

SEPTEMBER 6, 2026

SERIES 1: FOLLOW ME

LESSON 1.1: I AM A DISCIPLE

TRUTH ABOUT GOD

God expects us to follow the teachings of His Word.

TRUTH FOR MY LIFE

If I am to be a disciple of Jesus, I will follow His teaching.

LESSON TEXT LUKE 6:20–38, 44–49

KEY PASSAGE LUKE 6:46

And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

TEACHING OUTLINE

ICEBREAKER: If you were on board the *RMS Titanic* knowing it was going to collide with an iceberg, how might you have helped everyone avoid tragedy?

TEACHER TIP: Use the group's answers to prepare for the story in Connect.

CONNECT: Share the Connect segment.

I. REJOICE OVER DIFFICULTIES AS BLESSINGS

- A. Suffering as Identity with God's True Prophets (V)
- B. Disciples Rejected as Jesus Prophesied
- C. I will choose to rejoice in everything.

DISCUSS: *Paul called his affliction "light," although he was shipwrecked, beaten, stoned, and imprisoned for the gospel. How do you think he was able to view his affliction as "light"?*

II. OBEDIENCE AS A SIGN OF DISCIPLESHIP

- A. Trees and Their Fruit
- B. Our Words and Our Hearts

DISCUSS: *When we think of the word heart as the core of our will, thoughts, and morality, what are some things we should do to guard our hearts?*

- C. Two Houses and Two Foundations

DISCUSS: *What are some storms and floods that come against us in life? How can being built on the solid rock help us weather the storm?*

- D. Because I am a disciple of Jesus, I will follow His teachings.

APPLY: Share the Apply segment. (I)

PRAYER FOCUS

Lead the group in prayer for God to help us grow into believers who are mature enough to face and respond appropriately to the truths in the world around us, in our own personal world, and in the Word of God.

CONNECT

THE TITANIC'S DESCRIPTION as “unsinkable” did not come from the company who built the ship. And it wasn't from the White Star Line, who commissioned and owned the ship. A chorus of external voices gave the *Titanic* this iconic description. Because of its innovative features—such as a double-bottomed hull, sixteen watertight compartments, and remotely operated watertight doors—publications described the ship as “practically unsinkable.” This phrase, while not an absolute guarantee, was seized upon by the press and public, transforming into a near-mythical belief that the ship was invincible.

Despite the hype, *Titanic's* design had critical vulnerabilities that undermined its “unsinkable” label. Its watertight compartments, while advanced, were not capped at the top, meaning water could spill from one to another if the ship listed (tilted) significantly. The ship was engineered to stay afloat with up to four compartments breached, but no more. Additionally, *Titanic* carried only twenty lifeboats, sufficient for roughly half of its approximately 2,200 passengers and crew—a decision reflecting the overconfidence in its design and the era's lax safety regulations.

This overreliance on technology, coupled with the public's inflated perception, set the stage for catastrophe when *Titanic* embarked on its maiden voyage in April 1912. On the night of April 14, 1912, *Titanic's* myth of invincibility collided with the tragic truth. While cruising at near-full speed through the iceberg-laden North Atlantic Ocean, the ship struck an iceberg that tore through six of its watertight compartments—two more than it could withstand. Water flooded the compartments, spilling over their uncapped tops, and the ship sank in under three hours, claiming over 1,500 lives. In the aftermath, media and public inquiries turned the phrase into a symbol of irony, critiquing the overconfidence that left *Titanic* unprepared for the realities of nature's power.

LEARN

I. REJOICE OVER DIFFICULTIES AS BLESSINGS

A. Suffering as Identity with God's True Prophets

April 1912 was not the first time hype lost the battle to truth. Way back in the Old Testament, some people preferred to hear more hype than truth. True prophets often faced hardships for their willingness to speak the truth, distinguishing themselves from false prophets who spoke only from their own hearts or falsely proclaimed peace. Jeremiah 14:14 declares, “Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.” In this verse, God used Jeremiah to expose false prophets who delivered empty, self-invented messages, leading people astray, often with what seemed like no accountability.

Similarly, Jeremiah 23:16 warns, “Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Harken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the

LORD.” It is not a stretch to say these prophets operated from a place of arrogance at worst or ignorance at best. Jeremiah 6:14 further condemns those who “have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.” True prophets, however, are willing to endure suffering for proclaiming God’s truth. God’s true Old Testament prophets faced significant suffering due to their commitment to delivering the words of God. It would have been easier for them to speak lies that pleased the people and gained their applause, yet they remained faithful.

