

Good evening. How y'all doing? You a'ight? Let's dive in and pray. "Father God, we honor You and thank You for the opportunity that You us give to engage in worship. Your people gathered is a beautiful thing to experience, Lord God. It's a beautiful thing, people gathering expectant of You pouring into their souls, expecting to pour into one another and also wanting to pour upward, even though we add nothing to You through our worship and we don't take anything away from You from our worship regarding your character and attributes. Lord God, You desire worship. You desire to see us become worshipers in every single area of our lives, Lord God. So we pray today that You would let the words of my mouth, the meditations of my heart to be unadulteratedly acceptable in Your sight. O Mighty Jesus, my strength and my Redeemer in Whom I trust, let goal of this instruction be love from a pure heart and a sincere faith and a clear conscience, and help us to know nothing among You except the Lord Jesus and Him crucified. In Jesus Christ's name we pray. Amen."

Well, we're going to dive into John 1:35-51. I want to begin by way of introduction. In Western culture, this idea of us being a disciple and almost every biblical principle and theological concept in Scripture is made into a linear format. And then once we develop it and put it out press wise into a linear format, we begin to argue about when it begins and when it ends. When does discipleship begin? When you become a Christian or at some point in your Christian life, do you decide that you're really going to follow Jesus for real for real? Or you got saved, but you're supposed to follow Him for real for real sometime later. And we'll argue back and forth and create categories and paradigms and all types of things to blog about and to write articles about. And even as important as defining things is, even as important as it is to get clarity on everything that God gives us the grace to understand, we can argue about the premises of the Christian faith to the point that, while we're arguing them, we're not living in light of them. And so our hope is to both have a rich, nutritional, robust understanding of concepts, but we also want to dive in with both mind and heart into every single concept that God gives us the ability to understand.

The concept I want to talk about today is very, very interesting. I want to read this passage, and then I want to talk a little bit more about these things. Look with me in John 1, starting in verse 35. It says:

*The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and you will see." So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter).*

*The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You*

*are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."*

I love this passage, and we're going to dive into this passage and talk about just some really, really key concepts that I think John is revealing to us in this passage. I want to talk for a little while about the idea of the great invitation. You know, I love the Synoptics and I love John's Gospel. The Synoptics are written in unison in some ways with one another and have repetitious parables and teachings and miracles that Jesus had done. In Matthew 1, you see beautifully that Matthew wants to present Jesus as the messianic King of the Jews. In Mark, he's presenting Jesus as the suffering servant. You see in Luke that Luke is presenting Him as the Son of Man. And then you see that John's goal throughout his Gospel is to present Jesus as the God of all things. So he wants to present the deity of Christ. So the Synoptic Gospels are unified in many ways, and it's interesting that John sometimes seems like the lonely Gospel all by itself. But what's beautiful about all four gospels is all of them work uniquely together to display and to give a pictorial and appreciation for the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so John comes here, and he's showing off the beauty of the Word becoming flesh by saying, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." So Jesus was hanging out with God, chilling forever, They're enjoying how good one another looks. I mean, They're going, "You're fly too. . .You're nice looking too." I mean, they're just enjoying Their triune beautifulness together. All three of Them are together, enjoying one another, hanging out for eternity. And it says in verse 14 something magnificent. It says, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." I love that statement because it's talking about the Lord Jesus Christ tabernacling and hanging out with sinful men without becoming sinful, yet He was under the control of two substances. Two main substances marked what He was controlled by. When the Bible says someone was filled with something, it means to be under the control of something. When it says someone is filled with the Spirit, it means that they are under the Spirit's control. Here in this section it says that Jesus was filled with grace and truth, *charitos* and *altheias*. He was filled with unmerited favor, and He was filled with the right information, even though later we will find out that He is the information, He is truth. Then in verse 18, you see Him go further and say no one has seen God at any time except for the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He explained Him. That word "explain" means to *exege*. In other words, He came to explain what God was like. So who better to explain what God is like but God?

