Carry Your Cross

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[0:00] Such a joy to worship with you this morning. We're going to continue on in our series in Matthew. So if you would open up your Bibles.

We're going to finish off chapter 16, starting from verse 21.! If there's anybody, if not, let's turn our Bibles to Matthew 16, starting from verse 21.
Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's Word. Father, we thank you for your Word.
It is a lamp onto our feet. It is the guidebook of how to live this life.
The definition of what a truly good life is. And so Father, we want to sit underneath your teaching, Lord Jesus.
[1:19] We want to be transformed by your Word today. Let not these words come into one ear and out the other, but bring real life transformation today.

By the power of your Spirit. Empower me today to preach as an act of worship. To preach, not fearing man, but fearing you alone.
And that you would truly be glorified. Not just to pray that as a rote thing, but be glorified today. Be glorified in our hearts.
Receive the glory that you are due, Lord Jesus. It's in your name we pray. Amen. If you are able, please rise for the reading of God's Word.
Amen. Starting from verse 21. From that time, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.
[2:37] And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, Far be it from you, Lord.

This shall never happen to you. But he turned and said to Peter, Get behind me, Satan. You are a hindrance to me.
For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man. Then Jesus told his disciples, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.
For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?
Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.
[3:45] Truly I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. This is God's holy and authoritative word.

Please be seated. What is the good life? How would you describe a life well lived?
Maybe it looks like a life of comfort, living in your spacious dream home, eating a gourmet dinner, sharing a fancy cheese board, splitting a bottle of wine with your loved one, and capturing the night with a bike ride in sunny, beautiful weather to the local ice cream shop.
Maybe it looks like new adventures every week as you travel around the world, meeting new people, eating exotic foods, witnessing the greatest sights that this world has to offer.
Maybe it looks like the big corner office with the amazing view of the city on the 50th floor. You made Forbes 30 under 30. You're a CEO entrepreneur.
[4:55] You were the youngest self-made centi-billionaire in the world. Of course, all those things are not sinful in and of themselves. But are those the things, and the pursuit of them, that define a good life?

The world, by its example and its teaching, would wholeheartedly say yes. Life is not worth living unless you have those things.
But to Jesus, it's not comfort, success, riches, power, or leadership that define the good life.

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But it's suffering, lowliness, weakness, self-denial, and carrying your cross. To follow after him, that's what defines a life well lived.
Because ultimately, he knows that the path of suffering is the path to glory. That's the main point of my sermon today. He invites us to follow after him.
[6:07] As he first models, the good life by carrying the cross himself. And then he mandates his disciples to carry their own crosses. In the passage right before, Jesus just finished encouraging and blessing his disciples.

In particular, Peter. After Peter confesses Jesus' true identity as the Christ, he sets Peter apart as the leader of the twelve and subsequently as the leader of his church.
And to that congregation of those who confess Jesus as the Christ, Jesus grants the keys of the kingdom. Mayors grant keys to the city, to local heroes and esteemed public figures as an act of honor to esteem them.
But that's just one city. And that key really doesn't do anything. It doesn't give them any power. But the power of the keys that Jesus grants to his church has the power to determine who is in and who is out of the kingdom of heaven.
Not on the municipal, not on the national, but on the global scale. Because of this, the disciples, they must be feeling pretty good about themselves.
[7:34] Feeling like the Messiah's wrecking crew, that nothing could stop them, not even the gates of Hades, not even Satan himself. Like an inflating balloon, you can almost see their chests puff up line by line, moment by moment.

Ffft. Ffft. Ffft. That is until Jesus takes a pin and pops all of their hopes, all their expectations.
And he does it in an unprecedented way. For the first time in Matthew's gospel, Jesus begins to show them that he must go to Jerusalem, suffer many things, be killed at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be raised on the third day.
I imagine this not to just be this one line, mic drop sentence, this one moment that the gospel writers have summarized it like here. Matthew writes that Jesus begins to show them.
Knowing the shock of this statement, I hear Jesus slowly, carefully, explain to them why he must go and do this, that he is bound to do this, that there is no other possible future for him.
[8:55] Perhaps he pointed to the Old Testament prophecies that prophesied about his death, or maybe he explained that this was the only way for sinners like you and me to come to everlasting life.

But as a loving, patient teacher, not content to keep his disciples in the dark, he takes the time to ready his disciples of what's to come.
The ear-to-ear grin pulled across the disciples' faces, right? Slowly starts to lose that tension.
With every line, they end up more and more confused, maybe even angry and frustrated. Jesus, you're supposed to be our leader.
We're supposed to go to Jerusalem and crown you as the rightful king as you deliver us from our oppressors. But, you're going to die there.
[9:57] And die not to our Roman enemies, but the hands of our own people, the Jewish leaders? So, foolishly answering a question that, frankly, no one asked him.

Already the type to speak before he thinks, but now emboldened as a newly appointed leader, Peter takes it upon himself to be the spokesperson for the group. In their honor-shame culture, it's important to save face, right?
You do your best to protect the honor and reputation of others. So, Peter, probably thinking that he's doing Jesus a favor, he takes him aside, puts his arm around his shoulder, and he, I imagine him just whispering these concerns to him.
Far be it from you, Lord, this shall never happen to you. This is not a private question. It's not a confused statement. This is a, what in the world are you talking about, Jesus?
Stop speaking such nonsense. It's not even undesirable, but it is unthinkable for Peter to see his Messiah, his leader, to go and be killed.
[11:16] Though still with the honorific Lord, Peter rebukes Jesus, which, wow, amazing.

Which, I have to say, right, Peter has some guts guts to rebuke Jesus. It takes some guts to rebuke the man who he himself rebuked the wind and the waves in Matthew 8, who rebuked a demon to cast it out in Matthew 17.

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Peter rebuked that man. And it only seems like it's because Peter has some selective hearing, right? He completely skips over Jesus' incredible prediction of his resurrection.
Jesus didn't say that he would die and stay dead, but be raised on the third day. More than conquering the Romans, Jesus is predicting that he is about to conquer death.
That should floor Peter, but he seems to miss it altogether. But if Peter had paid attention to the glory that is coming after just his death, then maybe he could have avoided what was coming to him.
[12:34] I see Jesus listening to Peter with his body turned to the side, head leaning in, a posture of active listening, not one of speaking.

He lets Peter finish, then turns to him, looks him straight in the eye, and addresses him. And he doesn't hold back.
get behind me, Satan. Growing up, do you remember that feeling that you got when just one line from your mom, your dad, your teacher, whoever it is, just made your heart drop, right?
Oh, like, you're in it now. You done did it now. Now, your eyes widen, your pulse gets faster, your hands get sweaty.
Peter must be feeling all of that. And Peter is certainly not the main character of this passage, but again, I have to say, you have to appreciate that as the leader of this church, who is bestowed with the keys of the kingdom, his first act is to rebuke Jesus.
[13:49] Like, how wrong can you get? This is almost comical. Peter must have the Guinness world record of the fastest spiritual rise and fall in all of history.

And you know what? I'm so encouraged by his example. So many of us tend to think that there are tier lists in Christendom. You have the average Joe, normal churchgoer, the lowly Navy sailor, base rank.
Then on the next level up, you have the pastor. He's a special Christian. He's like the Navy SEAL.
And then if you really want to be overachieving, you move overseas and become a missionary. You become a super-duper elite Christian. They're SEAL Team 6. But the capital-A apostles, like Peter, Jesus' direct disciples, these are like the five-star fleet admiral.
These are the top dog, the head honchos. But when the gospels consistently portray even these capital-A apostles with egg on their face, it reminds me, as many have said, there are no great men of God, but only men of a great God.
[15:08] So we are not to put our hope in fallible men, but only in the God-man, Jesus Christ. And every time I feel like I mess up the communion or feel like I botched the sermon, I want to come back to this passage and remember that, hey, at least I never tried to rebuke Jesus like this.

But I digress. The word Satan, it's possible that it could be translated generally as enemy or adversary because that's what the word Satan ultimately means.
But I think Jesus is intentionally alluding to an earlier event in Matthew 4. It's been over a year since we preached on that passage, so just by way of reminder, there Satan tempts Jesus three times to get into sin and ultimately to abandon the cross.
But every time Jesus is holding on to promises and truths of God through scripture overcomes that temptation to fulfill all righteousness. In that chapter, in verse 10, Jesus remarks, be gone Satan.
In the original Greek, Jesus actually speaks the same exact words to Peter here, but to Peter, he includes two pivotal words that change the meaning from be gone to get behind me.
[16:38] You might be wondering, is Jesus harsh and punitive? The type of person that you need to walk around him with all care, with sensitivity, walk on eggshells because you might just get the stick.

