

Discipleship

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[0 : 00] If you could turn back please to John chapter 2. John chapter 2.

I'll keep my eye on that block and not that block. That block's 10 minutes slower than that block. So I'll keep my eye on the back block. I'll be encouraged. I've got a friend in Brunette's.

And he was in the police for many years. And now what he does in his retirement or semi-retirement is he's a driving instructor.

And so his day-to-day duties involve meeting with clients and preparing them and taking them through all the process and the mechanics and the preparation that's required before one undertakes a driving test.

So I was speaking to him recently and he was telling me about how he goes through all these different things to try and do everything that he can to prepare those who are looking at this driving test in such a way that hopefully they will get through the test and pass it.

[1 : 08] But I couldn't help but notice that every time he and the client is successful and there is a pass that's put online of somebody who's got through their driving test he'll always say to them congratulations on passing your driving test but remember it's only really now that you begin to learn how to drive.

And in John chapter 2 we meet these new disciples of Christ brand new disciples of Christ if we glance back over chapter 1 we can see and we can hear how Jesus sought out these men and he called them he opened their ears he touched their hearts in such a way that they would hear his call and we witness how they begin to follow Jesus and so they're identified and we see them there in chapter 1 going into chapter 2 as disciples of Jesus but if I can put it this way the disciples of Jesus who still very much have their L plates on they're still very much learning what it is what it means what it looks like to be a disciple of Christ and the fact is that's always true of us there are some here this evening who are fairly new Christians there are some here this evening who have been on the road for many decades as disciples of Christ and yet our L plates never come off we're always learning we're always being called to draw closer to Jesus we're always met with that challenge that we are to be more and more conformed to the image of Christ the Son we're always learning and in this chapter chapter 2 in this first part of chapter 2 there are five lessons that I'd like us to see five lessons in discipleship that Jesus that Jesus brings up with these disciples and if we are disciples of Christ just as they were lessons that the disciples back there and then so long ago so far away had to learn there are lessons there are lessons also that if we are disciples of Christ these spirits they really apply to us here and now five lessons the first lesson that we can note here is that disciples were to be in the world but not of the world the second lesson the second point is that they are taught to pray the third lesson is a lesson to obey the fourth lesson that they are taught through here is that they are to follow the signs that Christ details and the fifth lesson is that they are simply to trust trust in Jesus that's the structure these are the points that we have for the next 20 minutes or so the first point is this is a lesson in discipleship here that they are to be in the world but not of the world and we know from a fuller understanding of John's gospel we can think of

John chapter 17 where Jesus prays for the disciples we are made privy to the prayer that he offers to the Father and his prayer for his disciples was my prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil and what Jesus prays in John 17 for his disciples we see in practice in John chapter 2 he gives them that example to follow verse 1 of the chapter I've prepared from a different version so you'll forgive if there's a slight variance between the two sets of text here on the third day verse 1 a wedding took place in Cana in Galilee Jesus' mother was there and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding so in this wedding we see Jesus there John as he as he guides us in our thinking he highlights the fact that Christ was there on that occasion there were times that we are well aware that Jesus withdrew from the promise there were times when Jesus he withdrew and he was alone to be with his father in prayer there were times when Jesus taught his disciples to withdraw from the world and to be alone in the boat for example with them so they would learn from him but this was not one of these times at this time in John 2

Jesus was at a wedding his mother had been invited and Jesus was there with his disciples and so we find him rejoicing with those who rejoice just as in John 11 I think it is we see Jesus weep with those who weep and it's a simple point but it's one I want to underline so that we won't miss it the application is that we are to be in the world if we are Christians if we are disciples we are to be in the world but not of the world and in the course of our lives invitations will come as invitations came to Jesus and Mary here invitations will come to dinners and to weddings and to functions of one kind and another events gatherings and yes we are to use our discernment there are occasions where it's not wise for us as Christians to go into certain atmospheres because we know we are being led into temptation but we have an example here that is set for us in John 2 and it's an example where we see

Jesus and the disciples of Christ in that place where the people were where the crowds were gathered and they were there to be salt and they were there to be light the salt and light of Matthew 6 they were there to be those who will bring conversations into that place that as the apostle Paul refers to them are full of grace and seasoned with the salt of the gospel they were in the world but not of the world and we if we are disciples of Christ are to be in the world not hidden in our caves but in the world but not of the world I remember a friend of mine who was converted I think it was in his late teens he was a good football player and shortly after he was converted he was told by the session no more football you need to withdraw from all that kind of stuff and that's one example of many

[9 : 02] I could give of those who had an instruction who had a clear instruction given to them by other believers that they were to withdraw and yet that's intention with what we read in this chapter here that's not the example that Jesus sets you that's not the prayer that Jesus prayed in John 17 and I know that it's hard to be a good witness on the football field and I know that it can be hard to be a good witness for Christ sometimes at a wedding but the fact is it can be equally hard to be a good witness for Christ in a fang or in an office where tensions are running high so what do we do when we are in these situations where it becomes difficult to be a Christian in the world we pray for grace we pray for strength we pray that Jesus will help us we pray that Jesus who is not of this world but who is in this world will be seen in us so are we in the world with that love for the people who are still lost and the great commission is to go out not to wait until we all come in so first lesson in discipleship is to be in the world but not of the world the second lesson that we can draw from this passage it's a lesson to pray it's actually one that's very easy to overlook

I've overlooked it for many years and it just came at me in preparation there's a lesson here to pray look at verse three when the wine was gone Jesus' mother said to him they have no more wine and I think this is one of the most profound lessons on prayer that disciples can learn think about the situation try to picture the context they're in this wedding these weddings went on for days in that context and all of a sudden they seem to run out of wine which is a huge embarrassment a huge affront to the host family it was a humiliating situation for the host to be put in one that everyone would talk about it and Mary somehow becomes aware of the problem Mary believes that Jesus can help Mary believes that Jesus would have a will to help and so she simply and she briefly brings the problem to the attention of Christ when the wine was gone

Jesus mother said to him they have no more wine it's a prayer coming to Jesus with a need they have no more wine five hours long and yet it's a prayer all rest of all the things he needed to hear from him what needed to be done used to make me cringe because that's not prayer that's pride prayer is to take our burdens to take our problems to Jesus because we believe that he can and he will help us first Peter five and verse seven says cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you and that's what disciples of Christ are called to do take our anxieties take the anxieties that we feel for others that we are in great need just now take our problems and theirs take our burdens take our worries and cast them upon the

Lord in prayer and what is your biggest problem and mine I'll tell you what it is it's our sin a problem for us that is insuperable that we cannot overcome that we cannot find a solution for in and of ourselves is our sin and we all have none are righteous not one so what do we do with our sin we take it to the one who is able to bear the weight and the shame of it a hand that we often sing is a man of sorrows bearing shame and scoffing rude in my place condemned he Jesus stood we take our sin to the man of sorrows the man of Isaiah 53 the God man we take it to the one who is able to carry our sin as far as the east is from the west we take it to

Jesus he's the only one who can purge the sin who can take the sin he who knew no sin became sin for us so that in him we might become righteous and we do it by prayer that's how we do it how do I pray you might ask have you never taken your sin to Christ you're not a Christian here tonight and the problem is a problem of diction how do I do it what words do I use I'm not proficient I'm not one who's acquainted and eloquent in prayer what do I do what do I say what words do I use well Jesus gives us one compelling example of a prayer that he promised would lead to the justification and the forgiveness of the sinner and we find it in Luke chapter 18 and verse 13 we don't need to go there it's just a prayer that is seven words long

[16 : 25] God have mercy on me a sinner Jesus says the man who prayed that prayer beating his breast with sincerity in his heart was promised that he left that place having come up from his knees justified so how have you prayed that prayer yet the prayer leads us off the road to destruction and onto the road of discipleship and those who are disciples and who are assured in the discipleship who are able to say yes I know the Lord and I'm walking with him are we praying it's a challenging question are we praying praying in the private place in the closet with the door shut are we praying in the public place where the doors are open and there's opportunity to come here and to pray are we making use of that

Christians disciples our calling is to be those who will pray William Cowper said Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint on their knees how important it is that we as disciples learn that lesson in prayer and the only place we learn it is honour to get on our knees we can't learn to drive a car without getting in the driving seat we can't learn to swim until we jump in the pool and we don't learn to pray by reading books on prayer and going to courses on prayer we learn to pray by getting on our knees and coming to the place of prayer and praying so disciples are to be in the world and not of the world disciples secondly are to be those who will pray disciples thirdly are taught here to be those who will obey verse 5

Jesus Jesus mother said to the servants do whatever he tells you nearby stood six stone water jars the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing each holding from 20 to 30 gallons Jesus Jesus said to the servants fill the jars with water so they filled them to the brim then he told them now drop some out and take it to the master of the banquet they did so Bruce Mill one of the commentators says Mary's request was followed by implicit obedience prayer without a willingness to obey is little better than faith without a willingness to work and to the disciples I don't see we're all involved in this scenario they're learning here they're being taught here that the best thing the important crucial thing that they must do is obey

