

SESSION 2

OUR COMMITMENT TO CHRIST

THE POINT:
COMMIT YOUR WHOLE
LIFE IN TRUST AND
OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST.

MARK /// 10:13-22

MEMORY VERSE

¹³ People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ When Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the little children come to me. Don’t stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁵ **Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.**” ¹⁶ After taking them in his arms, he laid his hands on them and blessed them.

¹⁷ As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ¹⁸ “Why do you call me good?” Jesus asked him. “No one is good except God alone. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: Do not murder; do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not bear false witness; do not defraud; honor your father and mother.” ²⁰ He said to him, “Teacher, I have kept all these from my youth.”

²¹ Looking at him, Jesus loved him and said to him, “You lack one thing: Go, sell all you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” ²² But he was dismayed by this demand, and he went away grieving, because he had many possessions.

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KEYWORDS

a: Touch them (v. 13) – Jesus blessed them. This phrase’s use in this verse is intensified, conveying Jesus’ sincerity.

b: Inherit (v. 17) – Receive as an heir upon the passing of a previous holder. The inheritance received through Christ is not earned or deserved, but through a relationship.

HOW CAN WE SHOW TRUE COMMITMENT TO CHRIST?

The reality TV show *American Ninja Warrior*[®] has contestants tackling challenging and complex obstacle courses. These athletes have been in intense training for months. Their thinking has been totally focused on getting through those tough courses and finishing well. It's no small commitment.

We may not be vying for any kind of title, but our lives revolve around our commitments just the same. A quick look at a typical week will reveal our commitments and how committed we are to those commitments! Family, friends, a job, honing a new skill, practicing a hobby, and working out at the gym all call for a level of commitment. And all of them will face an "obstacle course" of challenges.

Our commitments reveal what we love. Our commitments also reveal *whom* we love.

In the Bible, we read about commitment, and specifically God's love for us. He is fully committed to us. The real question is how we respond to that commitment.

Trust Christ with Childlike Faith

// Mark 10:13-16

In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus gave us a clear picture of what commitment and obedience to Him looks like. While Jesus was teaching and healing, people brought their children to Him so He could touch and bless them. His disciples didn't like this and "rebuked them." The disciples probably thought Jesus was bothered by the children because He was busy teaching, healing, and building the kingdom of God. Jesus rebuked His disciples for thinking that way. Jesus made two statements.

1. "Let the little children come to me.

Don't stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." The kingdom of God belongs to people like those little children.

2. "Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

This must have been confusing for the disciples. People assumed that the most educated and knowledgeable in the things



of God would make it into His kingdom. Yet, Jesus said you must be like “little children” to enter His kingdom.

HOW DO YOU THINK THE PRESSURES OF LIFE HAVE STOLEN YOUR CHILDLIKE FAITH?

Most believers no longer have the childlike faith we had when we first came to Christ. We came to Christ in faith and trusted everything Jesus said, beginning with what He said about His love and forgiveness for us. We loved nothing in the world more than being with and pleasing our heavenly Father. Then we grew up, got busy with life, got distracted by things, and now God is no longer our priority.

That’s what Jesus is saying. Unless we come to God like a child we can’t enter the kingdom of God. Children aren’t caught up with the worries of the world but simply want to be with and please their Father. Entering God’s kingdom has nothing to do with position, power, education, or social status. Entering God’s kingdom has everything to do with the posture of our heart. We need to have the delighted, adoring posture of a child.

WHAT DO YOU THINK CHILDLIKE FAITH LOOKS LIKE?

Strive to Obey Christ // Mark 10:17-20

Immediately following the account of the little children, Mark related another event that helps us see what actual obedience to Christ looks like. These verses tell us about a man who wanted to know what he needed to do to inherit eternal life. This young man was trying to secure his way into heaven by doing good deeds. He wanted to know what was on the “get into heaven checklist.” You may have had the same question yourself: “What do I need to do to inherit eternal life?”

The problem comes when we think we can be good enough to gain a right standing with God. Donating to charity, giving money to the homeless, and volunteering our time, resources, and energy to good organizations are good things but shouldn’t be a part of our own “get into heaven checklist.”

WHY ARE OUR GOOD DEEDS NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO GET US INTO HEAVEN?

Jesus gave the man the list that he was seeking, making the point that he already knew what the law said:

- Do not murder.
- Do not commit adultery.
- Do not steal.



**DIGGING DEEPER
GOD IS GOOD**

Jesus was addressed by the rich, young man as, “Good teacher” (v. 17). In the Old Testament, the people of Israel didn’t normally use “good” to refer to other individuals. They generally used it when referring to God (1 Chron. 16:34; 2 Chron. 5:13; Ezra 3:11). Thus, Jesus’ question (v. 18) shouldn’t have surprised anyone who heard it. They believed that only God deserved the distinction of being called good. Being good meant much more than just doing some good things. The Greek word in this verse painted a picture of built-in, deeply-rooted goodness that would always come across as altogether genuine and pure.

If Jesus and God are one, why do you think Jesus said, “No one is good except God alone”?



- Do not lie.
- Honor your parents.

