

Message Transcript

BLURRY FAITH | THE KINGDOM REVEALED

RYAN BRAMLETT | AUGUST 15, 2026

Traders Point how are we doing? Hey, it's so good to be with you today. And before we hop into the sermon, I just want to speak to something. As a lot of you know our neighbors in central Indiana have been impacted by the recent flooding. And one of our strategic partners, Convey of Hope, is responding by serving those who have been impacted bringing relief, essential relief supplies to them.

And for you to know, when you give to Traders Point, some of that goes toward strategic partners like Convey of Hope so when disaster comes, they can meet it immediately. And we're monitoring it. We are continuing to offer financial support.

But, when we talked to them, we said, "What's the best thing that we, as a church, can do right now? How can we mobilize to make a difference?" And the best thing that they said is we can build cleaning kits so they can have those to distribute to those in need. They created a special QR code just for us. If you scan that, you'll be able to see all the things that go into a kit.

And here it is. As you can imagine, these items are time sensitive. Here's the ask. That all of these need to be dropped back off by 10 a.m. on Monday the 17th at either our Northwest campus at the front desk or our Fishers campus in the lobby. Campuses—those two are going to be open until 6 p.m. today for drop off and then a window tomorrow morning from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

And, church, this is our opportunity, this is our moment to make a difference. We talk about this all of the time. Our mission, as a church: Clear the Way, Equip for Battle, Deploy for Impact. This is a chance for us to be deployed right here in our back yard. And we, for sure, serve to meet eternal needs, bringing the Good News of Jesus, but we also serve to bring tangible needs in real time all for the sake of the gospel. You guys in to make a difference this weekend?

We're going to continue doing just that by praying right now over the situation, over the flooding and all of those who have been affected. Would you join us in prayer? Father, we thank You so much for an opportunity to come to You the One who is all powerful, the One who sees everything. And I pray in the name of Jesus that You would pull back the flood water. God, that dry land would emerge. We believe that You are able to do that. And I ask that.



And I also ask that everyone who has been affected, everyone who has experienced loss in this moment, God, would know that You are close to the brokenhearted. God, as they are in this season, may they know that there is a God who is with them and that is for them.

God, even in this crazy circumstance it could be an opportunity for Your church to shine. For people to come to see You for who You are. We ask all of these things in Jesus' perfect name. And the church says: Amen. Amen.

If you missed it at the campuses, there were three claps. So, I just wanted to wait for a second to see what was going to happen.

As you know, we are in our series through the gospel of... Mark. There we go. Some confidence. The Kingdom Revealed. This is Part 4. And where we left off last week, the Pharisees demanded a miraculous sign from Jesus as if He hadn't done enough already.

And Jesus opts to disregard their request completely, hops on a boat, and leaves. And it's just like this over and over again scene that they can't see Jesus for who He is. And the crazy thing is, they are not the only ones. The disciples, themselves, Jesus' closest followers, are close to going the way of the Pharisees. They can't see Jesus for who He is. He's just a little blurry.

Now, have you ever tried really hard to see something, but you just couldn't do it? Maybe you were at an art exhibit and you're walking through and you're looking at these abstract paintings and you are like, "I like it. I don't know what it is. It just looks like paint on a canvas."

And then you hear people talking next to you and they are like, "Oh my gosh. Do you see the story? Do you see how the blue represents the love of the father and the yellow, for sure, that's the child. Right?" And you are like, "I don't see any of that."

Or, maybe for you, it's when your daughter brought home her first boyfriend and you were like, "I don't see it. I don't see it."

Maybe for you, Jesus is still a little blurry. And that's okay. Someone might have dragged you here today or you're here because of someone else's excitement. But if you are being honest, you don't see it. You don't get the hype. And I just want to say: You're in good company.

None of us see God perfectly. We are all learning about His Kingdom, learning about what God looks like and how He shows up. And little by little, with a whole lot of effort, Jesus is coming more and more into focus. That's what the gospel of Mark is doing for us.



And that's why every weekend we say that we want to come ready, "I want to have an encounter with God." I believe that that can happen today.

So, I love Pastor Aaron's challenge to bring a physical Bible every single week, to open it up and be reminded that His Word is living and active. If you have a Bible, we're going to be in Mark, chapter 8, starting in verse 14. If not, everything will be on these screens right behind me.

