

Diane's sitting back there, so she's going to love the way I'm going to open this sermon this morning because I've got some pictures for you boys. Can we. Gentlemen. I'm sorry, I'm used to saying boys in my house. If I call you boy, it just means that you're generally male.

That's what I'm referring to. And there's. These guys are mostly male back there. So boys, gentlemen, look at that right there. Now listen.

Now listen, I came home. What's that exactly? He's on the table. That's a rule that all the boys in the house generally we follow. Not standing up on the table.

And yet this one somehow gets a pass on it. Can we have more pictures just so we can see that he's not always on the table. Look at that, look at that, look at that. And do we have one more? Aw.

Now this. Let me tell you. Let me tell you. That dog is so cute. He's the right size.

He doesn't shed. He loves belly scratches. I mean, who doesn't like belly scratches? He's great at playing fetch. He loves fetch.

He could do it for hours, hours on end before he tires out. He's very photogenic. We all can say yes to that, right? What's not to love about this little dog? Well, I'll tell you.

Buddy resists direction unless it's a direction he already planned on going anyway. Anyone. Anyone have a dog like that? Anyone married to someone like that? Yeah.

Yeah. Now, it's not that he doesn't love me. You ask any of the other guys. I'm his favorite. Honestly, I think I'm his favorite.

He loves me. But when I call him or when it's time to come back in the house after playing fetch, or when I tell him to stop barking in the middle of the night at Little like sounds at 120 year old house just makes. And I say shut up. I can't say that out loud because Carly gets mad at me when I do. But when I'm saying, you know when you're mad at a dog and you say things maybe you wouldn't say to other people, but you say it to the dog.

And he still, he doesn't care. He seems convinced. In all those instances, he seems convinced that his way is better than my way. And again, I love him as he is. Oh, absolutely.

But I also don't want to leave him as he is. I need him to change a few little things because I want him to recognize that my goal is for him to live his very best life. And to do that, he needs to listen to me when I'm talking to him. And then he needs to do what I ask him to do. Buddy is still learning how to yield to a higher authority, but

Buddy, and I suspect maybe many others of us in this room find that challenging as well.

Anyone here nod your head and say yes. I too, find it challenging to obey a higher authority. But the beautiful life that Jesus calls us into requires an ongoing, courageous honesty about who we are and who God wants us to be. So today we're gonna. We're gonna open the Scriptures and we're just gonna pray that the Lord would look at our lives.

He would. He would. He would peel back some layers, and we're gonna invite him to. To scrutinize our lives, the next step forward in our walk with him. So if you got your Bibles with you, and I always encourage you to open them up either on your app or in a in on Google, Gentlemen, you can Google this mark chapter 10, and we're going to be focused on verses 17 through 31.

While you're doing that, you can watch and pray. The Bible says watch and pray. So you can watch and pray. You can find your verse. I'm going to pray, and then we'll dig right in.

Heavenly Father, as we open your word today, you're going to teach us Jesus. You're going to teach us something very important about discipleship. So help us to learn and listen in Jesus name. Amen. Okay, how many of you guys are at Mark chapter 10 on some form of Bible?

I got 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. The tituses are not sure. They're like, listen, we didn't show up here to turn pages. We came to let you do that work for us. That's all right.

We got the screen up there as well. So if you don't have a Bible, you can read from there. As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. Good teacher, he asked, what must I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus says something very interesting that is worthy of another sermon.

He goes, why do you call me good? Jesus answered, no one is good except God alone. And then he answers the guy's question. He says, you know the commandments. You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony. You shall not defraud. Honor your father and mother.

You know the commandments. And the man says this. It says, teacher, all these I have kept Since I was a boy. How many of you guys can say, oh, yeah, I've kept all these since I was just a little child. I've been.

I've been pretty good. Any of you say that. This guy, this guy says,

I've kept these. I feel like this guy is. He's not lying.

He's like, I've kept these. And Jesus looked at him and the scripture says he loved him. He loved him. He says, okay, one thing you lack. Go sell everything you have.

Give it to the poor and you'll have treasure in heaven. And then come and follow me. Jesus is inviting him to be a disciple after he releases all the stuff that is holding him back from being a disciple. At this, the man's face fell and he went away sad. Why?

Because he had great wealth.

Jesus turns to his disciples and he looks around at them and he says, how hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God.

And the disciples were astounded, amazed, taken aback by these words. Jesus says it again. Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God. It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.

The disciples were even more amazed. Because background wealth equals God's blessing. We sometimes feel that too. If we've got all we need, then God's blessing us. If we don't have all we need, then we wonder, why isn't God blessing us?

And so the disciples are in the same boat. Like, hold on, this guy is rich. What do you mean? That he's going to have a hard time getting into the kingdom. Disciples were even more amazed and said to each other, well, who then?

