**Sunday 29th July 2022 Discipleship**

We watched ***Good Will Hunting*** this week. In it Sean, the psychologist, points out to Will, a tough young man with a brilliant future but a deprived and abused background, that his situation is not of his doing. He says “It’s not your fault.” About 5 times before Will finally believes it and breaks down like a little child.

It reminded me of Jesus’ encounters with Peter.

### **Peter Disowns Jesus Luke 22: 54-62**

Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance.

And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them.

A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, “This man was with him.”

But he denied it. “Woman, I don’t know him,” he said.

A little later someone else saw him and said, “You also are one of them.” “Man, I am not!” Peter replied.

About an hour later another asserted, “Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean.”

Peter replied, “Man, I don’t know what you’re talking about!” Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed.

The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times.”

And he went outside and wept bitterly.

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**And separated by how long in time?**

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When they had finished eating breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me above anyone else?”  
Simon Peter replied, “Yes, Lord. You know I do.”  
Jesus said to him, **“Then feed my lambs.”**  
Then he asked him again, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?”  
He replied, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.”  
Jesus said to him, **“Well, take care of my sheep.”**

Jesus asked him a third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?”  
Peter was starting to feel hurt that Jesus kept questioning his love, and the third time he replied, “Lord, you know everything. You know how much I love you.”  
Jesus said to him, **“Feed my sheep.** ⚫

Why would Jesus ask the same question 3 times?

Why are there 3 slightly different answers?

Disciple

In Christianity, **disciple** primarily refers to a dedicated follower of Jesus. This term is found in the New Testament only in the Gospels and Acts.

In the ancient world, a disciple is a **follower or adherent of a teacher**. **Discipleship** is not the same as being a student in the modern sense. A disciple in the ancient biblical world actively imitated both the life and teaching of the master.

It was a deliberate apprenticeship which made the fully-formed disciple a **living copy** of the master.

The word "disciple" comes into English usage by way of the **Latin *discipulus*** meaning a learner, "one who engages in learning through instruction from another, *pupil, apprentice"*. But given its biblical background, should not be confused with the more common English word "student.-

Disciple is a follower of a person constantly associated with someone who has a teaching reputation or a particular set of views

Greek philosophers - disciples learned by imitating the teacher’s entire way of life and not just by remembering the spoken words of the teacher.

What does it mean to be a follower or disciple of Jesus. We would need to look at his instructions and follow his moral behaviour. I have listed what I consider to be the main, and stand-out, attitudes, directions and moral behaviour items

* **The great commission**

Ubiquitous throughout Christianity is the practice of **proselytism**, making new disciples. In Matthew, at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, when calling his earliest disciples—Simon, Peter, and Andrew—he says to them: "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19).

Then, at the very end of his ministry Jesus institutes the Great Commission, (Matthew 28:19-20a)- commanding all present to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you"

In other words “tell your good news to others”

**Followers were asked to pursue a lifestyle which was radically different to those around them. I’ve tried to pick out some of the major ones but I’m willing to add to the list.**

### **Reject materialism. Live faithfully** Part of the early chapters of Matthew that we call the Sermon on the Mount (6:25-34 ESV)

“Therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

* **Seek peaceful resolutions**  
  The first and foremost example of not repaying evil for evil is that of Jesus our Lord. When the Romans and the Jews crucified Him, He prayed for them saying “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:34)  
  Sticking with the words of Jesus

Matthew 5:38-48 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. And how radical is this just a few lines later

* **Love for Enemies**

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven.

*In Luke 9: 51-62* Upon heading to Samaria, no one wanted to receive Jesus as he was so determined to head to Jerusalem. James and John – often times reckless disciples that they were – offer to “call fire down from heaven” to consume them for refusing their Master. Jesus uses this opportunity to speak “sternly” to them and move on to another village. It seems that the temptation to use religiously motivated violence was present even in Jesus’ most inner circle.  
Leaving the words of Jesus. - Even in the Old Testament there are examples of love your enemies– often regarded as promoting violence. David spares the sleeping Saul. Joseph forgives and does not seek retribution on his 11 brothers for selling him into slavery in Egypt.

* **Different but equal.** Michael talked about this last week The Bible in 3 words – how in the Christian life we do not count others as more important than you. There are different roles but each person remains humble and accepting of the worth of others.  
  1 Peter 5:1-11 CEV

# And to leaders of the church who, of course, have a greater (but equally responsible) role in shepherding God’s people. 1 Peter 5:1-11 CEV So it’s Peter talking again.

*Church leaders, I am writing to encourage you. I too am a leader, as well as a witness to Christ's suffering, and I will share in his glory when it is shown to us.*

*Just as shepherds watch over their sheep, you must watch over everyone God has placed in your care. Do it willingly in order to please God, and not simply because you think you must. Let it be something you want to do, instead of something you do merely to make money. Don't be bossy to those people who are in your care, but set an example for them. Then when Christ the Chief Shepherd returns, you will be given a crown that will never lose its glory.*

*All of you young people should obey your elders. In fact, everyone should be humble toward everyone else. The Scriptures say,*

*“God opposes proud people, but he helps everyone who is humble.”*

*Be humble in the presence of God's mighty power, and he will honour you when the time comes. God cares for you, so turn all your worries over to him.*

### **Go the extra mile, Turn the other cheek** Again in the wealth of Jesus’ moral teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 5:39-45 ESV

*But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you....*

#### Expect that it will cost personally (Matthew 8.19-22)

*Along the way someone said to Jesus, “I'll follow you anywhere!”*

*Jesus said, “Foxes have dens, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man doesn't have a place to call his own.”*

*Jesus told someone else to come with him. But the man said, “Lord, let me wait until I bury my father.”*

*Jesus answered, “Let the dead take care of the dead, while you go and tell about God's kingdom.”*

*Then someone said to Jesus, “I want to follow you, Lord, but first let me go back and take care of things at home.”*

*Jesus answered, “Anyone who starts ploughing and keeps looking back isn't worth a thing to God's kingdom!”*  
In his society, family was the individual's source of identity, so renouncing it would mean becoming virtually nobody. Jesus used a hyperbolic metaphor (or exaggeration) to stress the importance of this in Luke 14:26: "*If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple.*"  
Another quote from Jesus in Matthew 16:24

*"Then Jesus said to His disciples, ’If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.’"*

What does that mean? It means that there should be those in the congregation whose lives are worthy of imitation. It means that normally in a church, over time, as people become more mature spiritually, their lives become more and more reliable as examples of what it means to be godly. The normal thing for a Christian is not that we remain at the lowest level of knowledge and experience; that we learn just enough to get in the door and then put the Bible on the shelf. The normal, expected thing is to have many people in the body who can teach, who can counsel, whose attitudes and conduct can serve as examples for others to follow.

Our goal as followers of Christ is to become mature in the faith. To gain understanding. To develop wisdom. To experience, over time, what it means to walk with God. Not just for our own benefit. But for the benefit of others, so that in time we can become teachers, so that we can show others the way to God through our conduct and our counsel.

The church (meaning the body of Christ) but also our church, meaning Eden Uniting Church, helps us to follow Christ because it provides the context in which we teach one another and train one another and learn from one another. We share our experiences, our wisdom, our knowledge, our understanding. Through our lives, we demonstrate to one another what it looks like to seek after God, what it looks like to live for Christ.

If a disciple is a "follower," and we are disciples of Christ, it follows that we are willing to be led. We are willing to be led into places that we don’t understand; even places that are dark, and scary, and painful, and unpleasant; because we trust the One we are following. We are like sheep who trust and follow their shepherd.

# Hebrews 10:19-25 Contemporary English Version

### Encouragement and Warning

My friends, the blood of Jesus gives us courage to enter the most holy place by a new way that leads to life! And this way takes us through the curtain that is Christ himself.

We have a great high priest who is in charge of God's house. So let's come near God with pure hearts and a confidence that comes from having faith. Let's keep our hearts pure, our consciences free from evil, and our bodies washed with clean water. **We must hold tightly to the hope we say is ours. After all, we can trust the one who made the agreement with us. We should keep on encouraging each other to be thoughtful and to do helpful things. Some people have given up the habit of meeting for worship, but we must not do that. We should keep on encouraging each other, especially since you know that the day of the Lord's coming is getting closer.**

# Ephesians 4:14-16 CEV

We must stop acting like children. We must not let deceitful people trick us by their false teachings, which are like winds that toss us around from place to place. Love should always make us tell the truth. Then we will grow in every way and be more like Christ, the head of the body. Christ holds it together and makes all of its parts work perfectly, as it grows and becomes strong because of love.

# **1 Peter 5:1-11 CEV**

### **Helping Christian Leaders**

Church leaders, I am writing to encourage you. I too am a leader, as well as a witness to Christ's suffering, and I will share in his glory when it is shown to us.

Just as shepherds watch over their sheep, you must watch over everyone God has placed in your care. Do it willingly in order to please God, and not simply because you think you must. Let it be something you want to do, instead of something you do merely to make money. Don't be bossy to those people who are in your care, but set an example for them. Then when Christ the Chief Shepherd returns, you will be given a crown that will never lose its glory.

Young people should obey your elders. In fact, everyone should be humble toward everyone else. The Scriptures say,

“God opposes proud people, but he helps everyone who is humble.”

Be humble in the presence of God's mighty power, and he will honour you when the time comes. God cares for you, so turn all your worries over to him.

Be on your guard and stay awake. Your enemy, the devil, is like a roaring lion, sneaking around to find someone to attack. But you must resist the devil and stay strong in your faith. You know that all over the world the Lord's followers are suffering just as you are. But God shows undeserved kindness to everyone. That's why he appointed Christ Jesus to choose you to share in his eternal glory. You will suffer for a while, but God will make you complete, steady, strong, and firm. God will be in control forever! Amen.

Peter’s Confession of Christ  
([Mark 8:27–30](https://biblehub.com/bsb/mark/8.htm#27); [Luke 9:18–20](https://biblehub.com/bsb/luke/9.htm#18); [John 6:67–71](https://biblehub.com/bsb/john/6.htm#67))

[**13**](https://biblehub.com/matthew/16-13.htm)When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, He questioned His disciples: “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

[**14**](https://biblehub.com/matthew/16-14.htm)They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

[**15**](https://biblehub.com/matthew/16-15.htm)“But what about you?” Jesus asked. “Who do you say I am?”

[**16**](https://biblehub.com/matthew/16-16.htm)Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

[**17**](https://biblehub.com/matthew/16-17.htm)Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah![b](https://biblehub.com/bsb/matthew/16.htm#fn) For this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by My Father in heaven. **[18](https://biblehub.com/matthew/16-18.htm)**And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. **[19](https://biblehub.com/matthew/16-19.htm)**I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

[**20**](https://biblehub.com/matthew/16-20.htm)Then He admonished the disciples not to tell anyone that He was the Christ.

Christ’s Passion Foretold  
([Mark 8:31–33](https://biblehub.com/bsb/mark/8.htm#31); [Luke 9:21–22](https://biblehub.com/bsb/luke/9.htm#21))

[**21**](https://biblehub.com/matthew/16-21.htm)From that time on Jesus[c](https://biblehub.com/bsb/matthew/16.htm#fn) began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and that He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

[**22**](https://biblehub.com/matthew/16-22.htm)Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. “Far be it from You, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to You!”

[**23**](https://biblehub.com/matthew/16-23.htm)But Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me. For you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.”

Take Up Your Cross  
([Mark 8:34–38](https://biblehub.com/bsb/mark/8.htm#34); [Luke 9:23–27](https://biblehub.com/bsb/luke/9.htm#23))

[**24**](https://biblehub.com/matthew/16-24.htm)Then Jesus told His disciples, “If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. **[25](https://biblehub.com/matthew/16-25.htm)**For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. **[26](https://biblehub.com/matthew/16-26.htm)**What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? **[27](https://biblehub.com/matthew/16-27.htm)**For the Son of Man will come in His Father’s glory with His angels, and then He will repay each one according to what he has done.

[**28**](https://biblehub.com/matthew/16-28.htm)Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”