

Matthew (Quality: Very good, Quiet)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 17 October 1999

Preacher: Cornwell, Peter

[0 : 00] As the Lord may be pleased to help me, I would ask your attention to Matthew chapter 16 and verse 24.

Matthew 16 verse 24. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Matthew 16 verse 24. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

This, friend, is a special word. The Lord Jesus spoke to his disciples.

And not only his immediate disciples then, but I believe to all those that are his.

[1 : 30] Down to the end of time. And, friends, how we feel at times to need a word of encouragement.

That we might be helped. That we might be enabled to press on in the pathway that leads unto eternal life.

We have a humble hope. Sometimes the Lord has begun his work in our hearts and called us by his grace.

But, oh, how to endure. How to carry on. We don't know how to do it. From time to time.

The way is so dark. Our hearts seem to be so hard. And so carnal.

[2 : 39] And so worldly. And so taken up with time things. But, friends, the Lord deals with this very matter.

And instructs us how we should walk. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself.

Friends, has it been put in our hearts to come after him?

Are we seekers? Are we born again? Friends, I don't doubt we can look back to those times.

When we were born again. When we wasn't interested. There wasn't the desire to come after Jesus. To find him. But, friends, what do we have to say now?

[4 : 01] How stands the case now with you and I? Well, is it not that we are deeply concerned about eternity?

We realize that it is getting nearer and nearer to us. And are we ready? Are we ready?

Are we ready to enter eternity? Have we got those precious evidences in our hearts that Jesus is ours?

That he has a love toward us? Is there a desire in our hearts toward him? Do we, are we seeking to find him?

Are we troubled when we can't find him? Friends, oh, how hard we find it is to continue in the way.

[5 : 23] Our daily lives. There are time things. We know that. We are all solemnly aware of that. But, let us come to the spiritual side of things.

How is it with you and I, day by day? How do we rise in the morning?

What are our first thoughts? We know what they should be. They should be.

They should be. To give thanks and praise to our God for his mercy toward us through another night.

But, friends, how often it isn't like that. how often we are thinking about those things that we plan to do.

[6 : 47] But even perhaps before that, there are many times when we may complain.

Complain. Complain of the night ours. How it has been with us. I suppose it is so with everybody as they get older, the nights are more trying.

They are not like they used to be when we were young. But, friends, what mercies we have.

generally speaking, we get a measure of sleep and rest.

Sometimes much more than others. but, friends, it seems to me we are always ready to complain.

[8 : 19] We are always ready to find fault. Friends, oh, that we could consider the mercies of our God toward us.

Why there are so many cases worse than us. Why we have nothing to complain of, really, when we consider the sufferings of some.

We don't know half what people do suffer. But, friends, we should be concerned.

We should be found exercised and seeking the Lord. Even when we have a fair amount of health and strength so that we can go about our daily things for the most part, friends, we should, we should be found seeking the Lord before we commence on our labours.

We should, and I hope we do at times, feel our need of the Lord to go before us in our daily things, to edge up our way when things are not right, are not according to the will of our God.

[10 : 30] we have seen the Lord's hand go before us many times and hedged up our way.

We have found that he has overturned our desires or plans or schemes that haven't taken place.

And it may not always be because of health. Unexpected things come in our lives.

And our plans and schemes are overturned. But, friends, the Lord knows the end from the beginning and what he will do with us each.

And we are in his hands. He is the heavenly potter. We are his clay. And he will do as he pleases with us.

[11 : 43] And we will have to walk in that pathway that he has appointed for us. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself.

Friends, are we seeking the Lord day by day?

I'm speaking for myself and I'm sure it must be so with you many times. The Sabbath day is a special day.

I feel I can say and no doubt you can. We need the Lord more on the Sabbath day than any other day.

If the Sabbath day is to be blessed to us, then, friends, we must have the Lord's presence.

[13 : 13] and I believe this is a great concern and exercise to us as we enter upon the Sabbath day and especially as we enter into his cause.

we want his presence. We want his presence. We need his presence. We must have his presence. We can't continue without it.

Without it, it will be an empty form. Ah, friends, and without it, we fear we shall be brought to confusion.

then, friends, we need the hearing ear. we all need the hearing ear, you and me, the hearing ear.

And we can't give it ourselves. We can't put ourselves in the Spirit. And so, friends, what cause we have to fall before our God, to bow before him, to plead with him that he should come in our midst and bless us and make one in our midst it's his presence, it's his power that we need.

[15 : 04] But, oh, how far off we are sometimes. Friends, haven't we been stacked many, many times as we have sat in the pew to listen, to hear God's word and have found ourselves anywhere but in the house of God, anywhere but in the presence of God.