Who then can be saved? Who can be saved? Well, Jesus hears them. He says, with man it is impossible, but not with God. All things are possible with God.

And then Peter speaks up. He says, we've left everything to follow you.

Truly, I tell you, Jesus replies, no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age. Homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, fields, along with persecutions. So you get the good stuff, but also persecutions in the age to come, eternal life. But many who are first will be last and the last first. We're going through a series called regenerations.

We've been working through these steps one by one by one. If you follow along with us, you can. You've almost got these steps memorized, perhaps, but this step is step 10. And we simply call this continue, Continue. We've done all the hard work so far.

We've made some big, big decisions to trust Jesus with our lives, recognizing that we can't do it on our own. We trust Jesus and then we're asking him to look into us and, and we're doing a self examination. We're making it right between others that we have harmed and others who have harmed me. And we're forgiving and we're receiving forgiveness from others. And now we're at the point where Jesus says this is just now walking and living it out.

Hence the word continue. Where we continue to examine our lives and when we sin, we promptly confess and turn and walk with, with Christ. We continue the pathway with Him. Now this young man is not a villain. Last night I had a conversation with two very intelligent young men who have some great insight, goals, aspirations for their life.

And they're still young and they're already at this point where they're thinking seriously about this thinking man. I wish I had been there when I was their age. This is like this guy right here, he's like, he's in it to win it on this. He's serious, he's sincere, he's highly moral, he's very respectable. He's likely admired by all of his peers.

He's eager, he runs to Jesus. The scripture says he runs to Jesus. He kneels down, he's taking the right posture before God. He's asking the right question, what must I do? What must I do?

And yet Jesus says, you're not there yet. You're not. There's something, there's something yet that's, that's pulling you and holding you. And he gently shows it to this man. Now identify with him.

I want to please God too. I want to be a good example to others, especially those in my inner circle. I want to have the respect of the community around me. When I know better, I want to do better. Anyone with me on that?

I want to trust Jesus with the answers to my life. And I think you guys do as well. But in our sincerity to follow Jesus, we're always going to bump up against this reality. The reality is this, that following Jesus means that life as we generally are predisposed to live it in this world will require ongoing adjustment. I tell you, cleaning the bathroom in our house is always, is always a challenge.

Keeping the car clean is always a challenge. The kitchen sink, I think it goes about seven minutes on average between being empty and having another thing put in it. And I'm telling you, teaching how to do chores, it's hard because they. Well, I just cleaned that. I just cleaned that. How come it got dirty again?

I'm like, because it's life and we live in it and, and it happens.

Yeah. Anyone here like, yeah. Oh, that never happens in my house. No, this is just how life is.

It gets messy, gets dirty. Jesus says, listen, if you're going to follow me, life is going to get messy. There's always going to be something come up that you got to. You got to. We got to, we got to deal with.

And that's never easy. It's never easy to have Jesus tell you, here's something you need to work on. But it's especially hard when, when the rest of our lives really feels like things are going well, things are in place, things are clicking. Our lives seem to be moving in a great direction. We're on an easy, a steady keel.

It's like we look around and go, we're doing pretty good here. Remember? Hey, Jesus, what do you think about my life?

So when Jesus says, yeah, there's one thing you lack, we might bristle a little bit. Bristling is like, what are you talking about? What are you talking about? And in those times when Jesus asked us to change something or to address something, one, it can feel unnecessary. I'm doing pretty good, Jesus.

I'm going to church more. I'm putting offer some money in the plate. I'm not planning a murder or a bank heist. What's not to love about me, Jesus? It can feel unnecessary when Jesus asks us to do something more.

And it can feel intrusive, really. Maybe even a bit offensive. You want me to do what? Why? Well, that doesn't even make sense.

Why do you want that done? I'm doing everything that I was told to do and you want more. And we don't say it in that quite that tone, but that's sort of the attitude that's back there. Like our friend, this rich young ruler. We want the life that Jesus offers us, but we want it basically, as Alan said, added to our life like an extra side of sour cream at that baked potato.

Like an extra. We don't really want it to intrude too much. What we want to hear Jesus say is this man, Tim, you are doing great at following me. You, Tim, really, you're pretty much perfect the way you are. I mean, people love you.

I've got no suggestions, actually. In fact, I mean, I'm gonna, I'm gonna send you out There to tell people how to do it based on your life, because you're such a good example. Just keep up the good work. Check in with me next year.

When we look at this young man, we might be simply saying the same thing. Well, look, he's doing so good. He's managing his finances.

He's got his moral house in order. He knows the right question to ask.

