

10/11/26 Message

Part of FollowJourney of Discipleship
October 10, 2026

Message: Increasingly Central

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.

Is Jesus Central to You

- Jesus should become increasingly central to my UNDERSTANDING

Mark 4:21-25 (NLT)

21 Then Jesus asked them, “Would anyone light a lamp and then put it under a basket or under a bed? Of course not! A lamp is placed on a stand, where its light will shine.

22 For everything that is hidden will eventually be brought into the open, and every secret will be brought to light.

23 Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.”

24 Then he added, “Pay close attention to what you hear. The closer you listen, the more understanding you will be given—and you will receive even more.

25 To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given. But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them.”

- Jesus should become increasingly central to my IDENTITY

Luke 19:1-10 (NLT)

1 Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town.

2 There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich.

3 He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd.

4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way.

5 When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. “Zacchaeus!” he said. “Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today.”

6 Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. 7 But the people were displeased. “He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner,” they grumbled.

8 Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, “I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!”

9 Jesus responded, “Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham.

10 For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.”

The people knew Zacchaeus’ identity as a wealthy, cheating, scheming tax collector... the Bible calls him a notorious sinner. Language studies reveal he’s being called wicked, guilty, opposite righteous. Yet, this is who Jesus chose to spend time with! This is who Jesus left the crowd to hang out with. But Jesus knew him. It tells me that Jesus intentionally chose to spend time with Zacchaeus so Zacchaeus could get to know Jesus! How many times has Jesus reached out to you, called out to you, wanted to spend time with you, and you missed it! I think of that often. My prayer sometimes is simply, Jesus, don’t let me miss you! Something happened between v6 and v8 that changed Zacchaeus’ life. In one instant he didn’t know Jesus and in the next, his life was forever changed! That’s the Jesus effect. That’s what Jesus does. He changes lives! You can’t meet Jesus and not be changed. Jesus didn’t wait until Zacchaeus changed his life before pursuing him. Jesus went after him so he could change! Zacc’s identity was no longer the tax collector or the sinner; his identity was from that moment on, a follower of Jesus... he started the disciple’s journey!

—Pastor Chad

Romans 5:6-11 (NLT)

6 When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. 7 Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good.

8 But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

9 And since we have been made right in God’s sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God’s condemnation.

10 For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son.

11 So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.

My identity isn't in what I've done. My identity is in what Jesus has done for me! And, that identity defines who I am becoming! I'm not just trying to live a better life. I have been saved by Jesus and I am being transformed by his grace. My identity is rooted in my relationship with Jesus! It's not just knowing who you are, it's knowing whose you are! Jesus should become increasingly central to your identity!

—Pastor Chad

- Jesus should become increasingly central to my DAILY LIFE

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT)

5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.

6 Seek his will in all you do, he will show you which path to take.

Somewhere in our daily routine we try to fit Jesus in. We pray before breakfast, maybe read a spiritual post on social media, listen to Christian music, even attend church. All good things, but Jesus doesn't just want to be a mark on your schedule or something we fit in between the chaos of our day. Jesus wants to be central to everything else on your schedule! Here's the difference. Some people spend time with Jesus. Some people live their life with Jesus! See the difference! Both matter, but one should lead to the other! I can spend time with Jesus and still not live my life with him! When I live my life with Jesus, I spend time with Jesus!

—Pastor Chad

Colossians 3:17 (NLT)

And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

- Jesus should become increasingly central to my PURPOSE

Galatians 2:20 (KJV)

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

(NLT)

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Be the Light

Remember the lamp in Mark 4? A lamp's purpose isn't to be hidden; it's to give light. The more central Jesus becomes to me, the more visible Jesus should be through me!

To be his disciple, Jesus should be increasingly central to your identity, your understanding, your decisions, your relationships, your daily life, and your purpose. If this isn't happening in your life, then you aren't a disciple of Jesus. But you can change that today!

—Pastor Chad

Jesus should be at the center of your life.
Will you let him be there?

Not just part of your life, but central in and central to your life!
That's following Jesus, the journey of discipleship!
Start today!