Christ and all this that we're we're shown in the outworking of this scenario it was all done for the benefit of the disciples this was a sign this was a miracle this was an exercise in teaching the disciples to trust Jesus that's why they're allowed to see all this did Jesus need the jars did he need the water did he need the services of the servants who were waiting on hand or could he have done it all apart from them and without them he could have done it all in an instant our God is the God who can create everything from nothing he needs the help of no one and yet in this case Jesus he used the jars he used the water he involved the servants and in doing so he was teaching them that there was great blessing and there was great wisdom in giving him their obedience and the lesson for them is the lesson for us in application salvation a disciple is called to holy living if you're somebody who calls yourself a Christian as I am one who calls myself a Christian then you and I together are called to a life of obedience to Jesus and to his word and that's not what saves us we are saved by the grace of Christ we are saved by

Jesus we are saved by what he did in obedience to the will of his father but what we are reminded of here and what we come to know increasingly in our own experience as we walk with Christ through life is that there is great wisdom and delight in doing the will of God it's a natural son so famously I'll do it my way the disciple of Christ the anthem that should mark our lives is not I'll do it my way or not I'll go any other way but I will seek to do it Christ's way because to obey is always the best thing to obey is the way that brings blessing to the Christian and glory to Christ and to obey is the means by which we show our love to Jesus and our love for

[22 : 51] Jesus we can say all the words we want we can make great protestations about how close we are with Christ and how much we love him and yet Jesus says if you love me obey me John 14 verse 15 if you love me you will obey what I command verse 21 whoever has my commands and obeys them he is the one who loves me he who loves me will be loved by my father and I too will love him and show myself to him do you and I want to know more of Jesus do we want to see him more clearly do we want to walk more closely with him we need to obey him and seek to live for him his way not our way one of the lessons of discipleship to be in the world not of the world to pray to obey fourthly briefly to follow the signs we pick up here at verse 9 the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine he did not realise where it had come from though the servants who had drawn the water knew then he called the bridegroom aside and said everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink but you have saved the best till now this verse 11 the first of his miraculous signs

Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee and I know in the end that doesn't come out very clearly the word signs but in the Greek it's very clear that this was not simply a miracle but it was a miracle with that design with that intention to teach and to point it was a sign this was not of course the reason why Jesus came Jesus didn't come from glory to this earth to make sure there would be enough wine at a wedding enough food on a particular day to feed 5,000 people who gathered that was not the primary reason why he came and that's clear in the dialogue between Christ and Mary that he says when Mary approaches her my time has not yet come Jesus is thinking about the reason for which he came which will come to in a moment but nevertheless he responds to the request of

Mary the prayer of Mary and the miracle that he performed it wasn't just a miracle that saved the glasses of the wedding family on that day it was a sign and as the disciples witnessed all that they saw as they looked to Jesus increasingly they were convicted they were convinced that Jesus was no ordinary man but he was the God man he was the Messiah he was the Savior have we come to see that yet that's the crucial question have we come to see yet that Jesus is the Savior the Messiah the promised one the one that can save us the one that can satisfy us the one who we deserve that we owe our lives to because that's how John's writing this is not a gospel to entertain us this is not a gospel to give us academic stimulation

John's purpose in writing this is crystal clear he makes it so in John chapter 20 verse 30 John says Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples which are not recorded in this book but these are written these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name and so this sign it pointed to the person of Christ and this sign pointed to the work that Jesus came to do it's slightly obscure but we're beginning to see the reason why Jesus came verse 6 Jesus draws attention to the jars that were used for ceremonial washing and these jars and these jars were a feature of everyday life day by day they were filled up with water the water of religious rich but the reality was that that water would never cleanse the heart it was the wine which pointed to the blood which would be shedding the cross on the hour that

Jesus was looking to that would provide cleansing for the heart and so the disciples then and the disciples now were being pointed to the cross in the beginning of his ministry the opening of Christ's ministry ministry we have these pointers to the cross to that place where our burdens would be lifted where our sins could be rolled away forever through the blood that we remember and we take the money upon our lips disciples are taught to follow the science trust and finally the disciples are taught to trust because the effect of all of this was very concisely as

[29 : 27] John tells us his disciples put their faith in him and that's what disciples of Christ do we put our faith in Jesus we put our weight on Jesus we believe we trust in Christ so are you a disciple are you trusting Jesus you know you can follow the science we can we can we can we can we can we can we can be those who day by day are blessed by the gifts that he bestows upon us in common grace just as he bestowed gifts upon those who sat at the wedding in Cana of

Galilee we can be those who invite Jesus to come in and sanctify the high days and the holy days of our lives just as they invited him to come in and be present at that wedding in Cana of Galilee we can even in some measure obey Christ with a superstitious hope that he will look favourably upon us in this world and bless us as a result of our obedience but all of that is not enough we need to trust him so are you trusting him that's right