

## **Discipleship: Following in Jesus Footsteps**

### **by Chris Famisaran**

Welcome to this presentation from the Downey Seventh Day Adventist Church. We are located in the greater Los Angeles area at 9820 Lakewood Boulevard in Downey, California. We would love to have your worship with us any Saturday you are in our area.

Man, I'm hungry. How are you all doing? Enjoying your labor day weekend? Let's begin with the word of prayer. Father in heaven, we thank You, Lord once again for the opportunity to come together and to worship be with us, as we now do a deep dive into the scriptures in Jesus name. Amen.

I think it was, I don't remember exactly. I think it was maybe around 1980. Very well to do business man by the name of Dick Bass, decided he wanted to take his kids to the Matterhorn and climb it. He was a little older, I think he was probably around 50 years old. And so he dragged his kids all the way over there. I think some of them were still in college and they were able to climb the mountain. And he done so earlier, I believe when he was in college, and it lit a fire in him. And he decided, you know what, let's go climb Mount Denali. And let's go climb Mount Aconcagua. And pretty soon he realized he had climbed to several of the tallest peaks on each continent. And then came this really brilliant, great idea. Let's climb the highest peak of each continent, also known as anybody know, the Seven Summits. All right. And he knew he couldn't do it all on his own. Yes, he was a very successful businessman. But he needed help. So he reached out to some friends, I believe they helped climb guide on Mount Rainier, Martie Howie was one of the guides a strong female climber who I believe it climbed Mount Everest at that point, and a bunch of other people. And in order to be able to make this project complete, he had to go and he had to really learn how to climb because the type of climbing that they were going to be doing required an extra care of diligence and technique. And especially when you're climbing above 8000 meters, that goes to a whole nother realm where in his case, he would have to use bottled oxygen. But when you're 50 years old, you know, you kind of get set in your ways. You think, you know a lot of things. And he did. But he still didn't know the fine tunings of high altitude climbing. And he was here at 50 years old, he suddenly realized, you know what, I'm out of my league, I have to be able to get some help. So he hired all of these guys. And in the meantime, as well, he met another man by the name of Frank Wells, another very business, very successful businessman. He helped lead a number of Hollywood ventures. I don't remember exactly what companies but he was the president of several high high companies. I think it was either Paramount or Warner Brothers. Eventually he would go on to take the reins of Disney. Tragically in 1990, I think it was either 1993 or 1994. He was in a helicopter plane crash helicopter crash and he passed away early. But two different individuals Dick Bass. His business was an oil and other ventures strong conservative from Texas and Frank Wells from California. Two polar opposites. They came together. And they wanted to complete the goal of summitting all Seven Summits And along the way, they learned. They were they were humbled many times. Thinking they could easily carry a pack though, could weigh anywhere from 40 to 80. And sometimes even 90 pounds at a time. And depending on the peak, maybe even pulling a sled. It was a Herculean effort, especially with guys

who were older. You know, they weren't they weren't 18 being 50 plus years old, was hard. But along the way, Frank, he was able to complete six. And I believe as May of 1985, Dick Bass stood on the top of Mount Everest at 55 years of age, completing the dream of the Seven Summits.

In order to accomplish that goal, he had to listen he had to be taught in so many in many ways, he had to find mentors. Many of them are even younger than him. But as he did, so, he was able to grow and finally achieve that dream, that goal of standing not only on Mount Everest and being the oldest person to do so at the time, but also of being able to complete the Seven Summits being the first person to do so.

Today, we're going to talk about discipleship. And let's go to Matthew chapter four. This is a very prominent theme in the book of Matthew. We've already talked about how Jesus was the fulfillment of the Old Testament. And in the second Sabbath, we talked about Jesus being the anointed one. Last week, we talked about the kingdom of heaven as a major, major theme. In fact, we're gonna even kind of touch base a little bit on that today. But let's go to Matthew 4, Matthew 4, verse 18. And it's here that Jesus calls his disciples. Alright, so in verse 18, as Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, called Peter and his brother, Andrew, they were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. Jesus said, Come follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people. Once they left their nets, and followed him. And going on from there, he saw two other brothers James, as son of Zebedee and his brother John, they were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets, and Jesus called them immediately they left the boat, their father, and followed him.