Jesus chose these commandments because He knew this Jewish man would know them. These commandments involve other people. The man was excited because in his outward behavior he was obedient. However, his actions showed partial commitment. We demonstrate our commitment as we strive for obedience. There should not be limits to our obedience. But Jesus was about to drop a bomb on this man's way of thinking.

WHY WASN'T THIS MAN'S OBEDIENCE GOOD ENOUGH?

Follow Christ Wholeheartedly

// Mark 10:21-22

Jesus laid a big demand on the man by telling him there's

one thing he lacked. He still loved money. Jesus told him to give all his money to the poor and follow Him.

Giving up our possessions is not the point of this passage of Scripture. There's no other place in the Gospels that Jesus told anyone to give up their possessions. In following Jesus, Zaccheus gave away half of all he owned to the poor and paid others four times what he owed them (Luke 19:1-10). In His parable of the minas, Jesus called us to use what we have wisely for His kingdom. So why did Jesus make this demand on this man? Jesus knew the man loved his possessions more than he loved Him. Money sat on the throne of this man's heart, not God. So Jesus looked past his surface obedience and went straight to the one thing the man loved more than anything.

We can't miss what Jesus did before His demand of the man. "Looking at him, Jesus loved him." The man wanted a rich, full life as well as eternal life and Jesus wanted both of those for him too. Jesus loved him and wanted the best for him. Jesus knew the way to get both of those desires was an "all in" commitment to follow Him.

The young man heard an answer to his question, but it was not what he wanted or expected. "He was dismayed by this demand, and he went away grieving, because he had many possessions." This man had said with his mouth he wanted eternal life, but he was not willing to do the one thing Jesus said he needed to do. He loved his money more than he loved Jesus. He didn't want a genuine relationship with Jesus.

THE POINT: COMMIT YOUR WHOLE LIFE IN TRUST AND OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST.

After the man walked away, Jesus remarked “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:25). Jesus, not people or things, must hold first place in our hearts in order to enter the kingdom of God. God wants us to be “all in.”

WHAT OBSTACLES KEEP SOME PEOPLE FROM TOTAL COMMITMENT TO CHRIST?

How can we be saved? Can we only be saved by first being perfectly committed to Jesus with all our hearts? No. We’re saved by grace through faith. We enter God’s kingdom like children who come to our Father, desperate for His love and presence. The evidence of our salvation are hearts fully committed to our heavenly Father we love. Committed hearts don’t give us entrance into the kingdom of God, but they prove we have already been given access to God’s kingdom. When we trust Christ and have received the love of God it proves we’re totally committed to God in return.

WHAT DOES A LIFE TOTALLY COMMITTED TO CHRIST LOOK LIKE?

DID YOU KNOW?

A life committed to Christ resembles the life of Sojourner Truth. Born into slavery in 1797 as Isabella Baumfree, Sojourner had several owners who were cruel to her. But she became a runaway at the age of 17 and received help from a family of Quakers who freed her. While living in the Quaker home, Sojourner said she received a vision from God. She said, “God revealed Himself to her, showing her that He was all over.” She later said, “Jesus loved me! I knowed it, I felt it.” Sojourner said God changed her name “because I was to travel up an’ down the land, showin’ the people their sins, an’ bein’ a sign unto them.” She said He gave her the last name “Truth” because she was to speak the truth to the people. Sojourner’s work as a writer, preacher, woman’s advocate, and abolitionist was sometimes met with harassment. But she did not allow that to keep her from doing what God called her to do. She died in 1883.¹⁰

IN WHAT WAYS DOES SOJOURNER’S LIFE HELP TO DEFINE A LIFE COMMITTED TO CHRIST?

LIVE IT

Remember when you were first saved? You wanted to be in His presence and do His will. You were excited about your relationship with Him. Sometimes as life happens, people and things become more important than God. This lesson has reminded us that God should be our first love. We must say “yes” to Him even when it is hard.

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- This week rekindle the childlike faith that drew you to love God. If you find that you have strayed from Him, recommit your heart to Him.
- If you’ve been trying to be good in order to gain a good standing with God, acknowledge the futility of it. Trust Christ and be obedient to His Word as a response to His grace in your life.

DAILY READINGS

1. THE GREATEST LOVE // 1 JOHN 3:1

Whitney Houston sang the “Greatest Love of All.” In the song, her greatest love of all was loving yourself. While loving yourself is important, God’s love, by far, is the greatest love in all creation. John reminded us that the greatest love story ever written is found in the pages of Scripture. In page after page, the heart of God is revealed toward His children. God loves us more than we can love ourselves.

His love should encourage us to commit ourselves to Christ and live as He did.

2. UNITED FOREVER // ROMANS 5:10

Why did Paul say we were God’s enemies? We were enemies of God because of the sin in our hearts. In that condition, we could not live in God’s presence (Ps. 5:4). Paul was reminding the Roman church and, ultimately us, that the love He had for us when we were His enemies caused Him to sacrifice His Son. Imagine the depth of that kind of love. Now we are eternally tied to God through the power of His Holy Spirit.