Physically, prophets often endured harm, imprisonment, or threats to their lives because their messages challenged the status quo and angered powerful figures. Speaking truth to power is usually fraught with risks. Jeremiah was beaten and put in stocks for prophesying against Jerusalem; he also was cast into a dungeon with no water and faced plots against his life. Micaiah was imprisoned and fed “bread of affliction and water of affliction” for prophesying against King Ahab (II Chronicles 18:26).

Other prophets also paid the ultimate price through martyrdom. Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, was stoned for his rebuke, and Uriah was slain by King Jehoiakim for prophesying against Judah. The New Testament reflects on such martyrdom, noting prophets were tortured, mocked, scourged, imprisoned, stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, and slain with the sword (Hebrews 11:35–37). Their examples should serve as a reminder that suffering is not only a possibility for messengers of God’s truths; it is to be expected.

(V) PLAY VIDEO NOW

B. Disciples Rejected as Jesus Prophesied

In several New Testament passages, Jesus prophesied that His disciples would also face rejection. As He prepared them for their mission to spread the gospel, he warned of opposition, persecution, and rejection, much like the Old Testament prophets endured. These prophecies foreshadowed the challenges the disciples would encounter, including hatred, trials, physical punishment, and even martyrdom.

When Jesus sent out His twelve disciples to preach, He foretold that they would be hated and rejected by the world for His name’s sake: “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Mark 13:13). He elaborated in John 15:18–19, saying, “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. . . . because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you,” and in Matthew 10:25, “If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?”

These prophecies were fulfilled in the early church; Peter and John were arrested by religious authorities angered by their preaching of the Resurrection (Acts 4). Then they were commanded not to speak in Jesus’ name. Similarly, the apostles were beaten and shamed, but they rejoiced in suffering for Jesus’ name. They were changed by the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul was shipwrecked, stoned, beaten with whips, beaten with rods, thrown into prison, and even left for dead. Paul was persecuted by Jews and Gentiles alike as another example of the broad hatred Jesus predicted from “all men.”

Jesus also warned that His disciples would be delivered to councils and scourged in synagogues, as stated in

Matthew 10:17: “But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues.” (See also Mark 13:9.) This prophecy came to pass when Peter and John were brought before the Sanhedrin—facing rulers, elders, scribes, and Annas the high priest—and when the apostles were beaten by order of the council for preaching in Jesus’ name. Clearly Jesus was not just trying to be the most popular preacher in Galilee. He was calling for disciples, not just fans.

C. I will choose to rejoice in everything.

After all he had suffered, Paul wrote in II Corinthians 4:17, “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Ministry naturally brings moments of discouragement, yet Paul showed us how to suffer with grace, and he continued because hardship does not have to halt ministry.

God’s church is called to support each other by equipping and affirming those who serve. In daily life, serving in church or community—whether teaching children, visiting the sick, or volunteering in unseen ways—can sometimes feel thankless. Yet the call of mature believers is to step in and minister faithfully, even when no one notices or offers appreciation. In these moments, we remember that although believers face hardships, God’s mercy sustains us. To trust God despite pain is a holy resolve, and to stand firm when we want to crumble is itself a declaration of faith that God’s hand is guiding us and using our trials to deepen our walk with Him.

DISCUSS: *Paul called his affliction “light,” although he was shipwrecked, beaten, stoned, and imprisoned for the gospel. How do you think he was able to view his affliction as “light”?*

Seasons of discouragement will come to all of us. There will be days when it feels difficult just to make it through, let alone to give ourselves in meaningful service. But Paul taught us that perseverance is not only possible but transformative. When Paul called his sufferings “light affliction,” we might be startled; he endured shipwrecks, beatings, and imprisonments—things most of us would not call light. The key lies in perspective: Choose not to focus on the present pain but to focus on eternal glory.

II. OBEDIENCE AS A SIGN OF DISCIPLESHIP

A. Trees and Their Fruit

Luke 6 contains key sections from Jesus’ Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:20–49), a message similar to His even more famed Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7) but delivered in a different setting and with distinct emphases. In Luke 6, Jesus used the metaphor of a tree and its fruit to illustrate that our actions reveal our inner character. He taught: “For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.” This is a clear reminder that authentic discipleship is not merely about what we say or display on the outside; it’s about an internal transformation that daily calls us to live like Jesus.

The imagery of a tree and its fruit draws heavily from Old Testament writings. Psalm 1:3 compares the righteous to a tree planted by streams of water, yielding fruit in season. Similarly, Jeremiah 17 describes the blessed person as a

tree by water, unfazed by drought. Isaiah 5 paints the picture of a vineyard producing bad fruit to critique Israel's faithlessness, a backdrop Jesus reworked to emphasize our individual responsibility to follow Him. The metaphor's power lies in its simplicity and universality: Just as a tree's fruit reveals its nature, disciples' actions and words reveal our hearts. This teaching confronts hypocrisy. In short, it is a call to align our inner and outer life. It's a call to practice what we preach.