So we come to this passage, and we see really the precursor to most of the passages on discipleship you'll see in Matthew, Mark and in Luke 5 where you will see a new encounter with the disciples and Jesus beginning to call His disciples. So this is really before that. We see in this section that He will begin having encounters with these people groups, specifically those who will eventually become His disciples, those who would eventually become His apostles and those who would eventually represent His reign and begin to faithfully transmit the gospel to the church so that the church, throughout the ages of history, would continue to faithfully transmit the nutrition of the Lord Jesus Christ by generation, by generation, by generation, therefore giving us the ability in 2010 to still have the right information about the Lord Jesus Christ and have a way of looking at the Lord Jesus Christ that I think is very unique. So we come here with this great invitation and we see how Jesus operates. Like I like Jesus a lot. He's so smooth. We're going to see in the passage that He's just so smooth and He seems so nonchalant, but He's so self-sufficient, really understanding Himself enough that He doesn't need anybody. And so we're going to see some beautiful things about the Lord Jesus Christ and also be challenged in our need. And if you're not a Christian, whether you don't know Jesus as Savior, well this will be a great invitation for you. And for the person who is in Christ, who has trusted in Him by grace alone, through faith alone, through Christ alone, this is going to be an opportunity to re-up by looking at and progressively appreciating who Jesus Christ is on a whole other level.

So we come here and we dive into my first point. Disciples of Jesus Christ have a journey with Him that is constantly unfolding. In verse 35 it says, "The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" Now just imagine the cinematography here. This is beautiful cinematography. You've got the pictorial of John standing up in the midst with two of his disciples, chopping it up with them, talking with them about whatever it was they were talking about. And so Jesus just kind of whisked past. And John was like, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" Can you imagine what that was like? Some dude is walking past and John's calling Him an animal. But those words ought to be our staple. "Behold the Lamb of God" is a very unique and nutritious statement that we should selah for a moment. To be able to understand "the Lamb of God," you've got to understand the whole corpus of the canon and what it deals with regarding this subject of sacrifice. When you look in Leviticus, Exodus or Numbers, one of the things that you will see is God will say, "Go get a lamb. . .go get a ram. . .go get a calf." And you'll see in Hebrews where it will talk a little bit about that in pointing back to it. But what what is interesting here is that Jesus is not called "a lamb." There's a definitive article there of "the Lamb of God." Therefore, it's talking about the One who is central, the One who is the ultimate sacrifice for all of our sin.

What's powerful about that? Well, I don't know if you do it out here, but in Philadelphia, we have a thing called "layaway." Now you may not need layaway out here, but where I'm from, we need a little layaway every now and then. Whenever you're trying to get summer clothes, you go to Burlington Coat Factory, put your stuff on layaway. Well the Bible says the blood of bulls and goats never took away sins, but they put them on layaway. In other words, they were laid away, but they were never really dealt with, they were never really purchased. And so Jesus Christ comes on the scene as the unique Lamb of God and He doesn't allow any of those payments to be counted towards sins. He Himself, being the ultimate Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, comes onto the scene and takes all sins off of layaway so that we can walk in newness of life and reflect who He is in every single area of life. He eradicates and deals with all sin, and ultimately He's going to throw all of our sins into the lake of fire to be eradicated and destroyed forever so that we can continue to enjoy Him for eternity. So we get to experience comprehensive redemption in this with the Lamb of God.

So you see them going past and as John explains who Jesus is, we go into the next point. Jesus clarifies why we should follow Him. Now when you look right here in the passage, it says, "The two disciples heard [John the Baptist] say this, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following. . ." Now this is very, very interesting. Let's look at this word "disciples" here. In their society, even though the Greek word is different, disciples were called talmids. These were interesting dudes. Because in their day, it was really interesting to walk around and see many rabbis walking and disciples flanking them like an entourage following them. So back then, what you would see a teacher walking and a crew of dudes walking behind him. And if the teacher walked a certain way, all of the other students walked that way. If the teacher stops and strokes his beard, the other students kind of do the same thing. Can you imagine different leaders walking around and multiple entourages of dudes are walking around mimicking every single move. If they go to the market and grab a piece of fruit, smell it and look up, the student does that. In other words, the student was deeply consumed with becoming exactly like the teacher. Every part of the student's life was spent around their teacher because they were consumed and passionate about being a disciple of the one they were following.