Every time I read the story, I always wonder how did Mr. Zebedee feel that his two sons left to go and follow Jesus? Perhaps they've probably already heard of who Jesus was. He was a man who who could heal and he was teaching, he was preaching. He was different from everybody else. And they essentially were leaving behind the family trade. They were leaving behind the lives that they knew, to go on this new venture, a new season of their life, and to follow Jesus for the rest of their lives. If somebody were to call you and say, Come follow me, if Jesus were to come here and say, Hey, come follow me. Would you really want to follow? Well would probably be the common response. You're a madman. Right? Because how many people how many times have you heard that? And yet here in this story, Jesus, he calls his first disciples.

What is a disciple? A disciple is a follower. He learns from the rabbi, it was it was common back then that especially those who would be go on to become Pharisees and scribes. Early on, they would learn and they would know, the Torah, the first five books of the Bible and, and the rest of what we now know as the Old Testament, but especially the first five Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. And if you made the cut, you will be able to go on and learn from a rabbi. And to do so you will learn to imitate him, he would serve as a mentor. And in this case, Jesus here as well, as they would later call him rabbi, he would become their teacher. And just like Simon, Peter, James, John, Andrew, Jesus is calling us to become disciples to follow the teachings of Jesus. Dallas Willard, he says,

discipleship is the process of becoming who Jesus would be. If he were you. I read this earlier. It's like, Man, this is this is really awesome. Discipleship is a process of becoming who Jesus would be, if he were you. Because ultimately we're called to imitate and to take on what Jesus has shared with us in the book of Matthew. To Be kind to be loving, to go out and preach the good news, and all that Jesus has taught.

Now, and in Matthew 16, Jesus also says, Then Jesus said to His disciples, whoever wants to be my disciple must want anybody know.... deny themselves and take up their cross. And what? Follow me. This is a theme and Matthew have come follow me. He says that elsewhere as well. But these are some of the two passages that really stand out here. In fact, it goes on for whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? Imagine you, let's just say you had \$100 billion. But you had no friends, you had no money. You were alone. And at the end, you just die. Or would you choose to follow someone who brings life who brings hope? And to have family which life would you want? Yeah, you could have everything in the world. But when you die, that's it.

In fact, this calling discipleship is a lifelong commitment. Peter, James, John, those guys, their life would be forever changed when they left and drop those nets, to take on a calling, because their calling didn't stop when Jesus died. It had just begun. In the three years that they spent with Jesus, it was a time where they learned who God was. And in Jesus passing down lessons that would strengthen encourage them for the future. And the other thing that we have to keep in mind to George Night, he says, the gospel and ethics, they cannot be separated. The Gospel and ethics cannot be separated who we are and how we live, is important. If Jesus has touched our lives, and we desire to follow God.

We're called to live as Jesus would want to, and so in the Gospel of Matthew, there are five discourses, the first one we call the Sermon on the Mount extended times where Jesus would, maybe they just they sat down, and Jesus would just share something with them. And it was lessons, not only on how to live life, but how to be a disciple. The first one is the Sermon on the Mount. And check Matthew five, and my five through seven. In fact, we find here in Matthew five through seven, the first thing that Jesus talks about is the Beatitudes, the attitudes of those who are called to be disciples to be to be the merciful those who hunger and thirst, those who are pure at heart, those who are poor in spirit. All of these, Jesus also talks about salt and light, he talks about the fulfillment of the law and talks about murder and anger, adultery, divorce, oaths, an eye for an eye, love for enemies, giving to the needy. He talks about how we can pray in Matthew 6 in fact, we've even touched on this already. He talks about fasting, and treasures in heaven where your heart should be, to not to worry, we should not judge others. And also how we can ask, seek and knock the wide and narrow gates, the true and false prophets and disciples, and finally, the wise and foolish builders. So over two chapters, Jesus, he's sitting, he's sitting on this mountain, and there's 1000s of people below. And all of a sudden he starts to teach and make clear and and really say, Hey, this is how you should live your lives. These are the attitudes you should take on.

This is how you should treat others. And this is where you should put your trust in your hope in the long run.

In Matthew 10, it talks about missions where Jesus sends the 12 disciples out. And in fact, let's even go there. Let's go to Matthew 10. Matthew 10. So Jesus in verse one, Jesus called his 12 disciples to them, and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease, and sickness. These are the names of the 12 apostles first Simon who is called Peter, his brother, Andrew, James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew the tax collector, James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot who betrayed him. And these 12, Jesus and with the following instructions, do not go out among the Gentiles or enter any town of Samaritans, go rather to the lost sheep of Israel, as you go proclaim this message, the kingdom of heaven, another instance, has come near, heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons, freely you have asked, freely give. Now where it mentions, hey, you know, don't go to the Gentiles don't go to the Samaritans. It's not that Jesus doesn't care for them. But in starting now, hey, as a task in the beginning, go out to the lost, your lost brothers and sisters, and just what is also central to Gospel of Matthew is to teach, to proclaim, and to heal. Jesus is sending them out. He's giving them instructions. And he sends them out together to go and minister. And so discipleship is not only living, but also going out and serving. This is the second discourse. Now it continues on for another 40. It goes, there's 42 verses in chapter 10. And it actually continues. But especially here, though, this is important that this is the missions part. We're called to go out and serve, and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, especially to those who are lost. For those who have left. For those who've even never heard of Jesus.

And Matthew 13, Jesus goes on another discourse, another mini sermon, where he talks about several parables. Some of them you probably are very familiar with, for instance, the parable of the sower, the parable of the weeds, parable of the mustard seed, the parable of the hidden treasure, the parable of the net, and also at the ends, he talks about a prophet without honor. Now, in each of these parables he leads with the kingdom of heaven is like, so this kingdom, that Jesus is referring to the kingdom, as we've turned about talked about last week, both present, and future.

Additionally, in Matthew 18, the discourse on the church of how we should treat our brothers and sisters and in Matthew 18 is somewhat of a challenging chapter to some degree. It talks about the greatest in the kingdom of God. And when we in Matthew 18, who is Jesus referred to as the greatest in the kingdom, the humble, but also Who else? There's, there's a certain group of people that he uses as an example, children, right? I love children, because, you know, they just they haven't been.... they still believe, right? They're not jaded, and they're honest and to be dependent on their parents, much like we live as well, because we depend on our Heavenly Father for everything. We're called to believe, and to go forth. But it also talks about how we should handle those who cause others to stumble, or perhaps maybe they're hurting and harming other people gives directions. For instance, let's go Matthew 18. Let's go to verse 15. Matthew 18, verse 15. So it says if your brother or sister sins go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. This is really good common advice, amen. If you see

somebody you know somebody that you care about, right? And don't just say, hey, you're messing up, let's let's not go that approach. But if we truly care about our brother and sister was saying, Hey, man, I just I've been noticing something. I mean, are you okay? Right? That's the first thing. We don't go out. We don't tell everybody. But yet we go and we talk. And it says if they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen to you take one or two others along the way, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. So if you can't get make any sense with this guy or gal, then Hey, bring in a couple other people, that who do care about this individual. And if they still refuse to listen, you know, tell the church and if they refuse even more to listen, treat them as you would a pagan or tax collector. Now, when you read that, when it says treat them as a pagan or a tax collector, do you believe that Jesus has been harsh here? Because were pagans and tax collectors, well received in the time of Jesus? They weren't fact they were on the lower end, the lower of the bottom of the social standards of social. Culturally, you didn't hang out with pagans, you didn't hang out with tax collectors. But in this case, Jesus is saying, hey, treat this brother or sister as if they don't know anything. And you start from the very beginning.

Okay, simple lesson that we can all apply in dealing with people who either were having a problem with as well, okay, maybe somebody said something, and you heard it, second, third, fourth, fifth person, go to the source and hash your problems out. But it also talks about, you know, Grace, and love, when we follow God, we should, we should follow Jesus example, to be kind to be loving into, in this case here as well to be merciful, the parable of the unmerciful servant.

The fifth and final discourse, and Matthew is one where it takes place on Mount Olive, or the all of it or also known as the End Times discourse. In Matthew 24, talks about the destruction of the temple. And when Jesus says that the temple is going to be destroyed to them, like they're just they're blown away, how can this happen? Yet Jesus predicted and later on, and it will come true. But the temple was the lifeblood of the Jewish community. And here it says, Do you see all these things Truly, I tell you, not one stone will be left on another, every one will be thrown down. He's alluding to the fact of the of the End Times. And yet, and later in Matthew 24, Jesus points out that the day and the hour, is unknown. Nevertheless, in chapter 25, he talks about the parable of the 10 virgins, and the main lesson that we can take from the parable of the 10 versions is, be ready. Right? Don't go to sleep, don't take it for granted, always be ready. And the second parable in Matthew 25, of this discourse talks about the bags of gold. And one of the key characteristics of the servants was that they did things immediately. And finally, the last part is the sheep and the goats. God calls us to go care for one another, to feed those who are hungry, to care for those who were in prison.

And so you see, not only in the future, do we need to know. But let's practice and be the disciples that God has called us to be. So some of the characteristics of the disciples as they learned, and in the book of Matthew was, number one was a desire to know Christ. And the disciples were fortunate that again, they got to spend three years with Jesus and they weren't staying at the Ritz Carlton. They weren't staying at the Hilton sometimes they didn't even have a place they would sleep in a field probably. Or if they knew somebody, they could, you know, they could stay in somebody's house. But Jesus said, you

know, this, this road that we're on is not always He's going to be easy. But I'm calling you to be faithful. And then he was able to pass on the teachings that we now have in Scripture. And in Matthew, in fact, I think each of these discourses are building on each other. The first one talks about the fact of this is the thing, these are the things you need to know to live well, and what to expect, expect you how to live. Not only that, I want to send you out, as ambassadors, as Paul says, to be missionaries. And then not only that, I want you to teach these things like the parable of the kingdom, kingdom of heaven is like this. It's like that.

In Matthew 18, and talks about Okay, so we have believers, we're church, this is how we should treat one another. This is how we should deal with people who are struggling. These are some of the things the characteristics that I want you to share with others. And finally, at the end, the conclusion is, but wait, there's more. I am coming back. But in the meantime, please continue to live like this. Be ready. Be faithful, and love Well, do you see the building up to it?

So to know Christ, but also to be humble. Have a willingness Sorry, I'm getting ahead of myself. So characteristics of the disciples is to know Christ. To be humble, and a willingness to learn.

Jesus also continually talks about this fact of how to love your neighbor, and love them well. Be ready to serve. Jesus already taught them in Matthew 10. And in other places, but especially in Matthew 10. Be ready and willing to serve. And the last thing is, once you have learned and you've been taught well pass this knowledge along to other people. Because if we're not passing these teachings, will the church ever grow? We have to have new people come in, and when they do, we mentor them. And not just when people come in, but your children that come into the church. We want to mentor them to grow to be the next leaders, or not even next, if they're old enough, let's place them make them be leaders already.

God wants us to show who God is. And to follow God with everything with all of our heart, our soul, and our mind. Eventually, we accidentally passed over but in Matthew 28, as Jesus closes, Matthew 28 He says, all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me therefore go on what? Go and make disciples of who? of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. What did Jesus do this whole time? discipleship. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age, Jesus last parting words to the disciples was to go to all nations and when he says all nations, the world, but especially in our community, where we are here in Downey and wherever you live, let's go all into the nation's to teach, preach, baptize, and even taking on that tenant of of helping others to find healing that is central to the good news. The beautiful thing too is God says I have not left you but go and be ready for me. Amen.

I want to close with a quote by Robbie Galatie (sp?), He says when the church becomes an end in itself, it ends. I'm going to change this here when Sabbath School, as great as it is becomes an end in itself. It ends when small groups ministry becomes an end in itself and ends when this worship service begins.

comes an end in itself. It ends what we need is for discipleship to become the goal. And then the process never ends. The process is fluid, it is moving, it is active, it is a living thing, it must continue to go on. every disciple must make disciples. That is a key thing that has been true, ever since Jesus called Peter, James, John, and Andrew, and making disciples ever since.

So I want to encourage you, brothers and sisters, let us continue to be faithful, to ask God every day, Lord, grant me an opportunity to be a faithful servant to you to serve you. That I can not only be a blessing to others, grant me the words of wisdom and the knowledge know how to share you with others, that others may know whether on Lakewood Avenue, Paramount or whether they're driving on The 5 right now that they may know who you are, and that they might find grace and freedom in you in Jesus.

So let's be faithful. Let us go forth and continue God's calling. as disciples. Let us pray. Father in heaven, thank you, for your goodness, Lord, for the many teachings, Lord, and especially as we look through Scripture and how it builds on itself, Lord, help us to see these things. And not only that, Lord, make the scriptures come alive. And may we be faithful to these teachings that we don't just read them, Lord, but that we actually do them. Lord, it's only because of you that we are here. Thank you for your goodness, your love and your grace. Be with our brothers and sisters help us to have a safe Labor Day weekend. And above all, Lord, may You reign supreme in our hearts in Jesus name. Amen.

Grace, and peace, everybody.