

## DISCIPLESHIP

### SPRING CLEANING

Luke 6:12-19 // Craig Smith

March 5, 2017

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**CRAIG:** Hey, Good morning.

**CONGREGATION:** Hey, Good morning.

**CRAIG:** Was the parking lot better this morning?

**CONGREGATION:** Yes. .

**CRAIG:** Yeah. So part of our making room strategy, we moved from 9:30 to 9:15, and that seems to have been a good improvement. The next stage of this is, actually something really exciting, we are launching a new worship venue here on the campus. It'll be downstairs in what we've been calling the Youth Center, which is a terrible name. Because there's nowhere in our culture that youth is used without basically meaning they're in trouble. Like, Youth Center says juvenile detention to me. Okay?

So, we're renaming it, we're calling it The Mill. We're doing some renovations down there. What we're going to be launching is as an alternative worship expression. So, it will be a video preaching, it'll be, not like watching TV. Video preaching is basically going to mean that there's going to be a full-size screen in the middle the stage and they tell me I'm going to be life size. I'm lobbying for just a little bit bigger. Can you add a couple inches? What can you do?

But actually, I mean, churches that have been working with this kind of thing, usually what happens is that the couples argue because one member the couple is going, "No this is live, there's really a person in there." And the other is going, "No, it's video I'm pretty sure." And they don't even pay attention to the message because they can't figure that one out. So, very different experience than just watching a TV, live worship.

The worship will be a little bit different, it'll be a little bit more of a coffee house alternative kind of a vibe. And so, if you're immediately attracted to that or maybe just the possibility of worshiping in a little bit smaller room, we would actually love to encourage you, not only to attend that but to join us in the launch team.

So, what we're looking for is about 75 people per service, so we're going to be doing it at 9:15 and 11:00. Looking for 75 people to kind of commit for 6 weeks, at least to help kind of get it off the ground, get it rolling with some energy. So, if that's something you're interested in. Two ways that you can let us know about that, you can go to the Mission Hills app which you get at your app store. And there's a place at the very front page to let us know, "I'd be willing to at least find out some more information about that." Or visit the Connection Counter, the Welcome Center on your way out and let them know, "Hey, I would be interested in that." And we'd love to get you plugged in.

The goal of that obviously is to free up some seats so that we can continue to minister the people that God continues to bring to us. We're just looking at some creative and innovative ways to do that.

So, welcome to our new mini-series. We're starting a new series today called Spring Cleaning. How many of you have a bad taste in your mouth from spring cleaning? Anybody, had a Saturday ruined at some point of your childhood or every year in your childhood where mom came in and said, "Hey, guess what today is?" And you knew it was never, "We're going to Elitches Day," right? "It's Spring cleaning day."

How many of you have foisted the same sort of horror upon your own children? Yeah. You got to do it though, don't you? Because the reality is, if you don't do it, you're going to be overrun, because clutter is unavoidable. You don't have to have owned house,



if you've even just lived in a house or a dorm room or just had a car that you've been in for more than a few days you recognize clutter just accumulates, right? It just happens naturally.

We, actually moved about a year and a half ago, and we had not really realized how much clutter had accumulated until we had to box it up. And we're boxing it up, and I was watching the boxes move out to the truck and they kept coming, they kept coming. And it was horrifying to realize that much stuff... and I did not think of myself as a hoarder, but as I watched the train of boxes I had to re-evaluate my view of myself.

But the reality is it just happens, we just accumulate stuff and the same thing happens in the church. The difference is, the church doesn't so much accumulate things that we have, as we accumulate things that we do. We accumulate activities, we accumulate programs, and hopefully, they're good activities, they're good programs. But the reality is, sometimes the sheer number of those good things that we do can cause us to lose sight of the core things that we have to do because we're a church.

And God tells us in His Word that there are really basically three things that the church exists to do. Everything else is optional, everything else is extra. Three things that we have to do though if we're going to call ourselves a church. Those things are, evangelism, discipleship, and worship.

So, for the next three weeks we're going to be pouring into one of those core things for each of the weeks. Really, just looking to get a clear biblical understanding of what that thing is and then talk a little bit about what does that look like to engage as individual believers or here as a church here in Mission Hills. But those are the three things that make us a church. Those are the three things that makes anybody a church, evangelism, discipleship, and worship.

And if you are part of a church, maybe you're visiting here today or you're joining us online and you realize, "You know what? My church doesn't do one of those things." I got bad news for you, you're not part of a church, because any church that doesn't do all three of those things isn't a church as God intended it to be.

