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"Do's and"Don'ts

Sermon Series: *Mission Possible*, No. 2
Today's message is from Associate Pastor, Dwight Winter

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Mark 14:22-31

22 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body." 23 Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. 24 "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. 25 "Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

26 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. 27 "You will all fall away," Jesus told them, "for it is written: "'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' 28 But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." 29 Peter declared, "Even if all fall away, I will not." 30 "Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times." 31 But Peter insisted emphatically, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the others said the same.

Luke 22:54-62

54 Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. 55 And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them.

56 A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him." 57 But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said.

58 A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." "Man, I am not!" Peter replied.

59 About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean." 60 Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." 62 And he went outside and wept bitterly.

I hope you are well rested with the extra hour of sleep last night. If not, don't' worry, as one of my close friends has pointed out …with me speaking today you'll be able to get two extra hours of sleep.

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Can you finish this….

Don't do as I do. Do as *I say*!

They tell you one thing and then they *do another*!

Talk is *cheap*!

Actions speak louder *than words*.

"Actions speak louder than words but not nearly as *often*." — Mark Twain

"Actions speak louder than words. And sometimes inaction speaks louder than both *of them*." — Matthew Good

"If your actions don't live up to your words, you have nothing *to say*." — DaShanne Stokes

"Well done is better than *well said*." – Ben Franklin

Preach the gospel at all times and if necessary (take an offering… no) *use words*!

If you want to know what someone believes, don't listen to what they say, watch what they do!

Does what I do, reflect what I say?

Last Sunday, today and over the next two Sundays, we are considering Discipleship and is it really a Mission Possible?

Can it really happen?

How does it happen?

What's it look like when it happens?

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Last week Pastor Daryl shared two important components of discipleship and how discipleship played out in his life from a young boy to adulthood, and as a parent. If you weren't able to hear that sermon, I would encourage you to take some time to listen to it today. Maybe after lunch you can sit in your easy chair and watch it on the church's YouTube channel … who knows maybe you'll be able to get a third extra hour of sleep.

To be a disciple can be simply defined as being an imitator of Jesus…one who learns about Jesus, loves Jesus, lives like Jesus, loves others like Jesus, and loves themself like Jesus.

Discipleship is learning as much as we can about Jesus and putting what we have learned about Him into practice and making it part of every area of our life.

It can sound like a daunting task.

One of my seminary professors claimed, the gospel is shallow enough that a gnat can wade through it but it's deep enough to drown an elephant.

And if I may alter that a little bit and adjust it to say that being a follower of Jesus, being his disciple, is so easy that a child won't be overwhelmed by it, but it is so complicated that a degreed theologian will never comprehend how to complete it.

When do you begin discipleship…now;
where do you begin it…here.
how do you begin it …you just dive in.

Start right where you are by placing in your life the things that point you to Jesus … the Bible, Music, Books, Stories, Friends, Gatherings, Prayer,….begin to eat, sleep, and breath everything Jesus, so that when given the opportunity you'll bleed Jesus. Give Him every area of your life, let Him inform your recreation, your work, your hobbies, your habits...as a disciple of Jesus nothing we do is inseparable from His influence. It is all consuming.

Discipleship is simple but at the same time it is complicated because Jesus weaves Himself into every area of the human experience. No portion of the day is devoid of our being God's presence in that moment. Are all of those moments notable? Maybe not but they are all in the presence of the Almighty and are to be influenced by the presence of Jesus.

Jesus' disciples knew this struggle...from the simple to the complicated… they knew all too well, especially Peter. He had a front row seat to knowing Jesus and knowing about Him. It was easy for Peter to jump in and say, "Yeah, I'm with ya", but it got complicated when his desire for survival and his professed loyalty came into conflict, and all of a sudden it was, "No way, I don't have a clue who you are talking about!"

Too often that seems to be part of the journey of being a disciple of Jesus…it doesn't have to be but it seems like it is much…we're all in and in a moment of weakness, we bail…We don't know the fellow…never even heard of him?