Here's what Jesus is going to do. He's going to reveal His Kingdom is here and He wants us to know what, exactly, it's like. Look at this in verse 14. It says: "But the disciples had forgotten to bring any food. They had only one loaf of bread with them in the boat. As they were crossing the lake, Jesus warned them, 'Watch out! Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod.'" (NLT) So, what is going on here? What is yeast? What is leaven? What are we talking about here? And for some of you, you get this. I mean I've seen the Instagrams. How many people in here are baking sour dough on the weekends? Right? I see you.

There is a little bit of a starter. Right? There is a little bit of yeast that goes into the new batch to make it rise. That's what it means on the surface. But in the Bible, yeast or leaven is often a symbol of sin or evil—pride, to be puffed up. Jesus says, "Beware of the yeast." It will spread and corrupt everything. And when do you say beware? When someone can't see it.

When I was growing up in the neighborhood they would have little signs on peoples fences that would say: Beware of the dog. Why do they have that sign? Because that dog is going to see you before you see it. And you might be leaving without a piece of your tush if you don't beware of the dog. So, Jesus, in this moment, after His interaction with the Pharisees, says, "Beware of the yeast. Beware of the way they see things because they can corrupt you." In true disciple fashion, they miss it completely. Look at this. Verse 16: "At this they began to argue with each other because they hadn't brought any bread." (NLT)

They are very practical dudes. He said yeast. They didn't hear a word after yeast. They are just like, "That's right. We don't have any bread. And you forgot to bring the bread." They are doing the thing that Jesus' teaching was trying to show them they were doing. But they missed it again. And look at how Jesus responds in verse 17:

"Jesus knew what they were saying, so he said, 'Why are you arguing about having no bread? Don't you know or understand even yet? Are your hearts too hard to take it in?'"



Look at this, verse 18:

"You have eyes—can't you see? You have ears—can't you hear? Don't you remember anything at all? When I fed the 5,000 with five loaves of bread, how many baskets of leftovers did you pick up afterward?"

"Twelve,' they said."

"And when I fed the 4,000 with seven loaves, how many large baskets of leftovers did you pick up?"

"Seven,' they said."

"Don't you understand yet?' he asked them." (NLT)

Guys, today we're going to cover a lot of chapter 8. And it's best if we can kind of house all of this together to see they are not just put there. They are intentional. The reason these verses are here is for a specific thing so, if you have a theme for these verses I would say: Spiritual Blindness

This will carry us through pretty much the whole chapter. Let that be the banner. Jesus is just a little bit blurry to everyone involved. But He's going to bring them more and more into focus. Think about it. The Pharisees. Right? They can't see Jesus for who He is. The disciples. They can't see Jesus for who He is. It's a little blurry.

What we are going to read next is a story with a literal blind man who can't see anything at all. But there is something much more below the surface. And then we're going to close things out with Peter, one of the disciples. He is going to see Jesus like no one else has ever seen. He's going to make this beautiful declaration. But even him, in this moment, he is still half blind to who Jesus truly is. So, hold onto that as we jump into these next verses. Verse 22, it says: "When they arrived at Bethsaida, some people brought a blind man to Jesus, and they begged him to touch the man and heal him. Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village." (NLT)

So, they are moving around now, they are off of the boat. They are in Bethsaida; this is the little fishing town. They are very familiar with it. It's the hometown of three of the disciples: Peter, Andrew, and Phillip. And as they are going through, it's no coincidence to them that the first person that we get introduced to is a blind man. Look at what it says next. It says:

"Then, spitting on the man's eyes, he laid his hands on him and asked, 'Can you see anything now?' The man looked around. 'Yes,' he said, 'I see people, but I can't see them very clearly. They look like trees walking around.'" (NLT)



What is happening? More spit. If you were here a couple of weeks ago there was so much spittle when Jesus was healing the guy who was deaf. And now more spit. And He spit on the man's eyes. And then He has the nerve to say, "Can you see anything now?"

When I'm reading this I just get a different picture. Is Jesus working on a person or a 1972 Chevy? Like all I could see was an old mechanic at the hood, cigarette in his mouth, "Try it again. Alright. Alright. I see it. Stop. Stop. I'll get to it in a second."

This is new. We've read a lot; we haven't run into this. Jesus heals in an instant, almost always. But He doesn't completely heal this man. The blind man responds by saying, "I see. But it is blurry." What is happening? Did Jesus miss? Is He going to call for a mulligan? Is He going to say like—spit, spit, "Just give Me one more shot. Let me get My paws on you one more time. I'm having an off day."

Is that it? Or is there something else that we need to see here? Let's keep reading. We're going to unpack all of it here at the end. Look at verse 25: "Then Jesus placed his hands on the man's eyes again, and his eyes were opened. His sight was completely restored, and he could see everything clearly." (NLT)

Now, this is strange. Why did Jesus need two touches? Jesus has already proven that He can heal from a distance. Jesus has shown us that He has the power to heal people of sickness, of disability, people with demons—He even was able to heal a hurricane as it was approaching them. What is so different about this one?

And if you are taking notes, I would write this down. Anytime Jesus adds something to a healing, it's not for Him. It's for us. Jesus didn't need a second touch. We do. You see, these verses, where they are, they constitute a visual parable on spiritual blindness.

And Mark includes this, this story, to illustrate a gradual illumination of the identity of Jesus. Just like the disciples on the boat, things are a little fuzzy. But gradually, with just another touch from Jesus, things will become more and more clear if we will follow Him.

I think the other thing that he shows us is:
Sometimes God doesn't heal us all at once
Church, sometimes He does. Praise God. And I have witnessed it and I have experienced the miraculous. But sometimes, a lot of times, He heals with multiple touches over a long period of time.



And some of us have walked away or are close to walking away because God didn't heal you at once. And you can't think of a good reason for why He wouldn't heal you right now. If He could, why wouldn't He? And since He didn't, maybe He's not real or He's not as good as you thought He was.

And I get that. But what we have to wrestle with is this: What is most important from God's standpoint, from God's point of view? What does He want for you more than anything else? What matters most? Of course, our requests, our needs right now—they matter. But what is all of this wrapped up in? What changes our eternity? What is better than even the perfect circumstance? What is more powerful than any earthly resource?

Faith

It's faith. It's always been about faith. From the very beginning all of the way through the stories that God tells through the Scriptures, it's faith. And not blind faith but dependence and trust on Jesus and Jesus alone. This is faith. I learn to rely on God like my life depends on it, because it does. And I can't see how this situation is going to play out but I know and I trust in the One who can.

Because if we can be honest and vulnerable, just in this moment, none of us have too much control. The floor can fall out at any time. We are literally floating on a space rock through the universe. We need to know that we can stand on something that is secure. And, church, the strongest thing we've found is the blood and body of Jesus.

I mean, think about how much we try to control and hold things together. And the strongest thing most of us have found to bring security are little pieces of paper with dead dudes faces on them. We need something stronger. And, church, we have something that much stronger. We have the cross of Jesus Christ that we can cling to no matter our circumstance, no matter the situation. And in these moments this is when faith grows. Faith grows in the waiting. Sometimes when the waiting gets hard, we think that maybe God is not present. Or, maybe we start looking around trying to find answers and we find ourselves with some TikTok theology like this, "If God was real He wouldn't give us more than we can handle."

False. I think He actually does the exact opposite of that for a very specific purpose. Exhibit A. Look at this, 2 Corinthians, chapter 1, starting in verse 8. He says:

"We think you ought to know, dear brothers and sisters," this is all of us, "about the trouble we went through in the province of Asia. We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure," translation, God gave us more than we could handle, "and we thought we



would never live through it." I love the honesty. "In fact, we expected to die. But as a result," here it is, "we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God,"

We learned to live by faith. We learned to rely on God the One:
"who raises the dead." 2 Corinthians 1:8-9 (NLT)

Crushed, overwhelmed beyond your ability to endure. I am sure there are people who are at our campuses who are there right now in this season. And I don't know when it will end. But I do believe, from Scripture, that God can do something good in the midst of it, even if He doesn't heal all at once. That's what they experienced. They didn't get the healing all at once. They were experiencing persecution and trouble and danger and even death. But even in that messed up situation they began to see things, not from a human standpoint, but from God. God began to reveal more of Himself, of who He is. And one of the things we learn about who God, through the Scriptures, is the behavioral pattern of God. He seems to be much slower than we think He should be. Throughout the Bible, you see this phrase that fills the pages, that goes from generation to generation, everyone needs to hear it including us. And here it is. This is the command:

Wait on the Lord

It's hard. You can't see. You don't know how this thing is going to shake out. Wait on the Lord, the One who raises the dead. I even have a verse for you. Psalm 27, verse 14. Hold onto this one:

"Wait patiently for the Lord. Be brave and courageous. Yes, wait patiently for the Lord." (NLT)

Because I know the One that I am with. And I know that I don't walk by sight. I walk by faith. And I don't know how this ends, but I know that I'm with the God who raises the dead. I know I'm with the God who split the seas and brings people through walls of water. I know I'm with the God who is faithful who rescue and liberates.

I know I'm with the God who jumps into the fiery furnace with me. I know I'm with the God who shuts the mouths of lions. I know I'm with the God who takes down giants and castle walls. That's the God who I have my faith in. And that's who I choose to believe is in control. And because He is, I can trust that, no matter how it shakes out, God is with me. I'm going to be okay.

The Bible says that God's thoughts are not like our thoughts. His ways are not like our ways. And that is the understatement of the year. So, even though the plan is not going the way that you think it should, have faith. Be patient. Because God's plans are not going to perfectly match up with yours. Right?



Anyone have a plan for your life that was super simple, super easy? You could see it. All it had to do to happen. Maybe you had a three-step plan:

A B C

I'm right here baby and it's going to be great. I'm going to do this. And then I'm going to step over here. And then, boom, I'm at B. All I have to do now is step over here, ride off into the sunset. Perfectly. Just like I designed it.

Does anyone ever get that? Anyone's life look like that? No. No, not mine. Mine looks more like this [a scribble design]. Anyone else get one of these? Now this is a story about how my life got turned upside down. Right?

Ever since I've been following God, I feel like we meet. We huddle up. I say, "Amen." I zig. He zags. I'm like, "God, where are You going? We should go this way."

And it's so important in the waiting that we remain faithful because impatience is at the root of so many sins. And it takes great faith to wait on the Lord. So, what I would ask you today:

Is there an area in your life where it's hard to wait patiently for God? You are either actively taking things into your own hands or maybe you're tempted to start because you've been praying, "You should have brought healing, You should have brought restoration, I should have the thing by now." Maybe it's with marriage. You've been waiting. You've been dating. And it's just not coming. So, you're tempted to compromise dating because the pool is pretty shallow, "But, if I open it up to more people..." But can I tell you: Wait on the Lord.

Maybe for you it's financial security. And you feel convicted, but you just feel this tension of trusting God with your finances and you're compromising generosity and what God wants you to do. Can I ask you to wait on the Lord? Or, maybe for so many of us, students and adults alike, you're going through life and you're looking around and it seems like the people around us are most happy doing the most fun stuff and going in the complete opposite of God's best for us. And you're tempted to compromise holiness for happiness. Can I just encourage you today to wait on the Lord?

It may be hard in this season. But it will be worth the wait. You know, patience is a fruit of the Spirit, which means the part of God's divine character that He shares with us. Do you know what it means to be patient? It means long suffering, the ability to suffer well, the ability to wait well. Wait on the Lord.



We can't see things clearly right now. It's blurry. But with another touch and another prayer and more time in Scripture, and more wisdom, little by little God will bring the healing. Even if God doesn't change our circumstances, He changes our perspective. How you see things today is different from how you used to see them. He has given you wisdom to adapt to the situation.

We know this is true. Right? You see the world differently than you did 10 years ago. You see your problems; you see your priorities. And what do you do when you look back? I wish I could see the world then how I see it now. Anybody, when you look back to the picture of your younger self what do you think? You have one word. Right? When you see a picture of yourself at like, I don't know 18, you are like, "You were so dumb." Right?

[On the screen is a picture of Ryan with an over large t shirt and cut off sleeves] That t-shirt came with sleeves, I guarantee it. That shirt did come in my size. I chose to buy it at that length. Just dumb. I wish I had the perspective that I have now then.

But it's always relative. Isn't it? As I'm inching closer to 40 (I'm still a little bit off) even as I look back at me as an adult at 25, at 30 I was a child. I didn't know. I couldn't see anything for what it really was.

Do you know what that means? Yeah, you're dumb right now, you just don't know it yet. Have some grace for one another. Have some grace for yourself and trust that in God's timing He is going to work things out. Hold onto that. Things are still a little bit blurry—our spiritual blindness.

And we're going to continue that conversation and how it applies right here in verse 27. It says:

"Jesus and his disciples left Galilee and went up to the villages near Caesarea Philippi. As they were walking along, he asked them, 'Who do people say I am?' 'Well,' they replied, 'some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say you are one of the other prophets.'"

So, what is happening here? They'd just come off of a healing. They are walking and Jesus says, "Hey, there is a buzz about Me. But it's a little blurry. So, let's get right to it. Who do people say that I am?"

And they have no problem speaking up. They throw out all of these different things. "Some say You're John the Baptist; You are the new guy who has come to move people to repentance. Others say You are Elijah because of the miracles that You do. No one can deny them. And other people say You're a prophet. You are a mouthpiece from God. You've come to give a word." All are partially true. But it's still blurry.



Jesus is those things, but He is so much more. And what He's going to do in this conversation, He's got them talking. Now He's going to make it personal for them and for us:

"Then he asked them, 'But who do you say I am?'"

"It's not about the crowds. Who do you say that I am?" It's the question we all have to answer. This is the one that we can't be fuzzy on. How we answer this determines our life here and our eternal life. Who is Jesus to you? Not who do people say He is. Not who did my parents raise me to believe Him to be. Who do you say Jesus is? Is He another teacher? A miracle worker? A philosopher? We've got to get this right.

And at a moment when everyone else is silent, one disciple speaks up. And it's Peter—of course it's Peter. And look at what he says. He says:
"You are the Messiah."

What does that even mean? Another word for Messiah is Christ. Do you know that Christ wasn't Jesus' last name? He didn't introduce Himself as, "My name is Christ, Jesus Christ. Nice to meet you." It was a title. It meant that He is the Anointed One, the promised Savior. From the time of David, He is the King who is to come to establish God's reign here on earth and for all of eternity. A Kingdom of justice and righteousness. And many believed in this Messiah, the One to come, but it was blurry.

They had ideas of what He was going to be like. He was going to free the nation. He was going to crush their enemies and establish this new Kingdom. But they didn't know how or when He was going to do it. What Jesus is doing here is He is clearing things up.

He says, "I am the Messiah. But I've come for a much bigger enemy than Rome. I've come for death and sin itself. I will go to war, but not on these earthly powers but against the devil and darkness and what reigns in the spiritual realm. I will be victorious over it all. And it's been blurry but now I'm going to tell you who the Messiah is and what I came to do. Look at this description in verse 31. It says:

"Then Jesus began to tell them that the Son of Man must suffer many terrible things and be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law." Everybody. "He would be killed, but three days later he would rise from the dead." (NLT)



And I just want to pull a few things from here. The first thing is Son of Man. This is another title. The first time we see this is in the book of Daniel where Daniel is having this vision where he's pulled up to and he's seeing heaven. And he's able to name what he sees: angels and then there is God. But then this mysterious figure that is kind of blurry because He looks like a man, but He also looks like God. There is this God Man, the Son of Man. And Jesus, right here, is saying, "I am Him."

And then He goes on to say that I must be killed and rejected. What? The Messiah is supposed to defeat evil not be defeated. He must suffer. He had to. I want you to underline that in your Bible. He must suffer. Because if we don't get the seriousness of why Jesus came, there is no other way. He had to do what He did or we couldn't truly have the faith and belief that we need in God. He must. Because of man's sin and God's love.

We have sinned. We have fallen short of the glory of God. There was a payment that was due for our sin and we couldn't pay it. But God being a just and righteous God needed payment. He needed to be it to be clear. And because we couldn't pay it He absorbed it. Jesus, Himself, would take on the debt and pay what we could never pay because He loves us. Listen very clearly. Jesus did not come to give you a little boost. He came to give you His body. He had to die. It's not that we need a little bit of help, it's that we are helpless.

Jesus didn't come to show you the way to save yourself. He came to save you. A righteous God demands it, demands justice. A loving God paid the cost. And we celebrate the fact that in Jesus we have both. This is the difference. Everything else you read, any other thing that will tell you about what it looks like to have a good life, to follow in any deity, it is do these things then you will get this. Do this and then you will be approved of.

Jesus is the only One who is not pointing to a way. He said, "I am the way. I am the truth. I am the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. You have to have faith in My saving work of what I did for you on the cross. I was rejected but I died for you." Jesus is the way.

This is hard. This is hard for us to hear today. It was very difficult for Peter, specifically, to hear this. And he responds accordingly. Look at verse 32. It says: "As he talked about this openly with his disciples, Peter took him aside," Him here is Jesus, "and began to reprimand him for saying such things." (NLT) Only Peter could call this man the Messiah and then correct Him in the same conversation. Why? Because Peter had a picture in his mind of what the Messiah was supposed to do and who He was going to be. And guess what? Not die was at the top of the list.



So, when Jesus steps in Peter brings Him to the side and was like, "Hey, it doesn't have to be this way. You can do it differently. You are the Messiah." And look at what Jesus says in verse 33:

"Jesus turned around and looked at his disciples, then reprimanded Peter. 'Get away from me, Satan!' he said. 'You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God's.'" (NLT)

Kind of harsh. Isn't it? Jesus said, "Get away from Me Satan." Some translations say, "Get behind Me Satan." What is this all about? Well, in this moment Peter is unknowingly saying the exact same thing that Satan said to Jesus in the wilderness.

If you remember, right after Jesus is baptized, He is led by the Spirit into the desert where He goes face to face with Satan. And Satan offers Jesus the world if He will only avoid the path of suffering. If He would avoid the cross, the devil said, "I'll give you the whole world."

That's exactly what Peter is doing here in this moment. And that's why Jesus reprimanded him, Peter is so confused. He's saying, "You don't have to do this. You are the Messiah. You make Your own way. You belong on a throne, not on a cross."

Like, "Come here Jesus. Come here. I love the start that You have with everything, what You are doing with the fish and the loaves is beautiful. The multiplication—I've never seen anything like it. If you can multiply some of these swords, we really might have something. But we've got to stop all of the talk about rejection and dying. Okay?"

But Jesus reprimands him and makes it clear to you, to me, to all of us that there is only one way. God's way. And He says, "I have to. I must." This is the way. And then right here on the tail end of that, He gives us a must as well. If we are going to follow Him, if we are going to accept the invitation to be a Christian, here's the invitation in verse 34. It says:

"Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, 'If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me.'" (NLT)

I love that in the gospel of Luke he adds the word daily. Daily pick up your cross and follow me. And in your Bible maybe the heading here for these verses says something like: The cost of discipleship.

And discipleship is really just the process of becoming a disciple, the process of becoming more like Jesus. And I'm sure there are a lot of us here who can testify that it doesn't happen all at once. It's a blurry process where the old me is being transformed into the new me.



Maybe others of you are thinking like, "The cost of discipleship? I'm pretty sure I sang in these rooms, 'Jesus paid it all. All to Him I owe.'" That is true. And I want you to hear this:

The cost of salvation has been paid in full by Jesus
When He went to the cross, He paid every bit of the debt we owed. And when He would rise three days later, the check cleared. Everything has been paid for salvation. But:

The cost of discipleship is paid daily by you
The cost of discipleship

He gave us three things. Discipleship dues are due daily. This is what it means to follow Jesus, to accept the invitation, to respond to the Messiah, the Savior. And I just want to break it down. "If you are going to follow Me you're going to have to give up your own way." You have to take up your cross and follow Jesus. So, let's just unpack each one of these.

Give up your own way
What does that mean? It means that there is no room even for a little bit of leaven or yeast. There is no room for a little bit of your old life to make its way into the new life that He has for you.

When you are mapping out your life and that A B C—no. Skip straight to J, "Jesus, what do You want for me. What do You want this day to look like? I surrender everything to you Jesus. Show me."