And if you're here and you call this Mission Hills home and you get to a place where you realize we're not focusing on those three things, you should go somewhere else, because it doesn't matter what the sign out front says, any organization that's not doing evangelism, discipleship, and worship it's not a church. Because that's what God says is the reason the church exists.

So, we're going to be looking at each three of those things to make sure we understand what they are. Now we're going to look at them in a particular order because you have to start somewhere. The order that we're going to look at them has nothing to do with their importance. Each of those three things is equally important.

We're going to start this weekend with discipleship, but not because it's the most important or because it's the least important, just because you've got to start somewhere. The reality is those three things are equally important. It's a little bit like three legs in a three-legged stool. You can sit on a three legged stool, but you take one of those legs away, you can't sit on it anymore. You take one leg away from a three-legged stool, you don't have a stool, you have a conversation piece, you have clutter. You've got to have all three and all three equally important. So we're going to look at each of those things, we're going to start today with discipleship. So, if you got your bible, I'd love to have you turn with me to the Gospel of Luke Chapter 6.

Luke, of course, is one of the four Gospels, one of the four perspectives on Jesus that we have. And what is I love about Luke is that Luke is, he's kind of a word nut, he's really precise and specific about his word choices which is really useful as we try to get a handle on what this discipleship thing is.

Luke Probably, if he had experienced social media in the in first century or if he was around today. Luke would be that annoying friend who corrects all your posts, tells you, you know, you spelled something wrong or you're using, their, wrong. Anybody have



an annoying friend like that? How many of you are that annoying friend, to be honest?

Yeah, Luke would have been that guy because he's really precise, he's really proper, but the Holy Spirit uses that to really give us some insight into some concepts. And he uses words very particularly here in Luke Chapter 6, we're going to start at Verse 12. And I want you to notice his vocabulary.

“One of those days Jesus went out to the mountainside to pray, and He spent the night praying to God. When the morning came, He called his disciples to Him and He chose 12 of them whom He also designated Apostles. Simon, (whom He named Peter), His brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the zealot, Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot who became a traitor.”

Luke uses two important words there, disciples and apostles. And maybe the most important thing, at this point, to understand is that the 12 apostles were chosen out of... they were smaller subset of a larger group of people that he calls disciples. We're not going to spend a lot of our time on apostles today, but just so that we're on the same page, the word apostles means someone who is sent on a mission and it's a very specific kind of a mission.

And in this particular case, Jesus selected these 12 to be sent out into new territory sharing the gospel and really building churches where there hadn't been any gospel going before. But those 12 were chosen out of a larger group called the disciples. Now, he doesn't really tell us much about the disciples yet, just that, in some way they're attached to Jesus, some way, they're around him, they're following Jesus, but as he goes on we begin to get a little more insight into what makes a disciple a disciple.

Verse 17, “He went down with Him and He stood in a level place. A large crowd of His disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre in Sidon, who had come to hear Him and to be cured of their diseases.”

Luke introduces us to another term now, people. It's a little generic, but it's clear that he's distinguishing the crowd of disciples from the crowd of people, isn't it? There's something about the people that is different from the disciples or something that sets the disciples apart from the people. Now, he doesn't tell us exactly what it is that makes disciples, disciples, but he does tell something important about this people group. He tells us why they were there.

They were there because they were interested in what Jesus could provide. Did you catch that? He says they were there to hear Him and to be healed. They were there because they wanted what He had to offer in terms of teaching. They were there because they wanted what He had to offer in terms of healing.

But apparently there's something different about disciples. The disciples... again he doesn't tell us exactly what it is, but because the people are there because of what they want from Jesus, the disciples seem to be a group who are interested in something more than just what Jesus can provide. The disciples are interested in something more than just what Jesus can provide.

Now, don't misunderstand what I'm saying. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with wanting what Jesus offers, there's not. All of our relationships with Jesus begin because we want what He has to offer, and there's nothing wrong with that.

Jesus offers truth and we need it. We need hope, Jesus has it. We need salvation, Jesus purchased it on the cross. We need forgiveness, we need a relationship with God, Jesus offers all of those things. There is nothing wrong with going to Jesus, with following Jesus, because you want what He has to offer, there's nothing wrong with that. What I'm saying is that there is something about the disciples that goes the next step. Disciples are interested in more than just what Jesus offers. What is that?