Now the text just says that they were following Him. So Jesus walks past, then all of a sudden two of the guys peel off of John and start following Jesus. Now I'm from Philly, so if two cats start following behind me on the block, I'm going to start thinking of speeding up and losing those two dudes. But in their society, it wouldn't have been like that. In their society, they were communicating something to Him. They were communicating to Him that they were willing to submit themselves to be His disciples and He was to be their rabbi, their teacher. So they were saying, "We are now removing ourselves from connection with John, and now we want to be in connection with You." So Jesus starts walking and they're following Him. So talmid means that they went teachers everywhere, every day and every hour of the day, often without knowing or asking where the rabbi was going. That's crazy to me. The rabbi gets up and starts going somewhere

and you just follow Him. You don't know where he's going, but you follow him. The talmid rarely left his rabbi's side for fear that he would miss a teachable moment. One of the things I'm learning as I grow as a believer and as a Christian is that, according to Romans 8:29, God has predestined His people to be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's a powerful thing. In other words, God is most concerned about His people looking like Him. Everything in your life, through His providence, is uniquely grafted and set up for you to mimic and be like Jesus Christ. Now, we're not talking about moralistic mimicking where we just believe that Jesus is a good person and His only His life was redemptive but the cross wasn't. We're not talking about merely Christus exemplar by itself; we're talking about Christus exemplar (or Christ our example) as empowering to us as Christians to be empowered by the Lord Jesus Christ, to live the life that He lived but Him living it through us. Galatians 2:20 says, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." So we are to be lifestyle talmids and apprentices to the Lord Jesus Christ for a lifetime. And then apprenticeship has with it many rugged journeys. Apprenticeship is authored and created by the Lord Jesus Christ for Him to give us the grace to walk places we would never walk, to go places we would never go places we would never go because we're following Him, we're being led by Him and we're living in light of Him.

And so Jesus, not really impressed with anybody but Himself, does something interesting in the next section of this Scripture. It says, "Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?"" Man, I want to do a series on just the questions of Jesus. John is a unique book to study because more than the other gospels, he does what is called a double entendre. So many times throughout the book, he would do double meaning. Now Jesus Christ here is asking a question. Now whenever Jesus asks you a question, be afraid, be very afraid. My favorite part of when Jesus asks a question is in Matthew when it says, "They ventured to ask Him no more questions any longer." But here this is a probing question, "What are you seeking?" Now, we understood just based on us talking just now about historical background that it was normal for men to posture themselves and begin to follow. So Jesus is saying, "I know culturally what you're doing, but what are you seeking?" Or here's the Eric Mason translation, "What do you want for real, for real?" What's what He's saying. He's going, "I see what you're doing physically, but how is your soul postured towards Me?" Jesus is saying, "What are your expectations out of your boy? What preconceived notions do you have about Me that you'll want to write into the plan of My discipleship of you that you want Me to do but you don't want to hear from Me what I want you to do?"

In Matthew 4:17, it says, "Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The word "repent" in the Greek is *metanoéo* and it means to change your mind, to divorce your way of thinking and embrace His way of thinking. So when you become a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, many times we have unrealistic expectations of the Lord Jesus Christ because in our hearts we are wanting Him to do something that in His Word He has never promised us He would do. Phillip Yancey says in his book *Disappointment with God* that most people get disappointed with God because they have expectations of Him that He's never ever promised them of. And people become disappointed because these expectations are placed on God, then they start walking with Him and realize He has a whole other plan. In other words, you don't write the syllabus for your life; He writes it. Selah. He writes it, so therefore we must sit before Him and begin to let God lace us and develop us in the way that's best in His sight. Psalm 37:4 says, "Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart." Delight yourself in Him and enjoy Him. As you enjoy Him, you enjoy changes. Then when you pray back to Him, you pray based on His desires, not your own. You see, becoming a Christian is about being transformed, not transforming God. We don't transform Him. He's the same yesterday, today and forevermore in who He is. So now one of the things I'm always having to face as a Christian is my preconceived notions of what I want Him to do further as I grow as a Christian, therefore I'm needing Him to continue to confront me with, "I'm not going to do that. You can ask all you want. The answer is no. I'm not going to do it, not yet. It may be later but not now." I'm always struggling with Him and working through with Him.

So Jesus is asking them, "What do you want?" Jesus wants followers who will follow Him no matter what. So He wants you to understand what it's really like to follow Him. I like the way the Christians in Acts 14:21-25 did it. They preached the gospel to the entire city, made many disciples, appointed elders in every place and then they told them, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God." In other words, they gave them a realistic scope of the Christian life. It wasn't, "Everything is going to be bubbly, and there will be perfume in the atmosphere because of the Spirit's presence." No, it's not like that. It's ups and down, and it's challenges. But the thing about it is He's with us. So Jesus here with this question is dealing with the loaded nature of saying, "Yo man, are you willing to embrace My view of this or are you going to tell Me what you want?" Now can we tell Him what we want? Yeah. But we've got to be willing to allow Him to tell us what He's going to do and all throughout what it's going to be like to be in a relationship with Him.

But then it says, "And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" That word "staying" is the word *menó* in the Greek. And almost every theological and spiritual concept that John is going to talk about is laid out in the first chapter. John will more fully develop this concept of remaining or abiding. You'll see it more viably developed in John 15. But you see him playing on words when they ask, "Where are You remaining?" But then He's going to talk about us remaining later. And then it says, "He said to them, "Come and you will see."" I like that. Jesus isn't afraid of anybody. I don't know if I would have invited two new dudes that I just met over to my house like that. I just don't know if I'd do that. But Jesus is not afraid to engage with people. Jesus is not afraid to deal with difficult questions that we have of Him. He can handle it. And so He takes the time and spends time with these dudes.

And it says, "So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah."" I like that. Because here he's going and he gets his brother. And as you know, Peter is an interesting dude. He's an entrepreneurial fisherman. I don't know if he smelled like fish all the time because of how much he fished. He would have mended his own nets. I don't know how wet his clothes were at the moment or what he was doing at the time. But I'm always blown away at who Jesus calls into a relationship with Him to transform and use where they are to take them where they are. Into relationship with Him, He calls religious skeptics, businessmen, Hebrew fundamentalists, thugs, thieves, a shady government worker, a radical Jew, mama's boys and spoiled rich kids. That's who He calls to be in a relationship with Him, and that's us. That's a motley crew of goofballs that He wants to transform with Himself. And so as cats are being brought to Him, He is willing to engage them with Himself. I love that Jesus is willing to engage us with Himself. That invitation is such a beautiful invitation.

And then it says, "He brought [Peter] to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas"" This leads me to my next point. Jesus invites disciples to journey with Him in the fullness of redemption. Jesus just meets Peter, and He gives him a nickname. Now all of this is just culturally weird, right? It would be weird if somebody just met you and started calling you some nickname. But in this context, this was a viable understanding of things, because one of the things a discipler would do is they would give nicknames to their disciples. And what's powerful about this nickname is Jesus is asserting His authority as disciple maker and ruler with the ability to name us what He wants to name us. And it's interesting this idea of naming Peter, which means rock, will be more fully developed later in Matthew 16 when he later gives the climactic confession. One commentator says, "It's not that Peter is worthy of such an epitaph in himself, but rather the name is proleptic of the man whom God would create someday." I love that about Jesus. Jesus meets us where we are, but He also meets us where we are to take us beyond where we are. He doesn't want to keep us the same. And so Jesus is not looking at us and going, "We're savable" because of our strength, because of our muscles, because of our six-pack, because of your hair color or because of where we live. He look at us and say, "Man, I really want save them because of what I see they can do for Me." No, He looks at people who have absolutely nothing to offer, He saves them, gives them what He wants offered and then uses them. So here with Peter, He calls him a rock even though this man was far from a rock. He will blurt things out of turn, he will think he's the

best theologian, he will get put on blast, he got called "Satan" by Jesus one time. I mean, this is not "The Rock" right here, right? "Get behind Me, Satan." I mean, I would have cringed if Jesus said that to me. But we see in this passage that Jesus always wants to generate in us through His work and His power what we're going to do for Him in light of us being in Him.

Then we go to the next section and we see Philip come on the scene. It says, "The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip. . ." I like that. He went after Philip and found him. "He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" He's rocked right now because they are from the fly city of Bethsaida. Bethsaida is such a great city, maybe the Messiah should come from there. But no He doesn't come from there. He ends up with God really bringing him from Bethlehem, but He's coming now out of Nazareth. So we see Nathanael struggling with that reality. And "Philip said to him, "Come and see." In other words, he has encountered Jesus, he has experienced the invitation of Jesus and he is now calling to others, "Come on, yo. I want you to check out this dude that I met that I believe is the One."

I like the next part. It's beautiful. "Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." That would have rocked me. Back in the days, I used to watch the ThunderCats. Lion-O would pull out his sword and it had an eye on it. And he would say, "Sword of Omens, give me sight beyond sight," and he would see stuff in other places. You know, Jesus didn't need the Sword of Omens. He's God in the flesh. So He saw your man, Nathanael, and I don't know how He did it. Because Philipians says that He laid aside the independent use of His attributes. So I don't know what's happening here, but I know something divine and supernatural is happening with the Lord Jesus Christ here in relation to Him engaging them. And He calls him a dude that's without deceit. Now we know he is of deceit because he is a sinful person, but He's talking about unredemptive deceit. In other words, "Man, you'll say anything to anybody. The first thing that comes to your mind when you see somebody, you'll say it." In other words, "There's no fronting with you," Jesus says to him. But what's interesting about Jesus is, when Jesus sees this characteristic in him, He wants to use every characteristic that a person has before He meets them from a more redemptive standpoint when He gets to them. Let me give an example. A person is always blurting out stuff, just always talking out loud. When the cross gets to him, he can be honest and good accountability. A loud person is boisterous. The loudest person in the room, you can hear them before they come into the building. When Jesus Christ meets them, they become bold and passionate. An person who is very opinionated and unteachable and you can't tell them anything, they become decisive. A person who is promiscuous, who is flagrantly giving themselves away to others physically, when they meet Jesus, will accept His love because of His work. A wanderer who is a nomad, under Christ's work, will become a missionary. A gang leader who is gang banging, now under Christ can become a shepherd. A person who is just really needy and is always in need of someone, under Jesus Christ can become a worshiper. And unredeemed entrepreneur, under Jesus Christ can become an evangelist. We see here that Jesus Christ is about transforming who we are and using us to the maximum of His glory. And I like the progression in this passage. Because we first see that He is called "rabbi." We then see that He is called "Jesus of Nazareth." But then later on when He comes in contact with Philip, Philip goes further and calls Him "Son of God" and "King of Israel." "Son of God" meaning that He is God, and "King of Israel" is referring to that expectant messianic King that will come and free God's people from the tyranny of the physical reign of the Roman Empire. But as He hears that, Jesus is not grieved. But I like the progression in that passage. Because you see, as these people encounter Jesus, they get a deeper understanding of who Jesus is. However, Jesus always has to redefine what people think of Him based on the terms that we use about Him. And so He's always wanting us to become progressively more intimate with the characteristics of who we are so that we can live in light of Him and enjoy Him.



But Jesus clarifies this. We see in the passage that John started off by calling Him the Lamb of God. You don't see any of the disciples during the stretch of this passage ever relating to Him in that way. They don't ever bring that up or ask the question of what it really meant for that. I don't even know if John the Baptist really explains to his disciples about what the Lamb of God would actually do or what the Messiah would actually do. But you see, Jesus clarifies things and goes back to that idea that John had mentioned to his two disciples when He passed them the first time. And the passage climaxes at this point. It says, "Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these.'" And you will see this idea picked up in John 14:12 later on when He says, "greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father." But then He goes farther and says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." I like that. That's a powerful, powerful phrase right there. Because it points back to Genesis 28:10-22 where Jacob one day had a vision of the Lord God, and he saw a ladder. It's interesting that the text says the ladder touched earth at the bottom and the top of the ladder touched heaven. And he saw angels coming up and down on the ladder. I don't know if they were climbing or flying on the ladder, but they were coming up and down on that ladder. And what's powerful about that passage is many people have gone away calling that "Jacob's ladder." I can understand the concept of calling it "Jacob's ladder," but Jesus Christ says something interesting here. In this passage He calls Himself the ladder. So this is really not Jacob's ladder, but it's God's ladder. And Jesus is pointing to the fact that the ladder is not something you use to prop up to get to a higher place to do construction work or to put something together. But He says, "The ladder in this passage is Me." And we see that the ladder touches earth and it touches heaven. And what's so beautiful about this is Jesus calls Himself the ladder. That means the ladder was connecting heaven and earth back together again. In other words, the broken relationship that man had with God, that heaven had with earth would now be restored through the person and work of Jesus Christ on the cross. And so Jesus being the true ladder, Jesus being the true Connector of all things, the true Redeemer of all things, the true Mender of all things, is coming back and He's laying it all out saying, "I want to connect the unconnectible, the things that are most disconnected that seem like they can never be connected that God wants to restore back together." Jesus Christ is essentially saying about Himself, "I am the One who will connect that back together, and you're going to watch Me do this progressively and ultimately." Over and over and over again, through the life of the disciples, they watched and walked with Jesus as Jesus Christ deals with brokenness, as Jesus Christ deals with devils, as Jesus Christ deals with difficulty. What's so powerful about the Lord Jesus Christ is there is no obstacle that is in His way that can stop connecting whatever it is God has in His heart, what God has in His mind, what God has in Him that He wants to reconnect again. God, in His providence and His sovereignty, is a connector of things. He disconnects some things so that we can unplug from certain things that aren't good for us and replugs us in.