One goal of discipleship is to get to the place that what we claim when life is good is how we live when life is hard. So that when we are strong is the same as when we feel weak. And what we say we believe is what we do even when the pressure is on.

Peter always seems to get a bad rap with this scene but notice his response when He knew that Jesus knew. When he wept, it wasn't just a little or gently. It was bitterly. He knew he blew it. That wasn't who he wanted to be. Two times in this story, his words didn't match his actions. First, he claimed he'd never deny Jesus; then he did. Second, when he said he didn't know Jesus, his words of denial were betrayed by his tears. In his words of denial, he was running from Jesus, but in his tears, he was on his way back to his Savior's side.

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Making words and actions match has been a strong focus of my Christian experience.

God, the Bible, and the church were always part of my life. Parents involved in pastoral ministry. Grandparents on both sides who were involved in missions and pastoral ministry. Two set of great grandparents involved in missions, pastoral ministry and street ministry. One grandfather who built a church, Christian Day School, and campground with a dormitory, cafeteria, and tabernacle. He would fly on a regular basis from Pennsylvania in his single prop Cessna to the Bahama Islands to do mission work that his daddy had started. Another grandfather, who served in the Korean Conflict, when he pulled into port, would go to work evangelizing the locals.

In all of his doing, my grandfather took time to share nuggets of truth that guided his life
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When being unfairly criticize or maligned … "Don't worry about what they say, boys, a lie will always hang itself."

When facing a tough, unfair situation … "We have a choice. We can, either, let it bitter us or better us."

When trying to make the choice between two competing options … "Honor God and He will honor you."

To this day those words encourage me when I have been misunderstood or ridiculed. They cause me to be aware of how I should respond to situations I face. They help me evaluate what I am doing, why I am doing it and for whom I am doing it.

As I said earlier part of my Christian heritage was church. When the church was open, we were there. Many times, it was open because **we** were there. Cleaning, mowing, attending special services, or just there an hour or two early to get things ready for service. Whatever it was, when church was on, so were we.

Rarely did anything ever supersede the opportunity to go to church, camp meeting, revival or some other special service. You see, our life was lived in the context of a defined Christian World view. Our first and foremost responsibility was to give God absolute first place in our lives. Second was to be connected to our community of faith. We never really thought, "We can't go to church tonight because we have to go here or there." It was just the opposite: "We can't go here or there because we have church tonight." And Sunday, well, it was always a day of rest and worship. Nothing else.

If you need a secret on how to enjoy Sunday as a complete day of rest, ask me after the service.

In addition to that, every other day of the week was to be lived with the awareness that God is real, and He is present, as well. He is watching. He is involved in this world and in my life. And I was to invite Him into my daily routine. There was regular encouragement to read my Bible daily; pray in the morning when I got up; I was given a prayer of blessing and protection by my parents as I left the house, a prayer of thanks at every meal and one of thanks & protection as we went to sleep at night. All of this, with the constant consideration of what God may want me to do with my life.

The Christian school I attended for elementary and middle school built on this. They had chapel services 3 days a week, school revival services, their own mission's week, their own summer camp meetings, New Year's Eve watch night services and who knows what else. Daytime and nighttime service attendance was mostly mandatory for those services. The school added mandatory sessions on Christian Theology that played out in a weekly repetition of a question-and-answer form of catechism.

If I were compensated at a fair rate for the hours I spent in some sort of church service, I could have retired the day I graduated from high school.

After school, we would hurry home so that we could listen to the Sugar Creek Gang & Uncle Charlie at 4:00 on the radio. That was not a replay-able pod cast. If you missed it, it was gone. At night it was Stories of Great Christians at 6:45. On Saturday mornings, we would listen to Ranger Bill, and the Children's Bible Hour. On Sunday night at 10:30, it was Unshackled from

Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago. All of these were audio stories, some real and others fictional, that pointed our hearts and minds toward God and His will for our lives.