B. Our Words and Our Hearts

"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh" (Luke 6:45). This simply means our actions and words are an overflow of our inner character. The word *heart* in this verse is translated from the Greek word *kardia*, which refers not just to emotions but to the core of a person's will, thoughts, and morality. Who we are at our core impacts the fruit we bear.

DISCUSS: *When we think of the word heart as the core of our will, thoughts, and morality, what are some things we should do to guard our hearts?*

C. Two Houses and Two Foundations

Jesus wrapped up the Sermon on the Plain the same way He wrapped up the Sermon on the Mount: with the Parable of the Two Builders. In this parable, Jesus asked, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). He then described two builders: One built his house on a rock, and this wise builder's house withstood the storm and flood because it was built on a rock.

The other man in this parable did not fare so well when the storm and flood assailed his house because he built his house on sand. Jesus likened this foolish builder to one who "heareth, and doeth not" (6:49). Both builders heard the words of Jesus. Generally, we think the two men were building in different places. But, when we look at verses 48–49, it seems the only difference between the two men was that the wise man was willing to put in the work to dig deep to lay his foundation on something solid, whereas the foolish man built his house with a shifting foundation—sand. At the heart of our willingness or refusal to obey the words of God is a heart of wisdom or foolishness. Proverbs 24:3 explains that by wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established.

DISCUSS: *What are some storms and floods that come against us in life? How can being built on the solid rock help us weather the storm?*

D. Because I am a disciple of Jesus, I will follow His teachings.

Both metaphors—the tree and its fruit and the two builders—address the early Christian community's need to distinguish genuine faith from mere profession, a necessity when God's people face persecution, false teachings, and cultural pressures. The tree metaphor focuses on inner transformation. The builder parable stresses the practical outworking of faith. Together, they sing a holy duet calling us to a life of authentic discipleship.

TEACHER OPTION: *Tell the story below as a continuation of Connect, or share one of your own to illustrate how disciples of Jesus place our trust in Him and His Word.*

APPLY

TO THIS DAY, the *Titanic*'s enduring legacy serves as a stark cautionary tale, echoing the scriptural warning of false prophets who proclaim “peace, peace” when there is no peace. Just as these prophets lulled ancient Israel into a false sense of security and ignored the moral decay that invited divine judgment, the *Titanic*'s “unsinkable” myth—championed by engineers, journalists, and a public captivated by technological progress—crumbled against the harsh reality of an iceberg. Before the ship's maiden voyage departed Southampton on April 10, 1912, headlines and reports brimmed with unbridled confidence.

The April 1911 issue of the *Shipbuilder* magazine previewed the vessel's design and declared the *Titanic* “practically unsinkable,” emphasizing her watertight compartments as a near guarantee against disaster. Similarly, on April 15, 1912—the very day the ship struck the iceberg—*The Evening World* newspaper quoted White Star Line Vice President P.A.S. Franklin assuring the public, “She is an unsinkable ship,” even as wireless reports of the collision began to trickle in. These assurances, steeped in human pride, painted a picture of invincibility, much like the false prophets' promises of safety that masked underlying risks.

The early headlines promised everyone would be or was safe. But the post-disaster headlines laid bare the grim truth. *The New York Times* blared on April 15, 1912, “Titanic Sinks Four Hours After Hitting Iceberg; 866 Rescued By Carpathia, Probably 1,250 Perish,” capturing the chaos and uncertainty as survivors reached shore. The next day, *The Boston Daily Globe* followed with a stark banner: “TITANIC SINKS 1500 DIE,” underscoring the scale of the tragedy and the fatal flaws—like insufficient lifeboats and repeated warnings the crew dismissed.

The stark contrast between the pre-voyage sentiment and the post-sinking reckoning mirrors the biblical warning against trusting in false assurances. In Jeremiah's time, false prophets “healed the hurt of [God's] people slightly” (Jeremiah 6:14, NKJV), offering empty comfort instead of calling for repentance. Similarly, the *Titanic*'s promoters whitewashed flaws—high speeds through ice fields, overreliance on untested compartments—leading to catastrophe. By the time the passengers and crew realized its fallibility, it was too late.

(I) DISPLAY IMAGE NOW

In today's world, we are surrounded by choruses of voices—not all trustworthy—proclaiming safety or progress without substance. To navigate this, we must heed Scripture's call to discern truth from falsehood. The *Titanic*'s story reminds us that misplaced trust in human constructs—whether a ship or soothing words—can lead to ruin. By anchoring ourselves in God's truth and obeying His Word, we avoid the fate of those who trusted in false cries of “peace” or an “unsinkable” ship, building instead on the unshakable foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ.