



August 2, 2026

Becoming More Like Jesus

Day 1: The Picture God Has For You

Reading: Romans 8:28-30

God does not leave us without a destination. These verses remind us that from before time began, God's plan was to conform us to the image of his Son. The goal of the Christian life is not merely to avoid hell or attend church faithfully. It is to become increasingly like Jesus in thought, attitude, and action. Each day is an opportunity to move closer to that picture. Ask yourself honestly: do I look more like Jesus today than I did a year ago? That question, taken seriously, changes everything.

Reflection: What one area of your character most needs to look more like Jesus right now?

Practical Application: Write down one specific way you will pursue Christlikeness this week, not through performance, but through surrender.

Day 2: Naming the Enemies of Your Soul

Reading: Ephesians 6:10-12 and Galatians 5:16-17

Scripture is honest about the opposition we face. These passages describe the spiritual forces arrayed against us and the internal conflict between the flesh and the Spirit. The enemies of your soul are not abstract. They work through broken desires, cultural deception, and spiritual darkness to pull you away from who God is forming you to be. Naming them is not defeat. It is wisdom. You cannot fight an enemy you refuse to acknowledge. Awareness is the beginning of resistance, and resistance begins with turning toward God rather than away from him.

Reflection: Which of the three enemies -- spiritual darkness, the broken world, or your own disordered desires -- feels most active in your life right now?

Practical Application: Spend five minutes in silence today, asking God to reveal any stronghold that has quietly taken root in your life.

Day 3: Life on the Vine

Reading: John 15:1-11

Jesus does not offer us a program or a set of principles. He offers himself. In this passage, he uses the image of a vine and its branches to describe what genuine spiritual life looks like. A branch does not strain or strive to produce fruit. It simply remains connected to the source of life. The fruit is a natural result of that connection. When we seek purpose, peace, and transformation apart from abiding in Christ, we are attempting to bear fruit without a root. Connection to Jesus is not one spiritual discipline among many. It is the foundation of all of them.

Reflection: Are you currently abiding in Christ, or are you striving for spiritual results while remaining disconnected from the source?

Practical Application: Identify one daily habit -- morning prayer, Scripture reading, or quiet worship -- that you will commit to this week as a practice of remaining in Christ.

Day 4: The Courage to Lose Your Life

Reading: Matthew 16:24-26 and Philippians 3:7-11

Jesus makes an unsettling demand. He does not invite us to add him to our existing life. He invites us to lose that life entirely and find a new one in him. The apostle Paul echoes this in Philippians, describing everything he once counted as gain as loss compared to knowing Christ. This is not a call to misery. It is a call to exchange something small for something infinite. The pretenders, the masks, and the compromises that hold us captive all promise life but deliver bondage. Jesus alone holds the key, and he offers freedom on his terms, not ours.

Reflection: What are you holding onto that you have not yet been willing to surrender to God?

Practical Application: Write a prayer of honest surrender today. Name the specific thing you are releasing to God and ask him to replace it with himself.

Day 5: From Believing to Becoming

Reading: James 2:14-18 and 2 Corinthians 3:17-18

Agreement with truth is not the same as transformation by truth. James makes clear that faith without a changed life raises serious questions about the nature of that faith. Paul describes a process of being transformed from one degree of glory to another as we behold the Lord. The goal is not simply to know more about Jesus. It is to become more like him, so that the people around you -- your coworkers, your neighbors, your family -- encounter something real when they encounter you. Discipleship is not a destination. It is a direction, walked daily, in dependence on the Spirit of God.

Reflection: Which category best describes where you are right now -- agreeing, believing, receiving, or discipling? What would it take to move deeper?

Practical Application: Identify one person in your life who needs to see Jesus, not just hear about him. Commit to praying for them daily this week and ask God to make you a living witness of his grace in their presence.

Discussion Questions:

The sermon describes a saint not as someone extraordinary, but as anyone whose life is being progressively transformed to look more like Jesus -- in what specific ways have you seen that transformation happening in your own life, and where do you sense it has stalled?

The pastor identifies three enemies of the soul -- spiritual forces of darkness, the broken world, and the flesh -- how do you see these three working together in your daily life to pull you away from who God is calling you to be?

Of the four lies described -- that hard work makes you whatever you want, that you should follow your heart, that you deserve to be happy, and that your identity is what you do or feel -- which one has had the greatest grip on your thinking, and how has it shaped your decisions?

The sermon distinguishes between pretenders, masks, and compromise as three categories of strongholds -- which category do you find most difficult to recognize in your own life, and why do you think that is?