

Longing to Mimic The Rabbi Pt3!

Overview

Whoever may be joining us even now, from hither and yawn. We trust that our thoughts this Morning, the things that you hear and observe will be a source of blessing to you and be encouraged as young people all over the world are experiencing a renewal. Many of them have never known anything about the Lord and suddenly they have an intimate relationship with Him. It's happening by the thousands sweeping across America and I'm not hearing about a whole lot in our own country as yet, but the sure is God made, little green apples. It's going to happen in our country as well in my prayers. Do it right here, Lord. Just start it right here and I can tell you it's broken out in the Philippines. It's broken out in Uganda and most likely it's hard to keep up but it's probably spreading literally all over the world.

There's a wonderful move of God and it's among teenagers. It's among young people and why would young people be reaching out and trying searching for God? Because us adults have messed it up. We've messed up the world. We've confused them about their sexuality. We've confused them about what's right, about what's wrong. What used to be good is now called horrible. What was horrible is now called good. If you're white, you're a supremacist. It's just and now the world is preparing for the Third World War. Young people are filled with anxiety and fear. Thank God they're turning towards the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thank God for that. I'm so glad that you're here with us this morning and I trust and pray that what I'm about to share with you this morning will be a source of blessing. There was a saying back in the day, Jesus day, that you were encouraged to take the yoke of the rabbis. Rabbis, just another word for teacher, take the yoke of the rabbi. Then there was another saying with regards to the followers of the rabbis. The rabbis would assemble disciples. They would assemble followers. They would choose the followers. You couldn't just be a student of a rabbi. You had to be selected. You had to be chosen. And so there used to be a saying that may the dust of the rabbis' sandals rest upon your person.

The simple concept is may you walk so close. May you become such a close study of the rabbi that even the dust from his feet lands upon you. So why would anyone think that they needed to be so close to the rabbi in such a way? Because to be a rabbi, to be a teacher was the highest calling in the country. It was the highest calling in the culture. And to be a rabbi was just absolutely the top. It gave you great authority. Authority over people. And the calling of the rabbis, as they understood it, was to interpret the Word of God in such a way as it would call Israel to fall upon their knees and experience that which we're hearing about happening in the universities all over the world and among churches to seek the face of the Lord.

Because you see, the presence of the Lord had abandoned Israel. They had had a wonderful time when God was in such a beautiful way among them. But the Lord had withdrawn his presence. They were overrun by enemies. And it was at this time of Jesus appearing that they were under the fist and the authority of the Romans. And to Israel, this was a clear sign that they'd been abandoned by the Lord. He had taken them to this place called Israel, the Promised Land. And it promised to look after them.

Obviously, something's gone wrong. And so the rabbi's responsibility, therefore, was to teach the people how to respond, how to get right with God. And that happened in a couple of different ways. One way was that the rabbi in the synagogue would stand and he would teach directly out of the Bible. In fact, he wouldn't teach. He would read out of the Bible. Then he would vacate that particular stance as he stood and read the Word of God. He would step aside and sit on the chair called the seat of Moses. And in the seat of Moses, he would interpret for the people what he just read to them. That's not a whole lot different than what's happening here, right here this morning. I'm going to read to you the Word of God.

And then I'm going to interpret it for you. I'm going to interpret what I see in the Word of God. So things haven't changed a whole lot. What's really important is the one who gets to do the interpreting or the teaching. Blessed is the one who reads the Word of God. But another blessing we would pray upon the one who would interpret and say, this is my understanding of what the Word of God is implying to us. So it's really important, if you claim to be a teacher, that you better do so in a humble way. And the apostles in the New Testament had much to say about that. In fact, one of the authors in the New Testament said, don't seek after to be a teacher.

In other words, it's such a role that you want not to grasp for it and wanting to get ahold of that, but humbly walk in the ways of the Lord. So it's interesting, as I've shared with you here to for, and if you weren't here along the way, the whole process of learning the Word of God began when you were a youngster, and at the age of five you'd be taken to the synagogue. There in the synagogue would be a teacher assigned to teach in that synagogue. So it was a synagogue school. The teacher was called a rabbi. Anyone who had authority to teach you was called a rabbi. So you had rabbis that would have a very simplistic order in that they would teach the children who would come to the church.

