring to three separate people in verse 47, that is the ones characterized by coming, and the ones characterized by hearing, and the ones characterized obeying, by obeying. If that were three separate people, three separate kinds of people, each one of those participles would have its own definite article to indicate three separate persons.

So one article per person. But get this. There is only one definite article in front of all three participles. So that single article unites the three participles, brings them together and it's a construction that Greek students call the

Granville Sharp Construction. And under certain circumstances, that Granville Sharp Construction is a Granville Sharp Rule.

So these three things: coming, hearing, obeying, they refer to one and the same person. So the one who comes is the one who hears and the one who comes and hears is the one who obeys. All three together. Look back at verse 18. All those people from Judea and Jerusalem, all those people from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, they came, verse 18. Look what it says there, "to hear him," right? "They came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases."

They came and they heard, right? Then in verse 27, Jesus speaks to whom? All those that came are there. So now he speaks to those who hear. So all those who came to him, Jesus draws attention to those who are able to hear him. It's like he's culling the crowd. He's weeding out those who are not listening or coming for all the wrong motives.

And here at the end of his sermon, Jesus puts the capstone of obedience to complete all that he said. The one who comes to,

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comes to him, hears him, and obeys him, as well. That is the holy triumvirate of Christian discipleship and what it means to be faithful. In other words, we're talking about someone who is completely loyal. Complete loyalty to Jesus Christ. Total devotion.

Jesus is gonna say in Luke 9:23, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." Same thing. That is a way of living. It's not a onetime act. Coming means hearing, and coming and hearing means obeying, that is fidelity to Christ.

Now is Jesus talking about absolute perfection here? No. No, he's not, but he is talking about your direction. He is talking about where you're heading. Greater, fidel, fidelity, greater growth. These are all present tense participles, so the true disciple demonstrates lifelong faithfulness moving in the same direction. Always moving in the same direction.

What direction? Always toward Christ. "Everyone who come to me." For what purpose do they come? To hear Christ, to listen to his

teaching, to learn his words. And to what end? Well, that they might obey Christ. That they might put his words into practice.

They don't come Sunday mornings, ultimate, ultimately because of human relationships. They don't become, come just because they've got an obligation to teach, play, or serve or clean carpets or whatever it is. They don't come ultimately for any other reason expect this reason: to hear Jesus Christ. Why? So they might obey him because that's the heart of discipleship.

Now, is that easy to do? No. No, not at all. It's hard to be a disciple. That's why Jesus uses the word, strive. But it is a lot easier than the way of the unbeliever. Proverbs 13:15 says, "The way of the transgressor is hard." Life becomes increasingly difficult for the one who does not repent. And it eventually leads to judgment.

But for the one who practices repentance, always coming, always learning, always receiving, always embracing Jesus' teaching so that they might obey him, that is the one who's way is made

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straight before him, who's word is a lamp to their feet and a light to their path. At the end of that road is eternal life.

Well, that's what we see in the illustration Jesus uses, this illustration coming at the very end here as he contrasts building methods of two different builders. He said in verse 27, he's going to show us what's required to stay faithful. And now, he's going to show us. Okay, so third point, just like a wise builder, number three, fidelity to Christ means diligent effort. Fidelity to Christ means diligent effort.

Take a look in verse 48 there, the first part of the parable. "Everyone who comes to me hears my words, does 'em, I'll show you what he's like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation, laid the foundation on the rock." So stop there for a second. We've all watched this happen. We're watching homes going up all over the place in our area. And with every homebuilder I have observed, they begin not by going up, but by going down. Don't they? That's how builders build.

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Same thing here. This man builds his home, and we see that he's chosen to build near running water, a stream, a river. And in an arid land, that is quite pleasant. It's beneficial to be next to a river. No need to dig a well, able to provide water for drinking and cooking and laundry and, and bathing, sure makes the Misses happy. So it's great idea. This is a very id, as I said, he's a very wise builder. Happy wife, happy life, right?

So great idea to build near the river, as long as you build wisely. As long as you build wisely. That's what he did. But notice it took a lot of work. The way the ESV translate this, translates this, it says the man, it says, "he dug deep." There are actually two verbs there, not just one. The man who built his house, first he had to dig and the first verb there is *skapto*, to excavate the ground.

