

09/13/26 Message

Part of FollowJourney of Discipleship
September 12, 2026

Message: What's it Worth

Series: Follow

Background

I'm approaching this series as if we are all in the same stage of our journey with Jesus, at the beginning. For some, this will be a review, but for most it will be a guide for what comes next. For all of us, if we'll let God work in and through us, we'll grow closer to Jesus and each other.

—Pastor Chad

Matthew 28:19-20 (NLT)

19 "Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.
20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

It's a circle of life with Jesus at the center. When you jump on the circle, it should be your goal to reach out and grab everyone you can and pull them on the circle with you. There's a lot more to it, but it's a great illustration. When you commit your life to Jesus and you commit to following Jesus, then you become His disciple. It's like being a student. You're only a student as long as you choose to be. That's the problem with this thing we call the spiritual journey. So many of us choose Jesus when we need Him, but when life is good, we forget all about Him. We stop being a student!

—Pastor Chad

- The spiritual journey is intended to be a LIFELONG commitment where you start and never stop.

Stuck in the Mud

Luke 10:38-42 (NLT)

38 As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home.

39 Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught.

40 But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me."

41 But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details!

42 There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."

Talk about a family spat, in front of company. Martha was zigzagging all around the house frantically making everything perfect and trying to be an amazing host. The moment Jesus walked in, Mary took a different approach. She abandoned everything else and just spent time with Jesus... and it ticked Martha off! Martha bolted in, hands on hips, and she pointed at Mary, telling Jesus, "Tell her to get off her butt and help me!" Jesus looked at her and said, "Hang on a minute... you're missing the big picture here. Martha you're focused on activities, but Mary is focused on me!" Have you been there? Ever been stuck in the mud of life or grounded in the concrete where you can't see past the moment to see the value of what's right in front of you?

—Pastor Chad

- DISTRACTIONS keep you from hearing Jesus

It's not like Martha was intentionally doing anything wrong. In fact, all those things needed to be done. But, in that moment, she wasn't doing the most important thing. There's a time for everything, even things that need to be done. Truth is, doing the right thing is more important than doing good things. You may have heard this before;

Martha didn't commit a sin of commission. She didn't do anything wrong. Martha committed a sin of omission. She wasn't doing the right thing! Martha was distracted!
—Pastor Chad

Mark 4:1-20 (NLT)

1 Once again Jesus began teaching by the lakeshore. A very large crowd soon gathered around him, so he got into a boat. Then he sat in the boat while all the people remained on the shore.

2 He taught them by telling many stories in the form of parables, such as this one:

3 “Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seed.

4 As he scattered it across his field, some of the seed fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate it.

5 Other seed fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seed sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow.

6 But the plant soon wilted under the hot sun, and since it didn't have deep roots, it died.

7 Other seed fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants so they produced no grain.

8 Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they sprouted, grew, and produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted!”

9 Then he said, “Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.”

10 Later, when Jesus was alone with the twelve disciples and with the others who were gathered around, they asked him what the parables meant.

11 He replied, “You are permitted to understand the secret of the Kingdom of God. But I use parables for everything I say to outsiders,

12 so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled: ‘When they see what I do, they will learn nothing. When they hear what I say, they will not understand. Otherwise, they will turn to me and be forgiven.’”

13 Then Jesus said to them, “If you can't understand the meaning of this parable, how will you understand all the other parables?

14 The farmer plants seed by taking God's word to others.

15 The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message, only to have Satan come at once and take it away.

16 The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy.

17 But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word.

18 The seed that fell among the thorns represents others who hear God's word,

19 but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced.

20 And the seed that fell on good soil represents those who hear and accept God's word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!"

Jesus is teaching and he tells a story they all understand. He used a farming story using an everyday example. This was how first-century Palestinian farmers actually did it. They scattered seed broadly, knowing some of it would fall on the hard walking paths. Some of it would fall in shallow, rocky soil. Some among thorny weeds. And some would fall into deep, cultivated, ground (the good soil). The variable here isn't the farmer. It isn't the seed. The variable is the soil. Anyone who has ever planted anything knows... you can do everything in your power to make whatever it is you're planting grow, but if it's planted in bad soil... your actions are futile... worthless. Jesus is telling this story for one reason, to show the variable in your life isn't God, He's always the same. The variable isn't the Bible, it's inerrant, infallible, and inspired; it's literally the Word of God. The variable isn't the church you plug in to; as a believer you should be able to plug into any Jesus centered church regardless of the name, location, people, style of music, or programs.

—Pastor Chad

Distraction keeps you from hearing Jesus, and...

- YOU keep you from hearing Jesus

Four responses to the same seed:

– Hard path: Doesn't matter how good God is, how good the Bible is, or how good the church is if the seed just bounces off and disappears

without a trace! This happens, according to Jesus in v15, when Jesus is speaking to you, but Satan steals the message.

Here's what we do... we sit back and blame Satan because he's so big and bad and ugly. Truth is Satan has no power in our life that we don't give him. He's not God. He's not everywhere. He's not all powerful. He's not all knowing. He just simply sits back and waits for an opportune moment when we open the door and let him in, then he pounces ready to steal, kill, and destroy!

—Pastor Chad

– Rocky ground: The seed starts to sprout but the roots can't grow deep because the soil is rocky. It's when you respond emotionally.

These are folks that commit to serving but then wither out and quit. These are folks who sign up or commit to doing something, but they don't do it. The intention is there, but there's no follow-through. Surface level, no depth. People who are faithful, for a while, but then they disappear and they're MIA (missing in action)!

—Pastor Chad

– Thorny ground: The thorns choke the life out of the plants, so they never produce. He names the thorns: worries of life, lure of wealth, and desire for other things.

Two words, everything else. God is replaced with everything else. What's the everything else in your life that chokes the spiritual life out of you? If that's you, Jesus said, because of everything else and your commitment to everything else, there will never be any spiritual fruit produced from your life.

—Pastor Chad

If it ended there, this would be a dismal story of a dead garden representing spiritually dead people! Jesus screams out, there's another way! Distractions can stand in the way of your discipleship journey; you can stand in the way of your discipleship journey; but there's a better way!

—Pastor Chad

- Fertile soil: Seeds sprout, grow, and produce a crop that is thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted!

In verse 9 Jesus says, do you hear what I'm saying? Hey, I'm talking to you! Are you listening? The seed is the same. The difference is you! The condition of your heart determines what the seed produces. God is the same, Jesus is the same, the church is the same, the difference is you! Don't be so distracted that you don't listen to Jesus. Don't be so consumed with yourself, your life, your stuff, your job, your family, your to-do-list that you stop listening to Jesus. To be a disciple of Jesus, you don't just hear Jesus, you listen to Jesus! But there's one additional step.

—Pastor Chad

The Additional Step

- You listen to Jesus
 - Then you respond to Jesus!
- A good way to remember it is this:
 - HEAR IT
 - RECEIVE IT
 - LIVE IT

God doesn't just want to give you information. God wants to give you transformation. It's not about how much you know. It's about how much you grow. It's about the spiritual fruit produced from your life! Recently I asked you how long you've been attending church, how long you've been saved. If you've been with Jesus 10 years, shouldn't you look like someone who had spent 10 years with Jesus? The disciples only spent 3 years with Jesus, and they planted churches, spread the Gospel, and sent out missionaries to the entire world. They were disciples! Jesus wants you to be one too!

—Pastor Chad

Look at your life the way Jesus sees it:

- What is the condition of your heart (hard ground, rocky ground, thorny ground, fertile ground)
- Is your life rooted in faith
- Do you respond to Jesus with emotion or with intention
- Does Jesus root into the hard, unseen places of your life, your finances, your relationships, your thoughts, your decisions, your time

*Martha had the best intentions but was missing Jesus!
Jesus told Martha that Mary had chosen the one thing
worth being concerned about. He said Mary discovered it.
Have you discovered it? Once you let Jesus sow the seed
in your life, you're sent out to sow the seed for others.
And before we serve like Martha, we have to sit at Jesus'
feet like Mary! Let today be the day you spend time
sitting at the feet of Jesus! Don't be too distracted to miss
Jesus!*

—Pastor Chad