

# Bristol Conference 1977-06 Similies-Christ Gospels

by Stan Ford

---

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of following Jesus' example and living according to His teachings, including prioritizing God and family, giving up worldly possessions, and bearing the cross for Jesus Christ.*

**Duration:** 43:15

**Scripture:** Luke 2:41-46, Luke 14:25, Luke 14:27-30, John 6:38, John 8:30, John 8:32

**Topics:** "Discipleship", "Surrender"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on the attitude of Jesus towards doing the will of God. He uses the story of Jesus as a young boy getting lost in the temple to illustrate the cost of being a Christian and a disciple. The preacher emphasizes the importance of surrendering all aspects of our lives to Jesus, including our priorities, purposes, and possessions. He challenges young people to examine their ambitions and consider if they align with God's will. The sermon concludes with the powerful message that Jesus' words should be heard like the blast of a bugle, urging us to love and not hate.

---

## Transcript

I, as heav'n's beloved son, I want to see the saints in joy, the triumph he hath won. I want to spread our long love and count it all. I want to see him glorified.

Just a word of prayer. God and Father, as we have taken words upon our lips, before thee we feel we can be honest and say that this is the desire of our hearts. We do want to see him glorified as heav'n's beloved son.

Oh, we do want to see the saints in joy, the triumph he has won. We want to spread along the way the victories of his cross. We want to leave the world behind and count it all but dry.

Help us do it. Help us tonight in our study of thy word, so to present ourselves before thee, that we will go from this place determined to be the men and women thou wouldst have us be. For Jesus' sake.

Amen. We have been thinking together of the words of the Lord Jesus. Ye are the salt of the earth.

Ye are the light of the world. Tonight we're taking a very big step. Ye are my disciples.

Ye are my disciples. With this in view, would you turn with me into the 8th chapter of the Gospel according to John, please. John, chapter 8. And I would like us to commence reading in verse 30.

In the 8th chapter of the Gospel of John, And he, the Lord Jesus, spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believe on him, If ye continue in my words, then are ye my disciples indeed. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

The Gospel according to Luke and the 14th chapter, please. The Gospel according to Luke and the 14th chapter, please. Verse 25.

I would appreciate it if you would follow the words along with me in thought. I'm reading, of course, from the authorized version. The 25th verse of the 14th chapter of Luke.

And there went great multitudes with him. And he turned and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, his wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether they have sufficient to finish? Let, happily, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able, with ten thousand, to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

I say they're tremendously solemn words, aren't they? There is no way, please, there is no way under heaven, that I can soften the impact of these words. There is no way under heaven that I want to soften the impact, or I want that impact to be felt by myself as I even speak this evening. There is one thing that is absolutely certain, that when the Lord Jesus spoke of discipleship, and spoke of those who were, or could be, his disciples, he was speaking to those who were Christians.

Now all Christians are not disciples, but all disciples are Christians. So before I speak even of discipleship, may I ask, very pointedly, may I ask, are you a Christian? Of course, when I speak of discipleship, I'm not asking, are you a Christian, I'm asking, what sort of Christian are you? And I think between these two statements, there lies tremendous truth. The Lord dared, it seems to me, as a teacher, expect us to be his scholars.

The Lord dared, as a leader, expect us to be his followers. And the Lord, as an example, was an example who was worth following. Now I make that statement because I believe it to be absolutely essential to an understanding of discipleship.

The Lord himself cast a great, great shadow across his own teaching. Never once could a man point their finger at Jesus Christ and say, Lord, you told men to do what you didn't do yourself. There are three avenues of truth that we're going to look at this evening.

First of all, we're going to look at them in the life of the Lord Jesus, and then we will trace them in our lives. I want to ask this all-important question, what was the attitude of Jesus Christ to life's priority? Now repeat. What was the attitude of Jesus Christ to life's priority? The second thing I want to ask is this, what was the

attitude of Jesus Christ to life's purpose? And the third, most of you have gathered already, for they seem to fit as a glove upon a hand.

What was Christ's attitude to life's priority? What was Christ's attitude to life's purpose? But what was Christ's attitude to life's possession? In a moment we will think of a disciple's attitude to these three things. But let's look at that one who cast a shadow across his own teaching. What was his attitude to life's priority? First of all, what were life's priorities for him? I think they're summed up so perfectly in Holy Writ, don't you? He said, I came not to do my will, but the will of Him who sent me.

When it comes to the tender personal relationship in the family, what was his attitude then? Come with me for a moment in thought. Let's wend our way to that hand of men and women as they make their way to the place where God is to be worshipped. Oh, there will be other things, surely, that have to do with the Roman rule.

But the worship of God is there before them. And suddenly from amongst them a boy of twelve is missing. And after looking and looking and looking, eventually his earthly parents find him.

Could there be anything more tender? Could there be a toy more personal than the toy of a son with an earthly father? As they come and find this boy of twelve, they find him not like many boys playing in the fields, running the streets, but they find him surrounded with the very leading theologians of his day, speaking indeed of the things of God, astounding them with his immense knowledge. They come to rebuke him. And he but said, Wish ye not that I shall be about my father's end.

Here is life's priority. That in the tender toys of human relationship, Jesus Christ, for those who will be disciples, must ever have first place. As Jesus Christ gave to his father, God, the first place.

What was his attitude to life's purpose? In other words, what was his attitude and his relationship to the cross? The Father sent upon to be the savior of the world. From the heights of glory down into the scene, the blessed Son of God came. What was his attitude to life's purpose? Hearken to the words of Holy Writ.

Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross. Oh, what an attitude. But what was his attitude to life's possession? The getting of which occupies the time of men and women so frequently, so much time.

What was his attitude to life's possession? The Word of God says, though he was rich, yet for our sake he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich. Oh, brethren and sisters, my younger as well as my older friend, as we look at Jesus Christ, cannot we say this? That if ever there was one who set an example that we should follow, both in life's priorities and purposes, as well as in life's possession, then Jesus Christ was that person. In the verses that we have read together this very evening, it seems to me that the words of the Lord Jesus come like the blast of a trumpet.

I know not whether you can hear it down here, but where we're staying just a little way up the road, every morning we hear the sound of the bugle. I don't know who blows it. Every evening we hear the sound of the bugle.

I know not who blows it. There's a camp somewhere that's awakened out of their sleep by the blast of the bugle, and it seems to me that this is just what Jesus Christ does in the verses we have read. It rings around this audience tonight like the blast of a very trumpet.

Hearken to those tremendous words, HATE NOT, CANNOT. Oh, friends. HATE NOT, CANNOT.

BEAR NOT, CANNOT. FORSAKE NOT, CANNOT. CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE IF YOU HATE NOT.

CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE IF YOU BEAR NOT. CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE IF YOU FORSAKE NOT.  
Well, that's what Jesus said.

That's what Jesus said. Are we a Christian? What sort of Christian are we? HATE NOT, CANNOT. It seems to me that the Lord is here dealing with life's priorities, and he deals with our affections.

He speaks of mother and father. He speaks of wife and children. He goes on and dares to tell us of brethren and sisters, and then brings it to its close and dares say, Yea, and your own life.

Oh, friend, here he's dealing with our affection, the very seat of all joy and happiness. He dares to tell us that if we hate not mother or father, wife or children, brethren or sisters, or our own life, we cannot be his disciples. Now, just a little word about that old English word.

I know what some of you are thinking. In its usual setting in our English language, it means almost to detest, to hate. But it can't mean that in the Bible, can it? It can't mean that, because when it comes to mother and father, almost the first lesson you children learned were the Ten Commandments.

You learned honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise that it may be well with thee, and thou mayst live long upon the earth. So it can't be that hatred of mother and father when God tells us that we must honor our mother and father, wife and children. But doesn't the Bible say, Men, love your wives.

Have we not commanded to care for and provide and love our children? No, the word that's translated in our authorised version, hate, is the word which means love less than. Love less than. I loved my wife.

I loved her 38 years ago when I married her, and I love her more now than I did then. But I want to tell you something. I believe that she would have me say that I must love the Lord more.

Do you know the marvel for me? Are you listening now? Do you know the marvel for me? That the more I love the Lord, the more I love my wife? Oh no, the marvel is just this. The greater thanks I give to the Lord, the more I love my family, the more I love my wife, the more I love my children and grandchildren. It seems to be almost paradoxical.