It is that power and love that unites us to God and on which we can draw for help every day of our lives.

3. AMAZING GRACE // ROMANS 5:20-21

Sometimes people on death row seek pardons from their state governor or the president of the U.S., because they proclaim their innocence. Usually, new evidence has been discovered that proves their clear innocence. We are reminded in Paul’s letter to the Romans, that though we are guilty, God’s grace pardons us from our sins. More amazingly, He invites us to live with Him forever in His kingdom. The Christian life isn’t a mistake-free

life, but it can be a guilt-free life. God understands when we mess up—and He loves us anyway.

God’s grace is amazing! Thank God for His saving and restoring grace!

4. REFRESHING WORD // PSALM 19:7-8

This Scripture describes God’s Word as perfect. His Word renews and restores our lives. Many books have been written to educate us. However, education is not wisdom and education without wisdom makes us dangerous. Wisdom brings experience, knowledge, and good judgment to life’s table. The best kind of wisdom is godly wisdom that comes from the Word of God and brings joy. How refreshing to receive joy and wisdom from God’s Word. Thank God for His refreshing Word!

Let us use it daily to guide our steps in wisdom and give us joy.

5. TRAINING RIGHT // 2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

I’ve taught my daughters how to sew by hand so they can mend their own clothes. One of my daughters repeatedly tries something different and her way results in misaligned seams. Her mistakes reveal my inadequacies. Although I’m a good seamstress, my instructions aren’t always perfect. However, God’s Word is perfect! Paul discloses that God’s Word is perfect for “teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness.” His Word prepares you for every good work to which He has called you. Therefore, you should not try to live life a different way. He has a perfect plan for you for which you will be trained through His Word. So, when you read the Word, apply it to your life.

Make the Bible your standard for everything that claims to be true.



leaves are falling, Christ is calling

TANYA R. WEST

“So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ” (Rom. 10:17).

Fall . . . a season made perfect by everything pumpkin spice, hayrides, and football! There is something wonderful about the crisp, cool autumn air, sweater weather, and gathering around a warm bonfire to make s’mores that brings out the fellowship in everyone. It is during those times when we can gather with friends to reminisce over days gone by and make plans for the future to come. It is also during this time when we can take a few minutes of our conversation to invite our friends to experience the same God who causes the leaves to change into magnificent hues of orange, gold, and red.

There are many fall activities that present opportunities to not only fellowship with others but to share our faith. For instance, many of us will take time to research, prepare, and purchase new grass seeds and flower bulbs this season to prepare for spring. We will weedeat and aerate our lawns to make sure that what we have purchased will take root. In the spring, we will enjoy the fruit and blooms of our labor when we see a beautiful harvest of lush green grass and multi-colored flowers. How amazing would it be if we took the opportunity to pull double duty and plant seeds for the kingdom as well this fall? Planting spiritual seeds can be as simple as inviting someone to a small group study, or just being willing to share a short and sweet testimony of what God has done recently in your life.

**Christ is
always opening
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Other ways we can plant these seeds is to use the familiar traditions of fall. For some, it is the time of pumpkin carving and cooking, which can also become an open door to a praise discussion. For others, it can be a faith-filled conversation on a scenic drive or hiking trail while taking in the autumn colors. In our home, and the homes of many others, football season is a very big deal! From Friday night lights for high school and Saturday afternoon college games to Sunday/Monday nights filled with NFL® highs and lows, our family breathes, sleeps, and eats football.

During this season, most of us are in constant contact with people as we serve in the capacity of host, team parents, or just simply cheering on the sidelines. There is something wonderful and warm about gathering with other families to cheer on our favorite players while trying new dips and fingerfoods. But what if we took it up a notch and invited our confused coworkers, or the doubting delivery person who isn't quite sure what they believe in? What if we reached out to the searching soldier next door during this season, to not only offer chips and salsa, but to offer Christ?

Tailgating at homecoming games or sharing our cooking secrets on how to make an award-winning batch of chili, while coming together to cheer for our favorite teams can lead to great conversations. We can weave in the telling of a special and personal encounter we have experienced of how God was able to season our lives with grace, love, and mercy.

Here is the thing, while we are busy moving from one season to the next, Christ is always opening doors along the way, showing and giving us opportunities to be His hands and feet in this world. The problem is not being able to see the windows of opportunity because they aren't the most conventional nor traditional ways we are used to. We serve a God who was never meant to be contained in a box, so it only makes sense that we should think outside of the box to reach those in need! Think about it: If the only place to hear about Jesus was in Sunday School, how many people would be left behind? The Scripture tells us that "faith comes from what is heard" (Rom. 10:17), which should challenge us to share our faith even in the least traditional settings. We have zero reservation about sharing our famous recipes for physical nourishment to those who are hungry and excited about our latest dish. Imagine what could happen if we took a few minutes to tell someone the recipe of how Christ nourishes our souls?

So as you pull out that cozy sweater and your favorite mug this year, consider bringing an acquaintance or two along to the next Bible study. Because knowing Him is much sweeter than the best pumpkin spice caramel latte fall can bring!

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