Our minds have been far away. We've been amazed at the places where we have roamed to.

Ah, friends, how dependent we are upon the Lord to take us in his hands, to open our eyes and our ears and our understanding and causes were to enter with divine power into our hearts, to instruct us in the way that we are to go, to feed our souls with living bread.

it's only his power, the power of God, the blessed spirit of God that can convey these things to us and deliver us from empty formalities.

and then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself.

[17 : 06] Friends, how we seem to utterly fail in denying ourselves. I say again, we have those things in our lives that are a trouble, a concern.

Sometimes they're mountains. We can't take them to the Lord and leave them in his hands even whilst we are in the house of God.

They come again and again, take possession of our hearts. We find we're scheming and planning. How can we overcome this great difficulty?

But friends, we're to deny ourselves. I remember, I may have told you this before, I don't know, but it will bear repeating if I have told it to you.

But it concerning time things and the responsibility of them and so on, there was a shepherd that I know and he, his sheep had broken loose.

[18 : 47] They had entered a wood, a wood, and he was trying to find those sheep in that wood, which was naturally like an impossible thing.

But it was the week night, the week evening, that there was a service in the house of God where he attended.

He looked at his watch and he realized that if he was going to that service, he'd got to go, he'd got to leave those sheep.

And friends, he committed those sheep into the hands of his God and went to the house of God.

I believe that is walking this word out. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself.

[20 : 01] he left these sheep in the hands of the Lord and he went to the house of God. After the service, he went back to the wood to find the sheep.

He begged that the Lord would guide him to where those sheep was. And friends, the Lord heard his prayer and guided him to those sheep.

I never forgotten him. Friends, that's the pathway that the Lord will have his children walking.

In other words, we should put the Lord first. Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven.

Our carnal hearts and flesh would say, but there's reason with everything. We must. There's no reasoning, friends. there is no excuses, no excuses.

[21 : 29] Nothing is acceptable before God that should come before God. We should then leave everything, everything, into the hands of our God and he will take care of those things.

Whatever fears we may have, whatever thoughts we may have, seek ye first the kingdom of heaven.

if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.

Friends, we have many occasions in the word of God when the Lord spoke to various ones and said, follow me.

I believe Luke was one of them in particular and he left all and followed him.

[23 : 03] friends, how short we come in these things, whether it be the Sabbath or whether it be a week day, especially week days.

Friends, how we need to beware of finding and making excuses why we should not go, why we should attend to something else.

But friends, oh, the Lord, I say again, accepts no excuses. remember the word where there were various ones who made excuses why they shouldn't follow the Lord.

One said, let me go and bury my dead. Why, you and I might say, well, that's quite a reasonable excuse.

It wasn't with the Lord. Friends, the Lord said, let the dead bury their dead.

[24 : 46] Of course, there is the spiritual application of these things. and friends, the Lord doesn't expect the impossible from his children.

His children are not exempt on the Sabbath day, for instance, from sicknesses, afflictions, things that come upon them.

Where would they be when they are brought down? if there was nobody to attend to them, professionally, it is needful.

You might say, well, the Lord said, let the dead bury their dead. Friends, the Lord, he knows the pathway that his children have to walk in.

And if I might reverently say, he understands. He understands.

[26 : 36] But, friends, the Lord knows there's many times with us when we're despondent, cast down, and have many doubts and fears, and are very apt to listen to the temptations of the adversary, and make excuse why we shouldn't go.

But, friends, how do we know? Even this morning, I know we're here.

But what if we wasn't? What if we'd yielded to some temptation? What if we'd yielded to unbelief?

What if we'd yielded to temptations of the of the various sorts?

And it may be we could have made the effort and come to the house of God and haven't done?

[28 : 15] It wouldn't be the first time with some of us, would it? us. But how do we know? Whether this might be the very morning when the Lord was about to bless us.

We know. We know that there are times when his children are constrained and led of the Spirit into the house of God and whatever there may be that would hinder them, they won't be hindered.

They can't be hindered. Simeon couldn't be hindered to go to the temple of the Lord on that particular day and hour he went by the power of God.

But friends, these things come into our minds sometimes. We don't know when the Lord is going to be pleased to bless us.

And what if it should be on one of those mornings, one of those days when we gave in to the weakness of our heart and didn't come to the house of God.

[29 : 45] And what if that should have been the time when the Lord would have blessed us in our souls? We don't know when the Lord is going to bless his word to us.

And therefore we should make the effort. We should venture. Remember those that went backward and forward and could not find him?

They didn't give up, did they? They didn't say, it's no good, we can't find him, we might as well give up going backward and forward.