He knows the right place to go. Good job, young man. Keep it up. But Jesus calls me practically perfect in every way. And this young man and you, as wonderful and amazing as you all are, Jesus calls us to something deeper.

And this is step 10 where Jesus continues to move us beyond surface obedience into deeper, a deeper walk with him. And we invite him to look deeply and authoritatively into our lives and call us into a deeper walk. That song we sing. He's a good, good father. He's always calling me to go deeper still into love, love, love.

I think about Abraham. God did it with Abraham. Abraham had trusted God to leave his hometown and wander off into truly God knows where. That's what God told him. I know where I'm sending you.

You just, you just follow me. I'll take you there. Abraham does it. He leaves everything and takes off on this wild adventure, just trusting God. Then God says, there's one thing.

I need you to give me the most beloved treasure that you have. His only child.

I think about Job. Job's doing good. Job honors God. He's a God honoring man. And yet when Satan comes to request permission to test Job, God says, you know what?

This could actually work really well. I'm going to give you permission to do it. And I'm telling you, if you know Job's story, his life falls apart. And even David, you know David the man. God said, this is a man after my own heart.

And yet we know the story where God calls in a prophet and says, listen, you need to go and talk to David about this thing that happened. And you need to call out him, call him out into total honesty.

And Abraham and Job and David responded to that. They submitted to that, to God's better, greater plan. Abraham trusted God and God blessed that moment. If you don't know the moment I'm talking about, read it in Genesis. I'll give you the update the scripture point later.

But read that because Abraham submits to God his dearest treasure. And God uses that moment, he provides in that moment. He blesses that moment. And now this becomes a picture of Jesus for us. Way back in Abraham's life.

And Job submits to God's testing in an incredible way. We still look

at Job and go, oh my God, word, oh my word. But Job had this confidence when he was going through this. He goes, I know that when God has been finished testing me, I will come forth as gold. He had absolute confidence in God's ultimate good plan.

And then David, David heard the prophet speak to his life. And David is just awash with repentance. And he invites God not just to forgive that, but moment of weakness and sin in his life. But he says this, open me up, God, search me. God, know every part of my heart and my ways.

And because of that, because of that submission to God, God opened up this new stream of blessing, new avenues of grace and mercy and deeper experiences with God, deeper knowledge of him. When we allow Jesus to look completely into our lives, he can affirm what is good. Good job Noah, Good job. Yes you good job Noah. But he can also lovingly direct our attention to areas that need, that need addressed.

One thing you lack, and this is not said with judgment. It's not said with, said with harsh criticism. There's not a hint of like shaming in Jesus's tone. The scriptures are clear. Jesus loves this young man.

His heart is just open to this young man.

But because he loved him, he's not going to let him settle for anything less than God's perfect plan for him. God loves you too, but he's not blind to the areas of your life that are not fully submitted to him. And he doesn't want you to live in fear, fear or shame about those places. But he does want you to experience something deeper as you trust him with those areas and obey him out of those areas. And he says when you do this, there's a reward.

Treasures in heaven is how he describes it to this young man. I wish there was a happy ending to this account, but there isn't. At least none that I know of. We may meet this young man in heaven. He says, oh yeah, I went and over the weekend I did what Jesus asked.

We don't know. In this account, the young man walks away sad, unwilling or unable, unwilling really to follow Jesus deeper. And Jesus watches him go and uses that moment to teach his disciples something very, very important. He says it's really hard to release the death grip we have on the treasures of earth in order to experience the treasures of heaven. It's really hard.

This young man had a death grip on money. Some of us have the same death grip. We think a lot about money. What we don't have and what we want and what we need and what we think we need. We think a lot about money and we think and we have a death grip mentally on it and maybe even physically.

You may have, however, your grip tightly wound around something else. And it can feel hard then to say, okay, Lord, not this. As Peter said, well, who then can be saved? And that's the right question. It's a good question.

Because if salvation depends on perfect surrender, then I'm not sure that any of us here would qualify for salvation based on that. But Jesus says this. He goes, with man. Yeah, it's pretty impossible. But with God, all things are possible.

I wish our friend had stayed. I wish our friend had hung out just a bit longer and asked a few more questions, because I'm pretty sure Jesus would have said something like this. The kind of obedience that I'm calling you to is impossible in a human way. But if you will trust your life to me, and if you will follow me closely, I will empower you to do what seems to you impossible. And that's the message today.

Taking your next step with Jesus can feel impossible on your own. That's a big ask. You may say, God, you're asking too much. I can't do it. And Jesus says, I know.

And that's why if you follow me, if you trust your life to me, I'm going to be present with you by the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit is going to help you do what you need to do. That's he's the comforter. He's our equipper. He is our strength.