If you flip over to Luke Chapter 9, we begin to see, I think, what it is that the disciples are involved in that's different than just the crowd of people, the crowd of followers. Luke 9:12, “Late in the afternoon the 12 came to Jesus and they said, “You need to



send the crowd away so that they can go to the surrounding villages in the countryside and get food and lodging, because we're in a remote place here." And He replied, "You give them something to eat." And they answered, "We've only have five loaves of bread and two fish, unless we go and buy food for all this crowd, which is about 5,000 men." He said to His disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about 50 each." And the disciples did so and everyone sat down.

Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up at heaven, He gave thanks and he broke them and then he gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people and they all ate and they were satisfied. And the disciples picked up 12 baskets full of broken pieces that were left over.

You notice Luke is continuing to use the same language, right? We've got the 12, we've got the apostles, subset of the group of the disciples. We've got the disciples, that crowd of disciples and then we've got the people again, right? And all three of those groups wanted what Jesus had to offer. All three of them are hungry, all three of them wanted food. It's not like the 12 came to Jesus and went, "You know what, we're fine. We're just really worried about these people." No, the disciples were hungry too, the apostles were hungry too. They all wanted what Jesus had to offer, and nothing wrong with that.

But did you notice that the disciples were engaged in something different than the rest of the crowd of people? They were joining Jesus in his work. Did you catch that? It was the disciples that Jesus said, I want you to go and have people organize themselves into groups of 50 and that's what the disciples did, they joined Jesus in his work.

It was the disciples that Jesus gave the food to and they distributed, they were joining Jesus in His work of distributing the food. It was the disciples who picked up the pieces that were left over. Disciples are joining Jesus work, that's what disciples do.

Disciples join Jesus in His mission, they join Jesus in His work. That's what makes a disciple. A disciple is somebody, not only who follows Jesus, but who begins to join Jesus in His mission in the world. That is the heart of discipleship, it's the essence of it.

It's not just the essence of biblical discipleship, it's really the essence of the word itself. The word disciple didn't originally have any kind of religious connotation. Originally when people talked about disciples they weren't talking about people who are engaged in some kind of spiritual pursuit, the word disciple just really meant apprentice. It meant somebody who attaches themselves to a master in order to learn to do what the master does. It's the same word that would have been used of Jesus in His early years. Jesus learned carpentry from His father Joseph, and they would have said Jesus is a disciple of Joseph, the carpenter. He's attached to his master, he's learning the skills, he's learning the work, he's learning to do what the Master does. That's what a disciple was. It's what a disciple is.

Now, there's an important difference between being a disciple of a carpenter and being a disciple of the savior, though, right? What Jesus does in the work that He invites us to join Him in isn't technical, It's not involved with a series of technique, it's not about, you know, mitering a joint together or sanding a pigeon dropper stain, that's technical stuff.

What Jesus does flows from who He is. This is an important point. What Jesus does, the work that Jesus is engaged in, the mission that Jesus is involved in, is an outworking of who Jesus is. And we cannot join Jesus in His work unless we are becoming like Him. You can't do Jesus-like work unless you're a Jesus-like man or woman.

And so to become like Jesus, so that we can join Him in His work requires transformation. It requires teaching. We need to be taught so that we understand who Jesus is and what He's about and what His mission is, what His desires are. That's teaching. But it also requires transformation. We have to become more like Jesus, He has to work on us from the inside out until we become like Him so that we can do the kind of work that He invites us to.

So, discipleship involves both training and transforming. But, at its core, discipleship is a very simple concept, discipleship is



the process of becoming a like Jesus so that we can join Him more effectively in His mission. That's it. It's almost disappointingly simple, isn't it?

I know we have this idea, I think sometimes in Christian circles, that discipleship is this almost, sort of, like, you know, other-worldly mystical sort of a thing, "Oh, that person is a... it's a disciple." And you expect him to start glowing or something, right? But at its core discipleship is not complex, it's the process of becoming like Jesus, why? So that we can join Him more effectively in His mission. That's discipleship.

And what I'm trying to do in this series, each of these weeks, is to look at one of these core things that the church is called to do, discipleship, evangelism, worship, and really kind of cut through the clutter. Push aside all the expectations and the other things that might have been built up around and go, let's just get down to the basics, let's get down to the core, the skeleton of what the Bible says, what the God's word says about each of these three things.

And when we peel all the layers away, what the Scripture says about discipleship is just this, it's just the process of becoming like Jesus so that we can join Jesus in His work. Two sides of the same coin. You can't become like Jesus and not join him in his work and you can't join Him in His work unless you're becoming like Him, but those two together is what we call discipleship. And the real question then is just, okay, how do we do that? How do we begin moving forward from where we are to where we're supposed to be? How do we move from what we are now more towards what Jesus wants us to be so that we can do what Jesus wants us to do?