No, they went backward and forward. And the time came when they found him. Yes. And they rejoiced.

so friends, we are to take heed to this world.

[30 : 56] If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

So friends, we are instructed clearly to put first things first. God should be first in all our thoughts and our schemes and our plans.

Lord would make us tender, exercise our hearts and draw us toward him.

God is there a desire in your heart and mind that we might know him, that we might find him, that he would bless us.

There are those times when the Lord hides his face, we know. There was so with the psalmist. Oh, that I knew where I might find him.

[32 : 17] And in that psalm, is his mercy clean, gone forever? Will he be favorable no more? do not these thoughts come into our hearts from time to time?

But friends, it is our mercy that our God loves with an everlasting love.

An everlasting love. there are those times, those days, and not only days, sometimes it is longer than days, but we can't find him.

We are in darkness. We have many fears. We get very despondent.

But friends, hasn't the Lord come again and again to us?

[33 : 42] And sometimes we haven't been looking for him, have we? We've been in darkness, we've been dwelling upon our darkness sometimes.

The word tells us that we should look unto Jesus, not to our sorrows, look unto Jesus.

Jesus. He has the words of eternal life.

He goes before his children. Friends, that is a wonderful thought to consider.

Our Jesus goes before us. Oh, friends, oh, that we might prove to die, that our Jesus has gone before us.

[35 : 07] I did feel a little encouragement in the opening hymn that the Lord Jesus had gone before us. Because I've had this text with me for a couple of days, I should think, now, which is not usual with me.

but I had it before I left home and it's remained with me. Though I'd been afraid to announce it as the text for fear that it may not have been of the Lord, but I say again, the opening hymn did encourage me, that it was of him.

Oh, friends, how we need him to come to our health in the sanctuary.

We need it daily, we need it in our profession, all the time. We need to be cared.

We need to be exercised of right and concerned. Friends, how do we live?

[36 : 50] Do we take things for granted? We need to be for granted. Friends, I wonder how many of those people on that Paddington express train had any thoughts about eternity when they got on that train.

friends, how solemn these things are, and how suddenly they can come upon us.

I say again, the Lord knows the end from the beginning, and what he will do with each of us, we are in his hands.

There is a time to be born, and a time to die. Friends, how do we live?

Are we daily concerned about our state and condition? Do we daily feel our need of him?

[38 : 16] to come, to create in us a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within us? Friends, we need that so much.

Are we prepared, are we ready, to deny ourselves, and take up our cross, and follow him? there's many things, many crosses. We don't want them. There are afflictions, there are sore afflictions.

They hurt, they're painful, they leave us helpless. us. But, friends, we're instructed to take them up.

Take them up. You say, well, how can I take them up? Friends, we are to take them up.

[39 : 34] we are to receive them as from God. As from God. He permits these things to come upon us, to afflict us.

We read in the word, it is through much tribulation. Ye shall enter the kingdom of heaven. That's no comfort to a poor soul, is it, that has many trials, many tribulations, many afflictions.

But, friends, we are, we are to take up our cross and follow him. We are to accept these things and realize they're in the Lord's hands, that, friends, the Lord gives, the Lord takes away, not only life, but health.

Yes. And, friends, how often can you and I truly, humbly, say before our God, thy will be done.

Thy will be done. Ah, well, in this sore affliction, yes.

[41 : 32] When grace is given us, friends, and the love of God is in exercise in our heart, I believe we will be enabled to say, thy will be done.

If this is thy will, if this is the way, then, friends, I believe we shall prove that it's for our good, all things work together for good to them that love God.

Oh, friends, oh, that we might be enabled to consider these things and to walk them out. walk them out. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Oh, friends, oh, that the Lord might enable you and I so to humbly walk before him.

[42 : 58] Oh, that we might be delivered from fretfulness, envy in others and rebelliousness.

we know these things hurt and are very painful to us when we are denied them.

But friends, these things sometimes are sent and given to us to bring us down to the feet of Jesus.

Lord, help me. It takes a lot to bring us there from time to time. In reality, Lord, help me.

Ah, there were many in the word of God that were brought there. They had to cry unto the Lord to help them.

[44 : 23] And as you and I are enabled to look back over our lives, haven't there been many times when we have been brought to that very pledge.

Lord, help me, help me. I can't go any further. I don't know how to go on any further. The way is hard.

I don't know how to endure. Take up the cross. cross.

Then if any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Well, friends, may the Lord help you and I, I, to walk in this path, to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God and help us to realize that our times are in his hands and all events at his command.

[45 : 48] well, may the Lord bless a few things. For his name's sake, Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.