That's the beauty of following the Lord Jesus Christ, family. It's seeing Him connect the unconnectible. The great invitation is all over again. If you're not a Christian, God wants to connect you to the Lord Jesus Christ, connect you back to Himself. Because Jesus said in John 17:3, "This is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." However, when you become a Christian, even though you are positionally justified and you're positionally holy, you're not practically holy. So He puts you in the sanctification process, and it's a process of reconnecting everything in your life back to God's original order, and He's about working that together. Whether you got loot or you're broke, what side of the city you live in, what ethnicity you are, what type of gear you wear, what type of car you drive, it doesn't matter what type of job you have, Jesus Christ is about reconnecting things back to God's original design. And He wants to salute His Father one day and He wants to blow us away one day by handing the beauty of things being all the way connected back together again back over to the Father, for the Father to be over everything, for the Father to rule over everything. He's coming back, and I can't wait till He comes back. Because this old heaven and earth are just a preview of coming attractions. He's going to come back based on Revelation 21, and He's going to eradicate this old earth and He's going to eradicate this old heaven. Hallelujah. He's going to come back and He's going to recreate everything about this old design after the original design. In other words, He's not trying to take us back Eden, He's not trying to make it like it was before the fall. He's doing a major upgrade of everything beyond the first

creation to a greater thing that we could ever see. And I wonder when we join Him. I wonder when we take the invitation. I wonder when we follow the One who will connect all things back together again. I'm blown away by, I'm rocked by and I am going to follow Him.

And maybe you're here today and you're disconnected, you're comprehensively disconnected. Maybe you're disconnected from God. Yes, that's the first thing that has to be fixed. God doesn't come in and connect other stuff without doing that first. That's the central place of connection. But maybe you're here today and you're a Christian and you've lost some hope, you've lost some footing, you lost some steps in your life. Well Jesus has a ladder for you, and it's His cross. And He's still using it to connect bridges. And I don't know what your issue is today, I don't know what is in your life that is deeply disconnected, but God is so powerful that He loves showing Himself off. He's a great big old show off, from everlasting to everlasting. And if something can show Him off greatly for Him to be seen, He's about making it happen. Why? Because He likes to see things restitched back to His original design. Is there something in your life that you need to pray for today and beg God to reconnect all over again? Maybe it's something He doesn't want to reconnect because it's not healthy for His glory in your life. There are some things He doesn't want you connected to. Sometimes He wants you to remove it because He did not just come to bring happiness; He came to bring the sword He said. So He's going to cut some things up. But what's powerful about the Lord Jesus Christ is He never takes anything away that's not of Him without replacing it with something that is of Him. In Judges 6, He told Gideon, "Tear down the Asherah. Tear down the altar of Baal." Then He said, "After you do that, in the same place where you used to worship Asherah and Baal, I want you to build an altar to Me in that same place. I don't want you to stop worshiping; I want you to change who you're worshiping and how you're worshiping." So what's beautiful about the Living God is He always refills our life with Himself where He takes something that is not of Himself away. And I pray that as He takes us as disciples on this great journey with arms open wide with the great invitation for us to continue in light of the gospel that we don't lose sight of Him. If you trust Christ as Savior, you can't lose it. Yet in the midst of our walk with Him, we can lose sight, even though He doesn't lose us or we don't lose Him. And so I pray that God would make somebody hope again today and that He would connect the unconnectable in your life.

"Father, we honor You. Thank You that from everlasting to everlasting You are God. And God, I'm here as one who has many disconnections in my life where I'm in desperate need of the One who saves by grace alone, through faith alone, through Christ alone. I'm in desperate need of the One who heals through the work of the gospel and who supplies us with the necessary needs to move through life and to walk through life. Yet Lord God, we want to be people who hold everything except You with a loose hand. Lord God, we want our lives progressively and comprehensively reconnected to you. God, would You do that in our lives? Will you blow someone away by healing their brokenness today, by healing relationships, by healing relationships, God? Not just for their sake, but for Your namesake, will You make Your name known in our lives by reconnecting deep areas of disconnectedness so that we could maximize Your original purpose. Because everything was made by Jesus, through Jesus and for Jesus. And Jesus Christ, since everything was made for You, You have a purpose for everything. Will You break our understanding of things and help to embrace Yours and connect us to it through the work You did on the cross? In the mighty name of Jesus we pray. Amen."