And to experience this new life, we need community. We need to know what it looks like. This is why we talk so much about Rooted. Rooted is a 10 week experience where you get to learn what it looks like to lay down your old way, but not to stay there but to be invited into a new way of life with His rhythm. So, you see. You have to be willing to lay down your old way completely. And then

He says:
Take up your cross

Now, the cross had only one purpose. When you picked it up, you picked it up to do one thing. To die. It wasn't anything to play with. If you saw someone with a cross that was a dead man walking. And can we talk about how much faith it takes to show up every single day and to say, "Jesus, I'm going to die to myself. Die to my ambition. Die to my desire. And I'm going to trust that as I lay down my old life, as I lay down this day, surrendering it to You, God, You will raise me to new life."



Church, the Christian life is a life of 1,000 deaths but 1,001 resurrections. Being formed more and more into Jesus. Is that the visual you have when you think about what it's like to follow Jesus? A physical reminder on your shoulder of dying to yourself?

Because I feel like it gets a little blurry. For some of us maybe we got a different message of like God invited us to believe and wait, "Hold tight, I'll be back." But that's not the invitation. It's to come and die. The lifelong process of becoming more like Jesus. And the only way that becomes possible is through proximity, which leads us to the last thing.

Follow Jesus

He says the cost of discipleship is we have to follow Jesus. Not as the Messiah in your mind, as the Messiah that God promised. Not as the Messiah that you want, but the Messiah you need. And one more time, this is why Rooted is so crucial. Because so many of us have been brought to a place of belief. We have faith. But now what?

What Rooted does is it gives you rhythm. It shows you what it looks like to have a prayer life. You get to experience having a conversation with God. What does it mean to serve Him and His Kingdom right now? To leverage the gifts and abilities that you have. You get to experience service. You get an opportunity to take your story, as messy as it is, and find a way to say, "This is who I was and this is where God met me." And you'll find that God can use your story to bring His Kingdom here, now. For you to help bring people face to face with Jesus. So, one more time. If you haven't signed up yet, I cannot encourage you enough to sign up for Rooted to learn what it looks like to follow Jesus. Because you can spend your whole life trying to find another way, trying to skirt around Him. And that's what Jesus is going to speak to here next. It's almost as if He knows what we are thinking, "This sounds like a lot." He's like, "Yeah it is. And you can try to go a different way, but it's not going to work out." Look at what He says in verse 35: "If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it." (NLT)

Church, we try so hard to hold on to our old ways. Don't we?

Just enough Jesus

There is this phrase that God has been putting before me over and over again. It's this idea of can I get just enough Jesus? How can I get just enough Jesus that I can pray to Him when things are beyond my control but not too much of Him that I don't feel like I'm still in control.



How can I get enough Jesus so that I don't have to fear hell when I die, but also just enough Jesus that I can still build my own heaven here on earth. Just enough Jesus that I can still have fun on Friday night doing what I want, guilt free. But also just enough Jesus that He encourages me to come to church on the weekend.

See, the problem with just enough Jesus is that it is just not in the Bible. The exchange is all of Me for all of you. And Jesus even questions it. He calls it. He says, "Play it all out." What if you got everything this world could offer? How that would end for you? Look at verse 36. He says: "And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?" (NLT)

We live like so many things are worth more than our souls. The sacrifices that we make—what are you truly living for? What do you value most? If you look at your calendar and your bank account, what does that represent? Not just the faith you claim, but the life that you live. Does it show that Jesus is the most important?

Because it's so easy and we're so tempted to reach for the immediate and squeeze the world and try to wring it dry hoping that it will give us what we so desperately need. But Jesus said it can't cover the bill, "Even if you got everything included in this world, it is not a fair exchange for your soul. Only I can give you that."

Until Jesus is enough, nothing else will ever be
Until you find your worth and identity in Him and Him alone, until you can be content with the fact that He is, "I am who I am," and that "I have all that I need. And even if Jesus never gives me another good thing, He's already given me more than I deserve."

That's the space we need to be in. And that's the place that brings true contentment. And that is what allows us to have faith, not just one day but here, right now. To believe that we need a Savior. We need God to show up. We are desperate for Him to make another move. Because without Him, we don't have enough. And there is no shame in that. And that's what Jesus gets to in verse 38. He says:

"If anyone is ashamed of me and my message in these adulterous and sinful days, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." (NLT)
Jesus is coming back. And it says we can't live our lives ashamed. We can't live our lives with just enough Jesus, believing we can just get a little bit here and a little bit over here. He says, "No, you have to make a choice. You can only serve one master. Who is it going to be?"



And pride is what keeps us from seeing Jesus. That little bit of leaven, that yeast. An idea of, "I've got it." And remember, it's not that we need a little of help, it's that we are helpless. That is why the Good News is so good. Because we were dead, dead in our trespasses, dead in our sin. But thank God He sent Jesus to rescue us, to deliver us, to free us from everything. And I'm not ashamed of that. Listen to Paul in Romans, chapter 1, verse 16. He says:

"For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile." (NLT) So, for anyone who is here at any of our campuses and Jesus has been a little bit blurry, you don't get the hype. I hope that today you see that the hype is real. That there really is a God who loves you so much that He would become poor for you. That He would bankrupt heaven so that you could experience eternal riches. That there is a God who would become blind so that you could see. That there is a God who would die so that you could live.

This is what Jesus is asking you to place your faith in. In a Savior. One who has already proven Himself to be faithful. One who went to a cross and died for you. One who defeated sin, death, and the devil. The One who resurrected and has proven He has keys to earth and all of eternity. And what He wants is for you, more than anything, is to have faith in Him.

And that's an invitation that you can accept today. And when you do you will get to experience the power, the true power of who God is and all that He has come to provide for you. And we wait patiently, church. All of us who have received this gift. All of us who know who the Christ is, we wait patiently because it is blurry. But there is a day coming when everything is going to clear up—real soon. I want you to look at chapter 9, verse 1. This is what Jesus is getting to:

"Jesus went on to say, 'I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Kingdom of God arrive in great power!'" (NLT) What is He saying? He's saying that I started in weakness, you started in weakness, but we will end in power. I will see fully one day. It's a little blurry right now. And right now I will walk by faith, not by sight, but trust. Have hope for all that God has, guys. And what He has promised to do. I want you to look at 1 Corinthians, chapter 13, verse 12. It speaks directly to us: "Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely." (NLT)



You see, mirrors back then weren't like our mirrors today. They were made of polished metal. They didn't show a perfect reflection. It was dark. It was distorted. It was blurry. And Jesus' call on the back side of this invitation is to hold on to things. Believe in God for another touch and another touch until you see Him face to face. Because, by faith, there is a day coming when we will see perfectly.

There will be a gradual illumination until Jesus comes back. But, church, He's coming back. And He's told us what that day is going to look like in the book of Revelation. It says that all things will be illuminated. There will come a point where there won't be a need for the sun or the moon because the glory of God will illuminate it. It says that the Lamb, the Son of God, will illuminate all of heaven and we will come face to face with God Himself. A new heaven and a new earth. There is coming a day where love will triumph and whatever it costs you now will be worth it.

What I want you to hold onto, the last thing you hear, is that sometimes God doesn't heal us all at once. But He has promised to heal everything once and for all. Let's pray.

Father, thank You so much for today. God, thank You for this revealing, God, of who You are. God, that you would point out and humble us, that we do need a Savior. But, God, the Good News is that You are that Savior. The Good News is that You have already done it. You went to the cross. You died. You resurrected.

And You stand with an invitation. You stand waiting patiently for Your children to come back home. God, I pray today is the day that spiritual blindness is removed. God, I pray that today is the day that scales fall. I pray today is the day that so many people, for the first time, see You for who You truly are. I pray that today is the day that so many accept the gospel, the Good News of who You are and all that You have done.

And, God, I pray for all of us in the waiting. God, I pray that we would learn to wait on You. God, we would be patient. We would be brave. We would be courageous. God, we would look back and see how far You've taken us and how faithful you have been and that would ground us. And we would have motivation to push forward because we know how this ends.

God, give us the faith. Help us to walk by faith not by sight no matter the circumstance. God, raise our eyes. Help us to see the day that is coming when you will return from the clouds. God, You will be on that white horse and You will deliver victory once and for all. Love will triumph. Death will be at an end. No more tears. No more pain. No more struggling.

God, we will see You face to face. We will experience Your great love for all of



God, we will see You face to face. We will experience Your great love for all of eternity. We look ahead to that day. We have faith in that day. Jesus, it is in Your perfect and holy name we pray. And everyone said: Amen.