And to do that I'm actually going to invite three of our staff to come up. Jerry is over here and Janet is coming from the back and Keith is...wow, that was cool. Coming in from all sides. Jerry, Janet, and Keith are all part of our discipleship ministries here. Jerry oversees care and Sunday schools, Janet oversees our women's ministries, Keith oversees our ministry environments as a whole. And I've invited them up here and we're going to just answer some questions that we've collected from the congregation and from the staff about the process of discipleship and what it looks like to engage in that process here. Again, the overarching idea is this very simple one, discipleship is the process of becoming more like Jesus so that we can join Him more effectively in His mission.

So, the first question we want to answer is this, if I'm a Christian, if I've come to Christ by faith, am I automatically a disciple? Is every Christian called the discipleship?

**JERRY:** And the answer to the question is the most frustrating of all answers, No and Yes. No, we do not automatically become disciples, but yes, we are called to be disciples. In fact we'll go so far as to say that if you are a Christian, one who belongs to Christ, that being a disciple is not an option. Romans 8:29 says that, "God has ordained that those who belong to the family of faith in Jesus Christ will be conformed to the image of the Savior."

And we understand that that is a process. It begins when I profess my faith in Christ, but it doesn't end until the day that I die. The root word of the word discipline is disciple. That should tell us something about what it means to be a disciple of Christ. It's hard work, it takes an investment of myself.

If you tell me that you just got accepted into Harvard, therefore you are a lawyer, I'm going to say, no, congratulations on getting accepted into Harvard, but nobody is standing in line waiting to pay you huge Harvard graduate fees to work for them.

Between now and then, there are classes to attend, cases to study, exams to pass, not to list of which is the Bar Exam. After that's complete, then we'll talk about you being a Harvard lawyer. And so it's not an option, it is a calling.

**PREACHER:** Fortunately, there's no bar exam in discipleship, so that they breathe deeply, but I love that. Yeah, it's not automatic, but it's also not optional. There's hard work through engaging because you can't follow Jesus without following Him on



mission. And again you can't do the mission that He calls you to follow Him into, without becoming like Him, so there's a lot of work involved in that. Not automatic, but not optional. Love it.

Is discipleship best done in a group? like Sunday Schools, life groups or is it best done one on one?

**JANET:** Well, here at Mission Hills we offer both of those. Primarily we do things more with groups just because of our numbers. There are some wonderful benefits to being a part of a group. First of all, you get to do life together, each person is growing more like Jesus in the group as you meet regularly and you're encouraging one another, you're kind of inspiring each other on to keep on keeping on. You can share some of the struggles you've had, you can encourage somebody else that's going through a struggle that God has already taught you through that.

So, it's a great way for accountability, and it's a wonderful way to big church like this to get to know a small group of people that you really connect with, so it's a win-win all way around.

**PREACHER:** And, as you saying, it's a little bit of both, two because you build one on one relationships out of those groups and so women's ministries, men's ministries, life groups, all those provide, both the group that can help people become more like Jesus but also relationships that facilitate that, that's fantastic.

All right, are there phases of discipleship? And how do I know what phase I'm in? And how do I move on to the next one?

**JERRY:** Really three questions and will take on one at a time. The Bible does not clearly define phases of discipleship if it did it'd make what we all do a lot easier and that is planning the ministry of the church. But while there are not phases, we need to understand where we are in the process, again, the end result, the standard God raises for us is that we will be conformed to the image of Christ. So, how do I know how I'm doing in that?

Well, I expose myself to the Word of God which is where I learn about Christ, I learn to love as He loves, I learn to serve as He serves, I learn to give as He gives. As I learn all of that, then I can see, with the help of the Holy Spirit, how far the gap is between where He is, where I am, where I need to be so that I can best be involved in His mission.

As far as how I advance, I'll just quote the late great Walt Disney who said, "The best way to start doing something is to stop talking about it and start doing it." That's good wisdom, it applies to a lot of areas of our lives. And let me just say that, while our discipleship process has a start, it does not have an end. I was inspired last Sunday when I was teaching Sunday school and a gentleman shared his testimony how that last year was transformational in his walk with Christ because, for the first time in his life, God got a hold of his attention and told him he needed to memorize more scripture.

Well, Jim Butler will turn 91 this year and I told him, "You inspire me. I only hope, if God gives me 90 years on this earth that I'm still studying God's word and I'm still excited about it." Because that's what discipleship looks like.