And then he had to go deep, which is a second verb, the word *bathuno*, gets *bathos*, it's deep, deep, a hole, a pit. So he deepened, he hallowed out, he went down deep. Some people would be content to excavate, do a little digging and then lay, lay the foundation of the house within the earth. But this builder

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is wise. He takes the time to dig, to dig down deep, and he does not stop digging and hallowing out until he finds the bedrock beneath, that's the word *petra*.

If you picture *petra*, if you picture this immense, shear, towering rock cliff, like you can find in our Rocky Mountains. That's the word *petra*. But here this *petra* that we see exposed in our Rockies, imagine that submerged beneath the earth. Layers beneath layers of soil beneath hardpack on the ground. You got to dig because it's hidden from the service so you gotta dig and get down there.

And Jesus pictures the wise builder putting in the hard work. And he digs and he goes down deep until he finds that, that *petra*, that bedrock and that's where he builds his foundation. Now obviously the house that Jesus is describing in this illustration, it's a picture of the religious life. Think about your own life or other religious people. Think about Mormons. Think about Catholics. Think about other people who don't share our theology and they're very religious.

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You could, what you see on the surface of their life can be friendliness, kindness, charity, generosity. You can see good stuff on the outside. But what's above the surface is the structure, the house. It's what we can all see and observe. So you see the structure, the way it's formed. You see the siding. You see the paint job and the roof.

So this is the speech, the behavior, the lifestyle. We could say in terms of verses 43 to 45, this is the fruit of the persons' life, what you say, how you act. But that edifice that you can see on the outside, no matter how it looks on the outside, if it's not built on a solid foundation, it is not structurally sound, is it?

Those who take great care to build their religious lives anchoring their souls into the solid bedrock of Christ, how do you do that? Come to Christ daily. Listen to him habitually. Obeying him always as a matter of course. Those are the wise builders. Make no mistake. This digging is hard work. Going down deep, it's, it's really hard. It's really strenuous stuff. It's not pleasant all the time.



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It's not like watching TV or passive easy listening. It's active listening. It's diligent reading and study. It's setting aside some other things that you could be doing to make time, undistracted time to give yourself to him. So coming to him, listening to him, obeying him. It's constant watchfulness over your heart, over your life. It's prayerful meditation on the Word, on truth. It's looking after your life and doctrine closely.

Not only that, but fidelity to Christ and total devotion to him, it involves not just that hard work, but the hard work, the soul work of repentance, of finding our sins within us and putting them to death. It involves the thoughtful work of replacing sinful behavior with righteous behavior, which is pleasing to Christ and beneficial to other people. Fidelity to Christ is about putting off and putting on. It's hard work. But good work and satisfying work.

Listen, if we follow what Jesus teaches us here, look again at, at verse 27 and following. This is not easy stuff. Go back to

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verse 27, "I say to you who hear," that's us. "Love your enemies." Well, three words and he's leveled us all. "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also." Are you kidding me?

And "From the one who takes away your cloak, don't withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who begs from you, and from the one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. And as you wish that others would do to you, you do so to them." Whoa! Look, putting those words into practice in our lives, in practical ways, I guarantee you, is going to involve a lifetime of repentance.

It's going to expose your pride. It's going to expose your, your self-centeredness because frankly, you really don't want to love this way. It's not natural to you. It's not natural to any of us. This is the love that comes from God and God alone. And it confronts our self-love. It confronts our self-centeredness. Exposed in all this is our heart of anger. It reveals our true desires. It exposes and reveals our impatience, our tendency

toward retaliation, our own self-justifying thoughts, and words, and behavior.

And dredging all that stuff up, which is inside each one of us, I guarantee you, that is not fun. It's digging. But unlike the builder who just digs in regular dirt, which is good clean dirt, this is, this is nasty, filthy, sludgy dirt. Filled with nasty stuff. But when we dig that out, we cast it away. And we replace it with what God says in his Word is true righteousness. You know what? That is joy producing.

For the true believer, the pursuit of righteousness is pure joy. In fact, we can live no other way. As Peter said when all those disciples are departing from Jesus, Jesus said, "Do you want to go away, too," Peter? You guys? You wanna go away, too? "'Lord, where are we gonna go? You have the words of eternal life.' Can't leave. I cannot leave.

As hard as this is, as unpleasant as it can become, I can't go anywhere, can you? We'll find in this repentance spade work, the digging, the digging deep, we find the satisfaction of the wise

builder, who knows the soundness of his building. Because he himself worked hard to lay that foundation. Doesn't matter that no one can see his foundation once that building has gone up.