He's our encouragement. That's God in us, compelling us, helping us, encouraging us, motivating us, empowering us to do the next right thing with Jesus to go the next step. Step 10 is about staying close enough to Jesus that when he lovingly brings something to our attention, we can respond quickly, even if it is imperfectly. And what do I mean by imperfectly? None of us are perfect.

Our responses are imperfect. Because in the back of our heads there is always that niggling idea that maybe Jesus is asking something that he has no right to ask. What do you mean? Does Jesus have the authority to even ask us? It can feel intrusive, it can feel unnecessary.

But here's what we need to remember. When we trust our lives to Jesus, he has the authority to speak into every aspect of our lives, any aspect he sees that needs to address. We have given him the authority to do it. And we, we say, lord, like David, search my heart. Here it is.

What part of me does not yet align with your perfect will? And while it may seem unnecessary to us sometimes the thing Jesus asked us to. Jesus sees things ahead and above and far beyond that we cannot yet see. We go, ah. And unlike a parent, I need you to do this.

Because when you're 30, this is a skill you will need to have. So do

it now. Learn the lesson now so that you don't have to learn it later when it's going to be harder. And finally, it can be costly because when we release something to God, it can feel like we're losing in some way. Peter says this.

He goes, well, we've left everything.

And Jesus says, listen, I understand, but trust me, you're going to get that back 100 fold. The kingdom. What feels like subtraction becomes multiplication. What feels like death becomes life. Training Buddy to obey even when it doesn't make sense is important so he can stay safe.

We live on a busy road. I need him to come when I call him so he needs to be responsive to me. I can see traffic coming that he can't see. I need him to respond to me when I say come. He needs to come to enjoy a long and prosperous life.

He needs to obey. Training doesn't happen in one day. I wish it did. Wouldn't that be great? Wouldn't it be great if you could train a dog in one day?

My dog is not even. He's not that smart. I'm sorry, Diane, but he's special in so many ways. But he was not gifted when with at least noticeable intelligence. And so it's taking him a while to learn things that I feel like he should know.

It takes daily reminders and rewards for him to learn the lessons I'm trying to teach him. Living honestly and obedient, obediently before God is not a one time decision. It takes more than one day to train us to Most of us are not gifted with obvious intelligence. And God says, I'm going to be patient with you, but I need you to listen. You'll learn it, but I need you to listen.

So it's like David, it's opening ourselves up and saying, lord, search me again. Show me what I'm clinging to and give me the courage to release it. In your life, is there something that you feel Jesus is saying? Okay, Joby, you're doing great. There's one thing, one thing, Carly.

There's one thing.

I'm trying not to call on people that I know have one thing that's not. I'm not doing that. Is there one thing we can probably all think of? The one thing that Jesus says? Here's the this may not be the only thing, but it's the next thing that Jesus says, hey, let's talk about this.

Let's do this. If you yield to his authority and if you take that first step of obedience, and again, delayed obedience is disobedience.

So if you hear the voice of the Lord, act on it promptly. If we yield to his authority and take that first step of obedience, I promise you this, there will be an immediate sense of renewed spiritual health and confidence in your relationship with Jesus. You take that first step, and if you're feeling a little bit shaky with you and God, that first step of obedience, bam, you're back in you.

You feel, you know, the confidence. You're with Jesus, and he's right there with you. Confidence and then peace and joy, even in the hard parts. Your life's not going to end up like Job, I'm pretty sure. But even if it gets halfway that God never abandoned Job, and God's never going to abandon you.

You've got the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will help you. So if you're not yet a believer here, as we enter in this time of communion, today could be the day that you take your very first step with Jesus.

No man can come to the Father, no man can get close to God. No man can please God without going through Jesus. So if you have not trusted your life to Jesus, today could be the day that you do that and begin your journey with God. If you've not done that, do not leave here this morning without asking someone to pray. Pray with you.

This is simply a matter of you ask God answers. We'll baptize you this afternoon or before church is out. Maybe if there's water in there. If you're an unbeliever, don't leave without asking someone to pray for you. But if you're a believer, this moment of communion could be your next step.

The bread and the cup remind us that Jesus loves us enough to die for us. He loves us enough to. To refuse to leave us in our sin. And he died so that you wouldn't have to stay in your sin. And if you've received him as Savior, you can take the bread and cup today in honor of his sacrifice on the cross.

And then ask, as you're. As you're silent there before the Lord, ask, Lord, is there something that you want me to do next? And there's a real good chance that you already know what that is and all Jesus has to say. This is the thing.

Jesus is faithful. He will respond to your question and if it feels large, don't be taken aback. With man it's impossible. With God all things are possible. Hebrews 12 says this Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith for the joy set before him.

He endured the cross, he scorned its shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. He is able. He is able. Think about it. Just think about it.