**PREACHER:** So none of us are going to get there, on this side of eternity. We're all in the place and we need to be moving forward to whatever that next stage that God calls us to and the best way to do that is to take a step in that direction. Is there right way to do discipleship? What do you think? You're afraid to answer, aren't you? Honestly, the answer is, probably not. Just because it's about character formation, it's about transformation and we can't run people through mills. There are effective ways of doing discipleship and probably ineffective, but a lot of it has to do with culture and context.

Women are disciplined in slightly different ways and men are disciplined in their particular effective ways. What works well on a college campus doesn't necessarily work well in a suburban church. But there are certain elements, I think, that are always going to be common in a useful discipleship program or model. One of the things you're always go to have in a useful discipleship model is a clear understanding of the end result. We've got to begin with the end in mind. As Jerry was saying, we begin with



understanding who Jesus is and what His mission is and we're moving in that direction. So that gives us, sort of, our end goal. You go to begin with that.

I think a second thing is that a useful discipleship model usually can identify at least some key stages along the way. For instance, I would say one key stage is lost and then found. That's a big step in the discipleship process, right? People who don't know Jesus and then people who do know Jesus. I think from there you maybe move to the growing stage.

And then, I think, a third element that all useful discipleship programs have is they also have concrete steps to move us along the path. And, so, I mean, how do you move from being lost to found? Where you hear the gospel. Which means that we need to be sharing the Gospel, that's how you move people. We do evangelism. How do you move from being found to growing? Well, we help you get established, we teach you what you need to know about scripture and about the Gospel that maybe you've accepted but you don't fully understand. So there's, sort of, that, you know, embracing stage.

And so any discipleship model has that end goal, it has understanding of, you know, at least some of the distinct phases, and then how we move people along and then finally, it cultivates relationships that facilitate the process. Because this transformation it just doesn't happen in a room, you don't go into your room for two years with a Bible and you end up coming out like Jesus.

You've got to work stuff into your life and that happens in relationship, it happens as we have people that hold us accountable, people who challenge us, and move us along in a praying force and so any good discipleship model, as Janet was saying, will involve building relationships that facilitate that process. Are discipleship and mentoring, synonymous terms?

**KEITH:** The answer is No. They're very similar, but they're not synonymous. Mentoring really is about improving yourself and discipleship is about dying to yourself. So just like the crowds, mentoring is really about, what can I get? What needs can I have met? Whereas discipleship goes much further than that, and it's, how can I join in Jesus's mission? How can I become more like Christ?

**PREACHER:** And we know the concept of mentoring, kind of is coaching somebody along can be a tool to discipleship, right? But it has a very different goal than, as the world talks about mentoring because mentoring in the world is, how to be better at your job, how to be a better person, right? Whereas discipleship is how to be a different person, it's how to be more like Jesus.

Some of the techniques can help you move in that direction, but they've got fundamentally different goals, absolutely. Does discipleship influence more than just my spiritual life and activities?

**JANET:** Absolutely. Let's just picture your life as a wheel, and each spoke represent something on your wheel, marriage, parenting, your work, school, all those different things. Some people think that your spiritual activities or your relationship with Jesus is just one spoke, but in reality, Jesus is the center, He is the hub, He is the core and out of that flows relationships. And how we grow in Christ affects our marriages, and parenting, and our workplace, and friendships, and all those things, so Jesus is really the center of all that we do.

**PREACHER:** Yeah, we're good at compartmentalizing, aren't we? You know, we've got a spiritual life, we've got a work life, we've got a family life, but the reality is, we're the same people in all those things. And discipleship is about growing as the people that God's called us to be, to be more like Jesus, we engage in His mission and that mission plays out in our family, and it plays out in our work, and it plays out in all of those spokes.

Yeah, I love that idea that we're spiritual people and so discipleship is about the core, but then moves out into all of those spokes, love that. How do you know you're doing it right? Can you measure progress and discipleship?



**KEITH:** So there are certain things that we can measure, prayer is one of those. I'm I engaged in prayer? Do I pray on a regular basis? Is prayer just a part of my life? Do I pray without ceasing every day? Do I get involved in the prayer ministries that are here in the church when we have congregational prayer moments? Next one is scripture engagement. Are you Bible-driven? Do you go to the word daily? Is it part of your life? Are you memorizing scripture?

The next one is being present. Do you make coming to church a priority? Is it something that when you miss church that you regret having not been here? Do you seek to be here all the time?