They would read the Word of God by time to the assembly of the congregation, and then they would sit in the seat of Moses and they would do some teaching out of it. And so what would happen is that these rabbis in their occupation and in their position of interpreting what the Word of God said, interpretations would vary from rabbi to rabbi. And so when a rabbi would establish, this is what I believe the Word of God is telling us that we must do, he would interpret it in a certain fashion, and then he would come down on the people, rail on them at times, and say, this is what you must do. And it became known as the yoke of the rabbi, the burden of the rabbi.

The oxen would have a wooden yoke around its neck, and that was the way in which it bore the burden. So the responsibility of the rabbi was to place upon you the burden so that somehow the kingdom of God would be restored. You'll recall that in the ministry of Jesus, many got excited



about him being the potential Messiah, even the disciples themselves, obviously, all through the three years that they spent with him, they were consistently anticipating that he was the chief rabbi and that he was going to call the attention of the people to respond to the Lord in such a way that they were going to rise up and defeat the Romans. Acts chapter 1, Jesus said, Terry and Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high when you receive the promise of the Father. The disciples' immediate response was, yippee, now we're going to restore the kingdom. This was always in their minds. This was the rabbi that was teaching us the Word in the right way God is going to show up.

They missed completely where Jesus said, it's not for you to know the times or the days, the seasons. It's entirely up to the Lord. He didn't say, God is not going to restore the kingdom of Israel. He said, it's not happening now and that's not your responsibility. He'd been teaching them about the kingdom of God is not meat. It's not food. It's not an organization. It's none of these things. The kingdom of God is a spiritual dynamic that's to be birthed in every heart. And when they said to them, Rabbi, teacher, teach us how to pray. He taught them, our Father who art in heaven, thy kingdom come. That was the first request. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come. That was the very first. He said, go ahead and pray that prayer. It's a unique thing that you would go to school from the age of five to the age of 12. And in that time, you would learn Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy and you'd learn it so very well. If you were a very, very studious student, you could be invited to stay on and study further through your teenage years up until the age of 18. When you graduated at the age of 12, you would have the privilege, if you're a boy, of going up to Passover, to the Passover feast and participating in it. It was like a graduation exercise. Then if you chose to go on in your studies, you would remain under the teaching of the Rabbi.

And during that time, if you were really keen on rising up even higher in your learning and in your commitment to the Lord, you would keep your eyes and your ears open for a Rabbi that you could believe in and that you would choose to walk so close to him that the dust of his sandals would come upon your very person. So to be a disciple, that's what we need to organize right now. When Jesus invited the fishermen to now come along and be his disciples, he was inviting them to come and imitate him, absolutely becoming clones of Jesus. To learn how he prayed, what food he ate, when he ate it, how he managed himself as a minister among the people and the desire of every disciple in following the Rabbi, the desire would be to be just exactly like the Rabbi. But you didn't get to choose.

You'd be looking for a Rabbi that you'd like to follow and then you'd do everything that you know how to try and impress that Rabbi. So you'd be kind of like me, me, me. And if he chose you, it was incredible because if he chose you, he was saying, I believe in you. I've watched you. I've watched your studious approach. I've seen how you love the Word of God, that you consider the Word of God to be like honey. So I'm going to let you come and let you become just like me so that you will be my son and you will bear other sons and somehow or other. We are going to be responsible to restore the kingdom. So to be chosen by a Rabbi to follow was an incredible opportunity. But you'd never be invited to do so had you bailed out of school at any age. If you decided not to go on your 13, your 14 years, your 15th year, you would never qualify. So interesting that the disciples that Jesus chose to follow him, we don't see any record anywhere that any of them had gone on to study under Rabbi after the 12th year. In fact, it is very much concluded, very much concluded by those who study the Word of God, that the oldest among the disciples was Peter who was married. The rest of the disciples were somewhere around 15, 16 years of age. If they were endeavoring to qualify as disciples, they still would have been in school. But no, they had gone to follow the skills of their daddy. So the fact that Jesus would choose them is just so out of the ordinary. It's absolutely incredible. It says in Luke 9, he called the 12 together and he gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases. Now, this was, for their minds, I just have to kind of, I have to say this as loud and as clearly as I possibly can. This was huge.

No Rabbi in all of Israel had that kind of spiritual authority, only Jesus. Anybody who was 15, 16 years of age who was following the sandals of the Rabbi wasn't going to be granted anything. He had to stir the potatoes. He had to wash the Rabbi's clothing. He had to prepare the Rabbi's breakfast. He was a servant of the lowest degree. He had to learn the works of the Rabbi. Never did the Rabbi ever make any promises to him. But here Jesus, talking to these 15, 16 year olds, how old were these kids that went into the lime ridge mall this past week and didn't God use them? We've always thought of people doing things like that as being spiritual giants. The spiritual giants are among us folks because God chooses his disciples. Better say amen or something soon.

So he called them together and he gave them power. He gave them authority over all demons and to cure diseases. And he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God, not the kingdom of Israel. He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. And he said to them, take nothing for your journey, not a staff, not a bag, don't take bread, don't take money, and don't have two coats. And whatever house you enter, stay there and from there, move on. And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town, shake the dust off from your feet as a testimony against them. And they departed and they went through the villages.

These young fellows, these teenagers went through the villages preaching the gospel and healing people as they went. Now what they were doing when they were functioning in this manner was they were trying to mimic, imitate what Jesus did. This was the role and the calling of a disciple. Be just like your teacher. Be as much like him as you possibly can. Become his clone and care for the sick, care for the needy, care for the poor, just like he does. When you speak the word of God and you teach the word of God, you're to teach it just like he did. As you learn from him walking the streets, walking the highways, they were on a continuous camping trip. They probably stepped intensely along the way. How did they eat? How did they manage? People would offer gifts to them because the rabbi is here and people would open up their homes, open up their purses and invite them in for a meal. So that's how you would exist.

That's why Jesus said, don't carry bread, don't do this, depend upon the caring of the people. If the people don't care, you move on. And so here these men were endeavoring to imitate Jesus. It's interesting that the apostle Paul said, I want you to be imitators of me, just like I'm an imitator of Christ. So the apostle Paul considered his calling 6 to be a disciple of Jesus. What did that mean? It was Paul's desire to be exactly just like Jesus. Years ago, I learned a song. It was a chorus in our churches and it troubled me at times. And there came a point as a pastor, I



didn't want to lead in this song. It went like this.

To be like Jesus, to be like Jesus, all I ask is to be like Him, all through life's journey from here to glory, all I ask is to be like Him. What occurred to me is, well, that's a simple letter request. I want to be just like Jesus. That's all I ask, Lord. Not asking for a mansion on the hilltop, not asking for a brand new car, an expensive trip vacation in a while. I just want something really pure and simple. I just want to be like Jesus. It really occurred to me, are you serious? But then when I delve into the Word of God and I dig deeper and deeper, it occurs to me. That's exactly what our prayer ought to be, that as disciples of Jesus, there's only one thing I want from you, Lord. I just want to be like Jesus. I want to be a true disciple of the Lord.

So here are these young people this last week, went into them all, just down the road a lesson an hour away, and they acted out what Jesus had been doing. They acted out what they felt they were being led to do by the Holy Spirit. They were mimicking Jesus. They went into the highways and the byways. Highways and byways now have soft music traveling. As you're walking down the highway, it's all paved. There's glass windows on either side. Oh, there's a shoe store ladies. There's purses to match. That's the highways and the byways for these young people. Now, you can go out on the streets if you want and try to find somebody, but why go out in the bitter cold?

Go to the mall. You'll find somebody sitting on a bench there. You could sit down and engage them in the things of the Lord. My son told me just the other evening, he said, Dad, part of my responsibility is studying at this seminary. The kids in his 50 years, he's pastored for years. He gave all that up. He's gone back to learn and he studied Hebrew and Greek and all this stuff. I'm thinking my brain hurts just hearing about it. But he said one of his responsibilities is he has to go out onto the streets. He has to go somewhere and encounter somebody that he's never met before. Somebody, he doesn't recognize your face. It has to be a brand new person.

You've got to go and you've got to share your faith with them and you've got to write an essay on how it went. What day did you go? What time did you go? And if you can't do this, you don't write as a pastor. If you can't do this, why are you wasting your time here at this seminary? I want to go on record right now as telling you this, that he has learned at the Baptist seminary that the most powerful evangelical movement in the world is the Pentecostals. If you want to accomplish something in missions, you've got to get the baptism of the Holy Ghost because those Pentecostals are outdoing us. They're running like rabbits. They're doing the work of God. But beloved, I would just want to come forth right now and acknowledge something that those 7 people are not aware of.

There was a census taken a couple of years ago within our denomination, within our movement. 65% of our churches in Canada in that 12 month period had seen not one person give their life to Christ. So the district superintendent, I could get in trouble for all this, it's going over over the internet, but the district superintendent got up in a meeting, I was there. And he, he, he made this statement, I'm paraphrasing as best as I can, but he said, I'm really disturbed. I'm really troubled that our churches couldn't even lead one person to Christ in the process of a year. I sat there biting my tongue when the meeting was over and everyone had left the building. I made sure that I was in his way. As he came up the aisle, I stopped on my call by my first name. I've known him since he was a youth pastor younger than even myself. I said, I want to talk to you, brother,



about something. I said, you made an accusation today that the reason that people aren't getting saved in our denomination is the congregation. I said, tell me, sir, the pastors of those congregations, when the statistics are not one person got saved through any fashion in that church.

That means the pastor didn't lead somebody to Christ. That means he, he didn't go to a funeral and find somebody who needed Jesus. It means he never went into a hospital and witnessed to somebody about the need of Christ. It means he sat in his office and made up a fancy church bulletin, but never went into the parks and found a lonely person. It means that the pastors are not leading people to Christ. I said, what's going on in our denomination? He didn't like it. He turned us back on me and walked away. But this is the absolute truth. Jesus gave us the great commission. Go and preach the gospel and give them the good news.

And I'm so excited that a bunch of Methodist kids are falling on their faces before God, and they want to do something for Jesus. God, bring it on. Use the Methodist. Use the Baptist. If we're too busy with fog lights and fancy lighting, God, use somebody to go out there and win the world for Jesus. Amen. Come on now. That would preach in a Baptist church. Hello? And I might lose my credentials now. You know, like everywhere in our country, you're not allowed to speak your mind, you're not allowed to speak your mind about any topic. And it's time for us as a movement to wake up. And I'm so glad for you people. I'm so glad for you what you've been responding to recently.

It's so exciting. We went out into the streets there two weeks ago and prayed with people on the streets. We should give an opportunity for people to tell us what their experience was. These people actually prayed with people on the streets. They engage them. It's not hard to share your faith with people who need to know the Lord. Now I need to finish up. I can't, my eyes are really, it's almost 12. Okay. I better bring this to a conclusion as best I can. May you walk so close to Jesus. Well, the wording was, may you walk so close to the rabbi, bearing his yoke. May you walk so close to him that the very dust from his sandals kick up on you. That would mean you got extra close. And then you're breathing down the back of his neck. It wasn't suggesting that you carry on like that, but it meant, of course, it's a very simple concept. Walk closely. Get to know him as best as you can because he's counting on you to carry his message and his interpretation so that God would be honored.

So when Jesus talked to these, basically illiterate men who were fishermen and said, I want you to follow me. It must have just absolutely unsettled them. Did they know who this man was? Well, yeah, I've been kind of digging around in the gospels and I'm seeing some things that I read before and I didn't stop long enough and pitch my tent on some of those little spots. It says before he ever called on them, it says that he was becoming famous, that everybody was talking about him everywhere, that he was ministering the Word of God. He was healing people. Did the disciples hear? These men that were not yet disciples, had they heard about him before he came along the shore of Galilee? Yes, they did. So did they have this secret little desire in the heart?

Oh, to be one of his disciples? Not a chance. You're going to win the lottery before you have that kind of an opportunity. It ain't going to happen, Bob. But as Jesus came along and he stopped



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and you looked at them, they recognized him, of course. And then he said these riveting words. Come on, guys, I want you to be my disciples. I want you to take my yoke. They heard about his teaching. They heard people say, we've never heard anybody unfold the Word of God like this. And now this teacher says, and I want to impart it to you in such a way that you can share it with others. So they're so excited to do such a thing. And their dad suddenly was left with the fishing nets and with the boats.

These guys walked away from them and Herod. They walked away from everything to follow the Master, Jesus. And from that day then they had a desire. They had a desire. Was it a spiritual desire? Depends on how you want to define spirituality. It was, you know, like every parent hopes that their child excels in some role here in this life, every parent in Israel hoped that their child could succeed also. So every child should also desire to succeed. So when these disciples decided to follow Jesus, was it a spiritual dynamic where they moved, where they deeply touched? I would suggest, no, they're just excited about this icon. And they decided to follow him. But he was saying, I want you to walk very closely with me. So they did have that in their minds. I need to walk like him. I need to talk like him. I need to pray like him.

I need relationships just like he does. Wait, wait, wait. One of them said, Jesus, I'm going to do, I'm going to pair it. I'm going to put it together in a different way. Forgive me. This isn't exactly what it says, but this is what's implied. A disciple said, Jesus, you have a wonderful relationship with the Father. You talk about your relationship with the Father day and night, every time, every time. Like you're talking about having a relationship with the Father. If I'm going to be just like you, if I'm going to be an imitator of you, then I need some kind of relationship with the Father. Otherwise, I'm going to fail. 9 So Jesus, show us the Father. Introduce us to the Father.

Help us to get to know him. How can I be a true follower of you? How can I be a true disciple of you if I can't follow through in that mode? And Jesus smiled and said, have I been with you for so long? You don't know me? He that has seen me has seen the Father. I just want to say that they knew that they were supposed to become imitators of Christ, imitators. So I'll bring you to this one little nugget, and I confess to you, I got this from another preacher. I think his name is Bell. It doesn't matter. It's just this little nugget that I picked up from him because he was messing with this concept. And he said, what about the time that Peter almost drowned? What was that all about? Do you remember that? What motivated Peter to say, Jesus, if that's you, give me permission to jump out of this boat and walk on the water?

What was in Peter's mind? I'm supposed to walk so close to his sandals that the dust gets on my person. Jesus is walking on the water. I should be so close to him that the water droplets from his sandals would come up on the skirt of my garment. Jesus, if I'm going to be just like you, I should walk on the water. It was Peter who was gravitating with all his heart to be as loyal, to be as conscientious, and to be as diligent as he knew how. Where Peter began to fall down was when Jesus said, there's going to be a cost. You're excited about turning water into wine. You're excited about praying for the sick and see them getting healed. You're really excited about stopping a funeral procession and raising somebody from the dead.

He'd love to open up his own restaurant and turn water into wine and multiply bread and fish.



Or on the other side of it is, you're going to go through that and I'm going to be so close to your sandals that I, no, Lord Jesus, please tell us. No, I said I'd follow you to the ends of the earth, but I didn't think we're going to jump off the cliff. Are we ready to be true followers of Jesus? It's the call to discipleship. I read a book back in the 1980s by a writer. I might be wrong. Now, I was going to say, Rees Howells. He wrote a book on prayer and he buried me with that one. I couldn't live up to what he was. No, there was another author, Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He wrote a book entitled The Joy and the Privilege of Being a Disciple. No. He wrote a book called The Cost of Discipleship.

What did his discipleship, following Jesus, cost him? He died after a lengthy imprisonment by the Nazis. They killed him because he would not stifle his testimony. The cost of being a disciple of Jesus, 10 it can be pretty significant. I want to turn water into wine. I'd like to be a hero and multiply bread and fishes. Do you know that there are people who are racing down to this asbury right now? Because they want to get in on... Some of them are going with a really pure heart. They want to be revived. Others, they just want to see.

People went to revival, some kind of a move of God in Toronto years ago called the airport. You know why they went? Because they wanted to have an experience. There were times during that reign when I was preaching in churches and I'll finish with this. I was preaching in a church in another city. It was a major church. It was a midweek service. It was a whole week that I was preaching there for them. Revival services. I would bring a revival in my briefcase. It was always a briefcase of revival. And so here I was preaching this evening and then I invited the people to come forward. If you'd like prayer, you come to the altar and the people come and they lie from one side to the other. And as I went along, I had said to them, I don't need to know your needs. Jesus knows your need. But sometimes people want to tell you.

Sometimes I'll be saying, I've come here in the stead of my sister, my brother, my father. Wayward son. Others would come and say, I got to see the doctor tomorrow and I've got a very serious illness. So some people wanted to tell you and others didn't care. I got along with this fellow. I distinctly remember his name was Bob. He said, my name's Bob. He said, okay, Bob. He said, there's something I want you to do. I said, what's that? I want you to pray that I'll fall. You want me to do what? I want you to pray that I'll fall. I said, where do you want to fall? I want to fall right here on the floor. Why do you want to do that Bob? Because I see people falling in the church when the Spirit of God comes on them, pray that I'll fall.

. I said, is that your highest priority in your life Bob? You want to have an experience where you crash on the floor, go to sleep for a while. You believe that that's a high calling Bob? He said, will



you do it? I said, no. I said, I'm going to pray for you and don't you dare fall on me. Don't you dare hit the floor. I said, if you do, I won't be your catcher. If you notice, off the time they have these meetings and if the Lord puts you down, you better have a catcher because you're going to get a bang on your noggin.

Hello? And so I wouldn't do it. And so here's the quest. Am I seeking experiences? Or am I longing to be like Jesus to walk so close that the dust of his sandals touch me? If I never experience a miracle, if I never become famous, if I never do anything extraordinary, become known in the church for it, trade that all for an opportunity to follow in the footsteps of the Apostle Paul who said, be an imitator of me as I am of Christ. And what shall I imitate in Paul? He said, who's one of the greatest apostles of all time? He's my hero. And these were his words. All that I might know him. He didn't pray, all that I could establish, ten more churches. He didn't ask, I want to see more people rise from the dead. He didn't say, I want to see more people divine healed. He said, I have one goal in my heart to get to know him.

I'm Apostle Paul, if you don't know him, of course he did. But it's knowing another intimacy. It's learning to know in a deeper way the master, to be so sensitive that he could speak and say to you as a teenage girl, take your friends and go to the lime-ridge mall. I 11 will show you what to do. Am I as sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit as my wife's niece? I'm not going to go there, folks. Am I that sensitive to the leading of the Spirit? I'd like to think that I am, but that would be a foolish boast for me to say, I know exactly what they felt. Nene, they were there and I was at home drinking a nice cup of coffee. I wasn't there. Oh, that I might know him. The power of his resurrection. Oh, that I might fellowship with his sufferings. What does that mean?

Fellowship with suffering. Paul said, rejoice when you suffer and you're persecuted. Rejoice that you were counted worthy. Peter didn't count it something to be prized, to be worthy of suffering. Jesus is bound. He's heading for the cross of death. And a young girl said to him, you're one of them. I know you, you're one of them. No, no, not me, not me. It's hard. It is hard. It's difficult. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the cost of discipleship. Try and read the book. I bet you can't finish it in one good read. Just a paperback. I couldn't finish it by just sitting down and going through it. I was shaken. I was shaken.

I was shaken because he was saying, this is what the Word of God says about discipleship. Hey, Dave, how are you doing? I wasn't doing well and I don't know if today I'm doing any better. That's a terrible thing to admit, Pastor. I'm admitting to you, I have my weaknesses. If you're not sure about that, check with April. She'll give you a list. God can move a mighty mountain. Faith in God can come through the troubled sea. Faith will make the desert like a fountain. Faith will bring you victory. Lord Jesus, I pray that this preacher this morning who's spat and carried on will not be like some of the rabbis of days gone by, telling the people what they should do, but failing to do so themselves. That was Jesus' accusation.

They put a great burden on you, but they themselves refuse the burden. Heavenly Father, I would pray that if this message touched any heart, it would touch the heart of God's spokesman today. May it rivet into the life, the person, the spiritual dynamics of every person who's hearing my voice today. In Jesus' name, everyone would say. Amen.