The builder knows. And he takes joy in the fact that there is someone who saw it, who knows. It's the building inspector. It's the one who came to check the foundation to see if it really is sound, see if it's really built according to specs, within regs. That builder knows. The inspector can see and inspect. He knows the quality of the work. That's our joy, too.

So Jesus starts this illustration. Guy builds a house, sets his foundation on bedrock because, after all, he knows he's got a flowing stream right next to door, right next door to his house. Can't be too careful. With this house, though, resting on solid rock, he can be at ease against future catastrophe and that is the fourth point. Fourth point, fidelity to Christ means total security. Fidelity to Christ means total security.

So let's finish the parable here of the wise builder, verse 48. The one who keeps coming to Christ, the one keeps listening to

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him, the one who keeps studying his Word, keeps striving to obey, "he is like a man building a house who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built."

The ESV uses the word, stream, but when I think of a stream, I think of nice little babbling brook, a little trickle, you know. And I get some water out of it and say, Ooo, cool refreshing water. But in the context of a flood, that stream, whether it started out as a stream or river, it's no longer a babbling brook. Now it is a torrent.

And the picture here is of floodwaters, which come crashing, roaring down stream and they hit that house with overwhelming, unstoppable power, destructive energy, smashing, battering, hits the house suddenly, violently, but the man and his family, they're inside and they're unafraid. They're safe inside the house; calm, at ease, unconcerned.

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They may stand at the window for a little while with a cup of coffee or hot cocoa. Then they return to the kitchen table, play another round of UNO because the father is a wise builder. He's worked diligently to set his house on this foundation of bedrock. Again, we understand Jesus is making a spiritual analogy. He's not talking about construction industry. He's not talking about insurance for those who build in a flood plain. This is a parable. He's making an analogy to our lives.

And a question comes up at this point of interpretation about the nature of the flood Jesus is talking about here. Does this refer, as we are so quick assume, does this refer to the, the trials and the suffering that we kind of go through and face in our temporal lives, our lives here on earth? Is this the phone call that says, We've got the test results back and yes, it's, it's cancer. Is it that?

Though those things could cause us to crumble, our lives are built on a solid foundation, so we stand firm. Is that the idea here? Or does Jesus have a more final, ultimate, catastrophic flood in mind? I believe, based on how Jesus has conveyed the

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unstoppable overwhelming power these flood waters, he's talking here about a final ultimate kind of judgment.

The Old Testament is filled with flood imagery. In fact, it's got a really big flood back in Genesis chapter 6 that engulfed the entire earth. And that imagery comes through the Old Testament time and time again. Some of the prophetic language uses the same imagery calling to mind the, the devastation of the flood-like power of overwhelming divine judgment.

You find that language in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea and even at the end of the Bible in Revelation. When divine judgment falls, no one can stand against it. It's overwhelming, just like an unstoppable flood. Reminds me, I don't know if any of you saw that video footage of the, the flood, the tsunami that hit Japan in 2011.

I watched some of that video footage and how the water, the incredible power of the water that just swept away diesel trucks, and tankers and collapsed huge buildings. Completely engulfed the whole bay, swept away all structures so that

nothing manmade was visible. Just completely scraped it clean. That's a picture of divine judgment.

When the whole world is going to stand before the judgment seat and Christ is going to sit on that Great White Throne and he is going to judge and execute sentence. He's going to call the world to account. He's going to execute final divine judgment on all who have not obeyed the Gospel, all whose sins against God have not been covered in the cross and forgiven. And many of those who will be swept away in the flood of divine judgment, many of them will be religious people. Some from even, sadly, our own churches.

But you know what? The one who's built wisely, anchored into Jesus Christ, a life of coming to him, listening to him, obeying his Word, you know what? They have no fear that the tsunami of divine wrath will overwhelm them. Fidelity to Christ means total security. Because of the cross, all true disciples can confidently say in the language of Hebrews 13:6, "The Lord is my helper. I will not fear."



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And so because the most ultimate threat is taken away, the writer of the Hebrews says lesser threats are, too. "What can man do to me?" And not just man, but every temporal bit of suffering besides; every trial, every pain, every sorrow, every call that, yes, it's cancer, all of it. All those lesser floods that hit our spiritual homes, they can do nothing to undo our anchor and our confidence in the bedrock of Jesus Christ.

Once the wrath of God has been poured upon Christ for all who believe, what else matters? Bring it! What could unseat our confidence, right? We're more than conquerors. "In all these things, we're more than conquerors through him who loved us," Romans 8:37 and following. "For I'm sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Listen, this, beloved, is why antinomianism, the spirit of the age that decries any who call for obedience in the Christian life and denounces that attitude is pharisaism and de, this

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demand for holiness, calls it wrong, that is such dreadfully unloving theology. It's damning. Because it robs people of their assurance. It robs people of their confidence, their profound joy of this assurance that Jesus is seeking to give us.

We must obey our Lord's Word. We're personally accountable to him. He demands our complete loyalty, our total devotion. Which is a good thing. And it's manifest, that devotion is manifest in diligent effort in digging down deep and laying our foundation upon the bedrock of Christ and his Word.

And when we do, we rest in Christ peacefully with total security. We can sleep at night. That's fidelity. That's the principle of faithfulness in discipleship to Christ. And you know what, I'd love to end the sermon right here with these positive encouraging words of the future of the saints whose faith will stand firm against all judgment and against any trial and persecution and suffering on earth.

But I can't end the sermon just yet. And not that way, because our Lord has more to say. He wants to end the sermon with a word

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of warning. So must we. Over in Matthew's Gospel, the parallel, the contrast between the wise, the foolish builders, it focuses on the location. Building on the rock versus building on the sand. And that's where we get that children's song. It warns our kids, "Don't build your house on the sandy land, don't build it too near the shore. It might look kind of nice, but you'll have to build it twice, so you'll have to build your house once more."

But in Luke's Gospel, I think Matthew's point as well, it's about the way the house is built. The focus is on the manner of building. Not where it is, but how deep you go. Finding bedrock to put your foundation on. It's taking time, taking care, taking effort to build your house with a foundation and to put that foundation upon the rock.

And, by the way, once the flood comes, you won't have a chance to build your house once more. And our kids need to know that too, don't they? This judgment is permanent. There are no do-overs. So the fifth and final point for this morning and the Lord's final point in his Sermon on the Mount, number five,

infidelity to Christ means final calamity. Infidelity to Christ means final calamity.

Look at verse 49. "But the one who hears and does not do them," does not do my words, "he is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation." That is, he didn't, he didn't break through that hard pack on the surface. He didn't do, take, put forth the effort. He didn't dig and he didn't dig deep. He didn't dig at all. "When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, the ruin of that house was great."

When I was a little kid, we used to build forts. Any of you guys still build forts? We'd, you, find some old, abandoned boards. You know, plywood that's rotting, and a few two by fours, maybe some loose shingles that had fallen from the last hailstorm. And we'd go in the garage, grab dad's hammer without permission. And some nails. That's called theft.

But we'd, we'd bang out for ourselves a really cool fort. And for the price of one morning's construction project, we got full afternoon of delightful warfare. Bravely fighting off imaginary

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Indians who wanted to scalp all of our womenfolk. You know, commies, who wanted to invade America. At the end of the day, having fought for freedom and justice and the American way, we wandered home from that bloody battlefield and washed up for supper.

It's laughable to think that that fort would've provided any real protection from real enemies. It hardly could've kept us dry on an afternoon's rainfall in the summer. Certainly no shelter in the winter, even the mildest of Colorado snowfalls, much less a true snowstorm, or a blizzard. You would never find us hunkering down there. We'd be back in mom's house, right?

Take that fort, build it in any other part of the country, we wouldn't imagine it could provide protection during a tornado or a hurricane. It couldn't stand amidst the kind of flooding that people experienced recently over in Houston, Texas. Or take that fort and build it in Israel. Would it stand when the Jordan River flooded its banks?

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What we could never imagine would protect us and provide us shelter from any human threat or any natural disaster is certainly going to provide no protection at all when divine judgment falls. And not this time in a flood, but this time in fire. But, beloved, that's exactly what false professors of Christ do, and they do it all the time.

They either fail to think about judgment or they stupidly think it's not going to come to them because they use the words, "Lord, Lord." That's what religionists do. They rest securely in their comfortable lives now. Satisfied with just a little bit of religion. But they're completely vulnerable. They're unprotected against the flood waters and the fire, by the way of divine judgment, which is decreed.

And it's decreed and promised against them, against all who fail to come and listen and obey. And when they gather for themselves easy listening preachers, they may be listening to preaching, but they're not listening to Jesus. And so they come, but they don't come to the true Christ. They listen, but not to the true voice of Christ. And whatever religion they practice, it's not

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obedience to Christ because they're not really listening to him and they're not really obeying him.

They've gathered false teachers and hirelings around them who make them feel confident and self-assured and happy. People think they can come to Christ with lazy religion, sloppy obedience, which is no obedience at all. They, they want a Christianity that doesn't cost them too much, doesn't take too much time out of the schedule. Doesn't disrupt their lives.

They, then the less that they attend church, the less they're reminded, the less they're around believers who are thinking in certain direction, the less they're exposed to the, the confrontation and counsel of one another. The less they hear the preaching from the pulpit. And so the less they study Scripture. The more they fall away. The less they fellowship with the saints, and guess what? The less they think biblically, the less they act like Christians. The less they obey Christ.

They eventually stop listening altogether, some stop coming. They head for what's easy, what feels soft, comforting, but it's

a false comfort. It's a lying voice that entices them and lulls them into a sleep because one day they will face that judgment from which there is no escape. Jeremiah speaks of the Lord's wrath bursting forth like flood waters using the same language in two separate places. Jeremiah 23:19 and 20 and Jeremiah 30:23 to 24.

"Behold, the storm of the Lord. Wrath has gone forth, a whirling tempest. It will burst upon the head of the wicked. The anger of the Lord will not turn back until he has executed and accomplished the intentions of his heart." That's the emphasis in verse 49. On the sudden and the irreversible nature of the calamity of this judgment. Utter ruin, utter collapse. Total calamity.

And once it happens, there is no recovery. All is lost and there are no re-dos. That's why it's so important, folks, that you be sure you're found in Christ. He is the only refuge from that storm. And take into account your loved ones. Especially you older dear saints who have children who've wandered away or are attending some squish church. Do not feel confident with them.



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Don't be assured that they're okay because at least they're religious.

In fact, be afraid because religious people lull themselves into a false sense of security and they think they're fine. They're huddling under that little kid fort, built with little kid effort, with no foundation. You think that's gonna prevent them from being swept away when the flood comes?

That's why you must come to Christ. Your loved ones must come to Christ and listen to him, his Word. You've got to obey what you read in his Word, his true voice. For those of us who believe, we must press on to holiness, shouldn't we? And more and more as we see the day drawing near. The Navy Seals have a saying, "The more you sweat in peace, the less you bleed in war."

Christianity is hard work. But it is worth it all in the long run. Play now, you're going to pay later. Work hard now, suffer now, bleed now, sweat now, you'll rejoice now and in the long run. Christianity is not for spiritual slouches. It's not for sluggards. It's not for the cowardly and the unbelieving. I know

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that each one of us may feel weak from moment to moment, having times of fear and doubt, having times of inconsistency and even outright flaming disobedience. It happens to us.

But as new creatures in Christ who live by faith not by sight, we are strengthened in believing. We press on. We strive diligently to faithful obedience. Not of our own effort, but of all of his energy and effort in our own work. It's all coming from him.

I like what J.C. Ryle wrote drawing attention to the diligent effort that's required to pursue fidelity to Christ. He said, "Such a person's religion may cost him much. Like the house built on a rock, it may involve him in great effort, labor, and self-denial. To put to one side pride and self-righteousness, to crucify the rebellious flesh, to put on the mind of Christ, to take up cross daily, to count everything as loss for Christ's sake, all this may be hard work. But like the house built on the rock, such religion will stand. The streams of affliction may be violently on it and the floods of persecution hit strongly against it, but it will not give way. The Christianity which

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combines good profession and good practice is a building that will not fall." End quote.

It's a good word, isn't it? An even better word comes from our beloved apostle Peter. Here's a man who knew the shame of disobedience. He knew failure. He spoke rash words. And at times he failed by committing significant sin, even denying Christ himself. But he knew the restoring grace of the Lord. He lived in a trajectory that brought him to this point where he turns and exhorts all of us. We'll end with this.

2 Peter 1:10, "Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm you calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall." Amen and Amen.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, just want to thank you for the Sermon on the Mount. As we come to the end of this sermon, we thank you for the clarity of the preaching of your Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We want to thank you for your Son who preached this with such clarity and power, holding nothing back, giving us the fine print in bold font. We thank you for your Son

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especially as we come to our time of communion. He is the rock under whom we hide. He's the shelter that you've provided from the storm of your judgment. And to him we've fled for refuge, finding in him strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.