The next one is acts of service. I'm I serving here in the church? I'm I serving in the community with one of our local partners or with the Life Center? Are you considering going overseas on a short-term mission? What are you doing to serve?

The next one is investment in others. Do I know my neighbors? Do I care about their salvation? What about my coworkers? What am I doing to engage with others so that they can know Christ?

Then the last one is worship through generosity. Are you giving? Is giving a part of your life? Do you give on a regular basis? And if you give on a regular basis, have you considered to advance in that to give a percentage of your income? Are you constantly seeking to find more ways that you can give? So, is generosity just overflowing from you? So, those are some ways that we can measure.

**PREACHER:** The nice thing about this is even when there is no specific numbers attached to them, I mean, we can't talk about, you know, I'm 27% Bible-driven, right? I'm 17% interested in others, but we can tell whether or not we're moving, right? I can tell, I'm more interested in my neighbors now than I was two years ago? Am I spending more time in Scripture? Has scripture more informed my thinking now than it did six months ago?

And some of them do have concrete numbers, right? And I remember being told years ago, when I found this is absolutely true, you know, my checkbook and my day timer are great indicators of my relationship with Christ, you know, so we can actually look at those. Nobody has a checkbook anymore, I know, right but your bank statement, right?

You can go online and first bank will tell you how your discipleship process is going because you can see about how your money's being spent and your day timer tells you how your time is being spent. So, yeah, even when you don't have numbers, we can still tell, I'm moving forward? And that's powerful stuff.

What's available at Mission Hills to help me pursue discipleship? So let's say that you're convinced that discipleship is not optional nor is it automatic, so we need to move forward. How do I do that? As Jerry said, how do we stop talking about discipleship and actually start doing discipleship?

How do I move forward in becoming more like Jesus so that I can join Him more effectively and in His mission? Well, one of the best places today that we brought all of the options together at Mission Hills is just [missionhills.org/connect](http://missionhills.org/connect). We have a lot of different ways that you can plug into ministries that are designed to help you move further into that relationship with Jesus. Move forward towards being like Him so that you can act like Him. And all of them are collected on this website, so we try to bring them together. But we have women's ministries, we have men's ministries of all different varieties.

There are life groups, we'd love to have you connect with a life group. There are service opportunities, in fact. if you replace the word connect at the end with volunteer, you'll see lots of opportunities to step into serving as Keith was talking about. That's another one of those measurements. So go to the website and take a look at those and pick one of them and get involved in it.

If you're the kind of person who knows that you're going to forget to do that, how many of you is that you? You're not? A few of



you are interesting. Stop by the Welcome Center on the way out and say, “Hey, I’m interested in finding a group to get connected with, a Bible study to get connected with, or I’m interested in serving.” We’ve got lots of opportunity to serve. And they can talk to you about all this back at the Welcome Center, you can do it on the church app, you can do it at the website, but the key thing is to find one and do it.

Discipleship doesn’t happen without effort. But Jesus is beckoning us on, He’s saying, I’ve got great things in store for you, but stuff has to happen in you. So move forward, just ask the Lord right now. And I’m going to pray in a second and I will encourage you, as I’m praying, to simply ask the Lord to point you in the direction of a one step that you can take this week to move further down this road. Let’s ask Him for that.

Jesus, we just give you thanks. It’s an astounding thing that You loved us at all. In spite of the fact that we are not like You, You loved us. Jesus, You came, You died for us, You took our sins upon yourself, You rose from the dead, and You invited us into new life with You. But Lord, You didn’t just invite us into new life with You, You invite us into a transforming relationship where we can be truly changed from the inside out.

We can become like You and in addition to just that incredible privilege of being offered the opportunity to become like You, You give us the opportunity to join with You in Your mission. To be part of things that are eternally significant. And so Lord, we just ask that You would speak in each heart right now. And You’d convict each one of us about some of those areas that Keith shared, that we go, “Yeah, I know I can grow in that.”

And convict us of concrete steps that we’re going to take to move forward in that. Maybe it’s joining a bible study, or a life group, or a men’s ministry group. Maybe it’s stepping into volunteering for the upcoming Easter services or for kids ministry or for so many different things.

Maybe it’s stepping into freeing up a seat here and joining the Mill Launch team. But Lord, in all of those things what we ask is that You convict us about what it means for us to take a step forward so that we can become more like You. So that we can join You more effectively in Your mission. Thank you for allowing us to be part of this. Lord give us the courage to move into it, in Jesus name Amen.