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That was some of the teaching part of discipleship in my life. All of that is well and good, but the real test is always in going from the teaching and learning to the living and doing.

I had the opportunity to see how that worked in the lives of my parents and grandparents. On blistering cold nights In Pennsylvania, I often heard my dad pray as he crawled into the car or walked into a warm house, "Jesus please be with all those who are caught out in this cold and don't have a place to go." As a family, we became the answer to that prayer. One night we stopped to pick up a Jersey bound hitchhiker on a snowy night on Interstate-81 as we traveled from North Carolina to Pennsylvania. It was snowing and sleeting; daddy saw him and pulled over. There were 6 of us in the car already. As I remember it was a 1978 Chevy Caprice with two full bench seats. Four of us squeezed in the back seat so he could sit in the front with the other two, and over the next several hours he was warm and with each passing mile, he was closer home.

There was a chained gang of convicts who were working close to grandma's house on a hot day in North Carolina. When the guard knocked on the door to see if the guys could have a drink of water, Grandma said, "Yes I'll get a pitcher and some glasses." To which the guard replied, "Ah no, they can just drink out of the hose faucet." To which Grandma replied, "They will not. They'll drink out of a glass just like every other human…a cup of cold water in Jesus' name."

Or to know that Grandpa, a talented High School football player, gave up football his senior year because he read in 1 Corinthians that his body was the temple of the Holy Spirit. He thought well if my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, then why am I damaging His temple. Done.

Then, after leading a drug addict to Jesus, my parents and grandparents gave her a place to live, gave her a place in our family and for the last 35 years they cared for her and provided for her until she passed away just 2 months ago.

Discipleship is not just in the learning about Jesus, but it is also in the doing and the not-doing of what we've say we've learned about Him.

I hope what I have been taught and what I have seen lived out in the do's and the don'ts of my own life are what I've modeled for my children.

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As Pastor Daryl mentioned last week there is no single prescribed way of doing discipleship correctly. If I counted accurately, I've been part of about 8 different churches throughout my life. The unique ways in which each lived out what they said should be done or not done as part of the Christian life has had a common thread woven through them. Each congregation wanted their lives to reflect and their community to live out the words of scripture. They wanted their well said to be a well done.

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We are about to celebrate holy communion which is part of doing discipleship.
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Here we celebrate the Eucharist the first Sunday of every month. Other churches do it every Sunday. Some churches do it once a year and to them it seems like one time too many. They may do it different ways than we do it. But the number of times we do it and how we do it is nowhere near as important as what we allow to happen in us and through us when we do it.

In this moment, we imitate Jesus because we dip our hand in the cup with Him. And like Peter, we come here and resolve not to betray Him or deny Him. We may even hear Him say hard words about where we are headed in life — and He may say them as a warning, or He may say them as a promise.

As we come to His table, will you, also, let Him encourage you with the words recorded in Luke's gospel, when He says, "don't stop doing the things that I have told you to do and every time you do it, remember me."

Will you hear Him say, — what you are doing in life is My work, it's My body, it's My blood, it's Me living through you?

He is here to guide us; He is here at this table to correct us; He is here to encourage us.

Anywhere, any time this table is set, it is Jesus preparing to meet with His disciples.

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Heavenly Father, we thank You for all the ways You call us to grow in our knowledge of You, to fall deeply in love with You and to live out your will in your sanctuary and on the streets. Christ, join us now as we gather around your table. In Christ's name, Amen.

Holy Communion

Closing Song: "I Want to Be Like Jesus"

Closing Word and Benediction: Pastor Diddle

Look at the kind of person that Peter became – from the one that denied Jesus over and over again, to the leader, the real leader, of the church around the world. This is what the Lord can do – this is what the Spirit of God can do in a person whose life is given entirely to Christ.

Let's give our lives entirely that we might know Jesus, that we might say the right things, that we might do what Jesus would do in every instance.

Thanks for coming to worship today. The Lord bless and keep you. Amen

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