It is a blunt rebuke. But at the end of the day, his command to Satan is one of complete rejection.
His command to Peter is a stark but merciful command to get back into his rightful place.
Not as a leader, but as a follower. And how often are we guilty of the same thing, of getting ahead of Jesus? How often do we try to dictate what Jesus can and cannot do?
For a lot of us, we're all just starring in our own movies. We are the director, the writer, the producer, and lead actor.
And everyone else, our friends, our family, our spouses, maybe even Jesus himself, they're all just supporting characters. They have one job.
[17:55] They are supposed to know and say their lines as they're written. That's it. And when they mess up, when they botch it, they get so frustrated. But the core of the Christian experience is that

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Jesus is the one directing the show.

That the camera is not centered on us, but on Jesus Christ himself. Don't forget your place, brothers and sisters, saying that my life is not supposed to, it's not going how it's supposed to go. I'm supposed to have this and that by now. I'm supposed to be at this life stage by now. No, Jesus knows the story that he is writing for you, brothers and sisters.
And I promise, according to his great love for you, it will be a glorious story. A glorious story with an ending that's far better than you could ever imagine, that you could write for yourself.
All you need to do is follow him. Don't get ahead of him. Because if you get ahead, you might be like Peter, who's supposed to be the rock on which the church is built, but in this grand reversal, he's called a hindrance.
[19:17] And that word hindrance is actually probably better translated as stumbling block, as the ESV footnote shows. That illuminates, I think, the intentional wordplay that Jesus is making, that the foundational rock is now become the stumbling block.

Not part of our common vernacular, but the term stumbling block was used back then to describe anything that would lead you to fall away from faithful obedience, to act contrary to what you knew was right.
Right? Offering a bribe, bringing a recovering alcoholic to a bar, that's all like putting a stumbling block in front of others. And we know in the garden of Gethsemane, the cross, it daunts Jesus.
He knows full well that he must drink the cup of wrath down to the dregs, not to leave a single drop to save sinners like you and me. But nonetheless, as an honest reflection of his heart, he prays that the cup might pass from him.
Because Jesus is truly God, he could not sin, but yet as truly human, he experienced real temptation. If there was any temptation with the greatest alluring power for Jesus, it was this, it was the pull to avoid the cross.
[20:45] To try to obey and glorify God without the suffering of the cross. In this way, Peter, who was supposed to be one of Jesus' closest disciples, one of his closest friends, sounds less like an ally, less like a friend, and more like an enemy as he echoes Satan's temptation to avoid, to abandon the cross.

And then Jesus highlights the ultimate reason that Peter has gotten it all wrong, verse 23. It's because he set his mind not on the things of God, but on the things of man.
On earth, in our economy, might makes right. Peter is thinking that Jesus would be the mighty Messiah to call down the legions of armies, of angels, to restore the geopolitical nation of Israel back to its former glory.
With Jesus, he's thinking that we have the muscle, we have the power, and we're going to get things done. Are we tempted to, to think like that, to follow that pattern?
In college, I told my parents that I wanted to devote my life to full-time ministry, to use my life for things of eternal consequence.
[22:15] In response, in a thinly veiled attempt to try to get me to live their version of the good life, they replied that I need earthly status. I need earthly influence to maximize my impact for the kingdom.

If I wanted to do God's work, I needed to progress in my career. I needed to stack my resume. I needed people to listen to me. That's the only way to get things done.
And I love my parents, but don't you see that this is just another example of setting your mind on the things of man, not on the things of God. God needs not our fancy degrees.
He does not need our sophisticated subject matter expertise, or an earthly platform to get his way done. John Piper probably, or opened probably his most famous sermon life.
I need to know a life. You don't have to know a lot of things for your life to make a lasting impact, a lasting difference in this world.
[23:29] You don't have to be smart, or good looking, or come from a good family. You just have to know a few basic, glorious, majestic, unchanging, eternal things, and be gripped by them, and be willing to lay down your life for them.

Jesus knows that it is not by gaining earthly power and influence that lets us transform the world. It is not by human strength, but by our weakness.
Then his strength is made perfect. That's precisely why Jesus then moves the focus off himself as the model of the cross to now a mandate of the cross.

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Moving on from speaking directly to Peter, now to all of his disciples, Jesus explains what it means to get behind him and to follow him. And it requires two things, to deny yourself and to carry your cross.
What does it mean to deny yourself? To deny is a verb that's typically used to signify in scripture, a complete dissociation from another, a severance of any connection and relationship.
[24:49] Only this time Jesus uses it to call us to be completely dissociated with ourselves. As an example, again, harping on Peter, he thrice denies knowing Jesus right before his crucifixion.

Why does he do this? It's because he's ultimately loyal, not to Jesus, but to himself. He knows that to be associated with Jesus could be in his own head.
And so he's just looking out for number one. The opposite of self-denial is self-preservation.
To be clear, self-preservation can be a good thing, right? I think seatbelts, annual physicals, saved emergency funds, they can all be true good blessings from God.
But when your selfish desires become at odds with God's desires, what wins out? When obedience becomes costly, who are you loyal to?
[26:02] When your coworkers ask you what you did over the weekend, do you eagerly share about your Sunday service, about the members meeting that you attended? Or do you waffle?

You say, uh, you know, the usual. When you know that God is calling you to rest from your work, do you deny yourself and you trust in him, not rely on your own power, your own strength?
Or do you keep convincing yourself that you have no limit? When you know that you're living in sin and feel the pull of the Holy Spirit prompting you to confess that to others, do you share honestly, risking your reputation?
Or do you keep silent to save face, to protect yourself? When another brother lives in unrepentant sin, do you go and lovingly, patiently confront that brother?
To win him back. Or you don't want to cause any problems. You don't want to ruffle any feathers. So you just let it slide. Every single one of these moments asks the same question.
[27:19] Will I deny myself or will I preserve myself? Will I identify with Christ and follow him or will I protect my own interests?

Then Jesus raises the stakes of what it means to follow him. That we must carry our crosses. Remember that the cross is not the tame domesticated symbol that it is today.
We slap it on our cars. We wear it around our necks. Plaster it on our buildings. Even in our common vernacular, it's not even taken seriously. We hear things like, Starbucks ran out of oat milk, so I needed to get almond.
My cross to carry, I guess. And that's how we speak of the cross today. But we can't forget that the cross was a symbol of the most excruciating death that one could die.
Just imagine for a moment being stripped naked, flogged, whipped so that your back is shredded, nailed to a wooden beam, and lifted up to asphyxiate to death.
[28:28] And not just the bloody cruelty of the cross, but the stigma of the social disgrace made the Jews shudder. Only the worst, the worst of all, the worst of the worst, they were the ones that deserved the cross.

The Jews considered it the ultimate shame if a family member, someone that they knew closely, was crucified. And remember from last week's passage, Jesus and his disciples, they are in Caesarea Philippi, which was a hub of Roman power.
A town literally named after Caesar, the Roman king. The Jews felt the authority of the Romans very palpably in that town. The threat of the Roman cross was very real to the disciples, especially in the place that they're in.
And that's the context Jesus is commanding his disciples to carry their cross. And of course, Jesus is not literally commanding every single one of his disciples to die, to literally be crucified.
But as commentator R.T. Francis said, discipleship is a life of at least potential martyrdom.
[29:50] Discipleship is a life of at least potential martyrdom. The disciples knew what Jesus was asking them to do, to be willing to pay the ultimate price.

And this command is not just for the spiritual overachievers and pastors and missionaries. But it is a requirement for any person who calls themselves a Christian.
Any person who has been baptized, who partakes of the Lord's Supper. Whether or not you are martyred, following Jesus costs you your life.
Verse 25, 26, make that clear. It says, for anyone who wants to save his life will lose it.

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But whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. You see, Jesus' double usage of the word life here, right? He speaks of two kinds of life.
[30:52] The physical, temporal life on earth. And then the spiritual, eternal, everlasting life, either in heaven or hell. Counter to literally everything that the world stands for, teaches.

He's teaching that we need to lose our lives to find them. This world often teaches us that we need to go on these journeys of self-discovery.
To find our authentic selves. By ordering your life around what feels good to you, what feels most true to you, then will you be able to make choices that are in alignment with who you truly are?
That's the kind of language that the world teaches. Only this goes against everything that Jesus is saying here. We need not discover but deny ourselves.
We don't need to ultimately learn everything about ourselves but lose ourselves for the sake of Christ. And focus on those key words. For my sake.
[31:57] Unbelievers, they can make sacrifices all the time by God's common grace. Performing acts of charity, giving to the poor, serving needy communities. But for whose sake?

Self-denial alone accomplishes nothing of everlasting value if it is separated from Jesus. For we know that without faith, it is impossible to please him.
And so the famous saying from C.T. Studd goes, Only one life will soon be passed. Only what is done for Christ will last.
So if you do lose your life, when others pass you at work because you privatize church, when others pass you financially because you faithfully give to the needy, when others pass you, you won't regret it.
For there is no greater tragedy in this life than to meet your maker on that last day, thinking that you lived the good life, that you've invested in the right things, only to find out that everything you thought to be true was a lie.
[33:23] Many climb the corporate ladder today only to find that the ladder is leaning against the wrong wall. Many run with all zeal in this rat race only to find that they run straight into the pits of hell.

This is the greatest tragedy of our time. It's happening all around us. And may we never grow numb to it.
For many will find that with all the comfort, success, riches, and power that the whole world has to offer, they're poor.
In Luke 12, Jesus tells this parable. The land of a rich man produced plentifully. And he thought to himself, what shall I do?
For I have nowhere to store my crops. And he said, I will do this. I will tear down my barns and build larger ones. And there I will store all my grain and my goods.
[34:24] And I will say to my soul, soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years. Relax, eat, drink, be merry. But God said to him, fool, this night your soul is required of you.

And the things that you have prepared, whose will they be? So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God. Oh, if you are not a believer in Jesus Christ, how I plead with you that you might not be like this poor, poor man.
How I plead with you that you might not be deceived in what truly the good life is. For the good life is not defined by riches and comfort, but by following Jesus with the cross on your back.
For the path of suffering is the path to glory. You see, the economy of the kingdom is completely backward, completely upside down from the way this world works.
In God's economy, the way down is actually the way up. That to die is actually to gain. That it is more blessed to give than to receive.
[35:38] This passage began with Jesus predicting his death, disgrace, shame, but it ends in glory.

For verse 27 says that in his future coming, Jesus will come with his angels in the glory of his father. The whole world will see the radiance of the sun and they will see something that they have never seen before and they will tremble at his sight.
And the disciples don't even have to wait until Jesus' second coming. For verse 28 clearly says that some standing here will behold Jesus in his kingdom, coming in his kingdom during their lifetime.
This is a highly debated verse and it's really hard, really difficult to understand if you believe that it refers to Jesus' second coming. Because we know that Jesus hasn't yet come and the disciples are

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long dead.
So I think the key to this verse is to see that verse 27 and verse 28 they're speaking about related but altogether separate events. For verse 28 Jesus is not coming to earth but he's coming into his kingdom into heaven.
[37:00] The verse is referring to Daniel 7 which I think I threw up on the screen where the son of man comes to the ancient of days and is seated in heaven and he receives dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him.

That's fulfilled by Jesus when he after his death and resurrection ascends to the Father to receive his kingdom. For it's after Jesus' death and resurrection right before his ascension that he says in Matthew 8 right before the Great Commission all authority in heaven and on earth is given to me. And there some of the disciples not including Judas will behold his coming into his kingdom as he ascends to heaven. It's also probable that this verse has an even more immediate secondary reference to as I think Jesus is referring to his transfiguration which comes immediately in the next passage.
In fact, all three of the synoptic gospels Matthew, Mark, Luke, they have the event of the transfiguration immediately after this statement. Even Luke who has often a wildly different order of events.
And I think that's intentional. And we'll speak more about this next week but there the inner circle, only some of the disciples, they witness Jesus' transfiguration into awesome splendor.
[38:30] See, the transfiguration is like a sneak peek, a preview of some sorts, the curtain rolled back just a little into the full resurrected glory of the son that he will receive when he ascends to his kingdom.

The point being, death and disgrace are coming soon, sure. But make no mistake about it, incredible, uncontainable glory is soon coming right after.
the path of suffering is the path to glory. And when he returns in glory, he will rightly judge the living and the dead to repay every man, every woman for what they have done in this life.
He will see if there are those who lived the truly good life. And all of us will have to give an account for our works. So the question of the hour, have you lived a good enough life?
Knowing Jesus' definition of what a good life is, to die to yourself, to live for God, to sacrifice your time, money, body, maybe even your own life, have you lived the good life?
[39:49] The undeniable truth is that none of us have. In fact, we can't.

Left to ourselves, every single one of us knows the countless ways that we have not denied but defended ourselves. We have not died to but indulged in sin.
We have not been devoted to Christ but have denounced him. Apart from Christ, we have not lived a good life. And we will have nothing to show for when Christ returns.
Like Peter, we feel the shame of watching Jesus carry his cross to Calvary alone when we should have been there following him. When Jesus collapses from exhaustion, it should have been us to catch the cross but embarrassingly some random stranger is there.
We should have been crucified next to Christ but instead we hear our mocking voice yell, crucify him, crucify him. But Jesus Christ, knowing full well our sin, our shortcomings in the greatest expression of his love, laid down his life for his friends on the cross.
[41:17] Even when he was the only one who truly lived a good life, he died as if he was the worst of criminals. And it was the greatest act of injustice in all of human history.

But Jesus willingly took the injustice. He took it upon himself so that he could satisfy God's justice on behalf of sinners. By his death, we are now washed clean of all our sin, all our selflessness, all our betrayals, and we are now united to him by faith eternally, interseparably.
It is that union we share with Christ that now enables us to say, just like Paul said, Galatians 2.20, I have been crucified with Christ.
It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. Those who have so often abandoned our crosses to save our own skin can legitimately say with full truth, I have been crucified already.
I have not abandoned my Lord, but I have followed him, I have died with him. And you see Galatians 2.20, it explains the inward spiritual reality of our death, our resurrection with Christ.
[42:47] And if that's true of you, by faith, your inward spiritual death will manifest itself, will show itself by your outward daily cross that you take up.

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And so friends, I want you to feel the weight of the cross, yes, but I don't want you to be crushed by it. The Christian life is all demanding, yes, but it is not impossible.
Not only because you are in Christ, you have already lived the good life in and through him, but now by his grace you are empowered, you have power from the Holy Spirit to live the good life yourselves.
And being a disciple of Christ is radical, it is extreme, but it doesn't mean that it will always look radical or extreme.
Consider Matthew 25, a passage that's closely connected to what Jesus is saying here. There, Christ returns with his angels to judge the living and the dead, language strikingly similar to this text.
[43:54] And how does he recognize his flock, his sheep, his people? It's not by grand displays of holiness, taking vows of poverty, moving overseas for missions, or becoming martyrs, but it's by simple, faithful, daily obedience.

A meal given to a stranger, a cup of water that's offered in his name, warm clothing provided to the needy. These are not miraculous acts.
They are ordinary acts done by faith in Jesus Christ. And I see that kind of faithfulness in you, week in, week out, regularly glorifying the Lord.
Some of you may follow Christ by entering full-time ministry, going overseas, maybe even being martyred for your faith.
Some of you may follow Christ by leading a quiet, orderly life, faithful obedience. But all of you will die to yourself and live for Christ.
[45:10] Whether through extraordinary sacrifice, or ordinary faithfulness, and probably a little bit of both, by your union with him, you are empowered to follow Christ by denying yourself, taking up your cross, staying loyal to him, even when it costs you.

And it will cost you, brothers and sisters, it will cost you something this very week. And so as you faithfully follow Christ and bear your cross, even when it costs you, remember that there is a crown of glory awaiting for you, that the path of suffering is the path to glory, and that the God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory in Christ after you have suffered for a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm, and steadfast.
Brothers and sisters, we follow him, denying ourselves, carrying our crosses to live onto eternal glory. Let's pray. Amen. Heavenly Father, we pray, though the cost of discipleship is great, we know that, Lord Jesus, it is the greatest privilege of our life to follow you.
Empower us by your spirit to have great faith, to jump onto the water when it feels scary, to have the faith to know that you will empower us to walk on water, and to die, to lose ourselves, to fight the impulse, to try to save ourselves, to try to hoard and grab everything that we can, but to let go and to trust you.
and know that when we lose, we win. And when we're passed up, you don't forget us.
[47:36] And that when we are faithful to you, even in the midst of suffering, we will be glorified with you, and we look forward to that, Lord Jesus. It's in your name we pray.

Amen. Amen.

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