But that's how it works. That's how it works. The Lord dares to say on life's priorities, Are you going to be my disciple? My disciple.

He dares to command this supreme love. He says, will you give me my rightful place? Love that never falters. A love that stands the test.

A love that lays upon the altar the fairest and the best. A love that asks no questions. A love that pays the price.

A love that makes undaunted the final sacrifice. Love less than father love. I remember as though it was yesterday, although maybe six or seven years passed in Malaysia, spending such a long time with a dear, dear young man of some 23 or 24 years who has been brought up, have lived all his days as a follower of Islam.

And if you think it's difficult to win a Jew for Christ, you've never tried to win a Muslim for Christ. You can win a Jew for Christ easier than you can win a Muslim for Christ. I remember it so well as we sat together and began to speak of the things of God and then the great differences of the Christian faith.

I remember looking at him and with a smile saying, tell me, how many followers did Muhammad have before he was born? I remember the look he gave me as though I was dull. As opposed to him I was. And he said, how could anyone have a follower before he was born? Well, I have a savior that had followers before he was born.

For Moses, it was said, he chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. It's seeming the approach of Christ, greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. And that was a few years before he was born.

To have followers before he even birthed because he is none other than God, Emmanuel, God with us. God with us. I remember after a long, long struggle seeing this young man on his knees and hear him sob out and ask the Lord for salvation.

Oh, I wish I could say amen then. But I can't, you see. All I know is then that I've never heard of him from that day to this.

I tried, but he went back immediately and told his people that he had become a Christian, that he was laying aside the Islamic faith. And from that day to now I've never heard of him. I don't know what's happened to him.

We've tried to follow him. Our dear President of Red Dunder in Malaysia tried to find him. God! I don't even know this.

There are some folks that to trust Jesus Christ does mean father and mother. It does mean brothers and sisters. It does mean everything.

And you and I have it so easy. You and I, and I speak to myself, I use the words again of George Harrison with whom I once went first right into your country those years ago. Do you all still remember he used to say every time you point your finger at anyone you point three fingers at yourself.

And I'm pointing three fingers at myself tonight. What does it cost me to be a Christian? What does it cost me to be a disciple? Am I prepared to say, Lord Jesus, in all things thou shalt have the preeminent? Is it wonderful to know that is a possibility, a glorious possibility? Is it wonderful to know that God the Holy Spirit is in the hearts and lives of all who trust the Lord Jesus that they might be able to enter into the very victory of real discipleship. Take not, cannot, bear not, cannot.

It is not now on life's priorities and our affections the Lord centers his remarks. It is now upon life's purposes and he touches our ambitions. Oh, how he touches our ambitions.

There are young people in this service tonight. May I ask you something? What are your ambitions for life? What are they? To get a good degree in university? To come out with honors? To leave your mark academically in this city? God bless you if that's your aim. What are your ambitions? Maybe to marry, maybe to raise a family for God.

What are your ambitions? Maybe there's someone here tonight, I know not. Maybe there's someone here tonight and you hear the words of the Lord Jesus, Go, go ye into all the world and preach the gospel. Maybe there's some young men and women in this place tonight who are prepared to lay all on the altar for him and say, Lord, Lord, it is not just that I am prepared to go to any country preferably.

I'm prepared to go wherever you want me to go. Oh, please. The missionary call does not start with a cause or a country.

It starts with a cause or a conscience. Some years ago, I'm going back maybe ten now, a young fellow came to see me and as we climbed the stairs and went into my study and I sat down and he was so, oh, he was so upset. Uncle Sam, he said.

I'd known him as a boy in children's meetings. Uncle Sam. I gave my life to God and he threw it back.

Oh, come now, come now, that's not true, that's not true. You better tell me what you mean. He said, I went to a missionary report meeting and I heard Mr. Marsh on the chad and I said, God, I'll go to the chad.

He said, I started to learn French for I knew I'd have to grasp French. I've got a good pass in my examinations. I went and spent a year in France and now I can speak it very fluently.

And yet the door has been completely shut and I've never once had the opportunity of going to chad. It's no, no, no. Every time I ask for a leaver, no, no, no.

I offered him my life and I prepared and he threw it back at me. I didn't know what to say. Listen, you young folks, please.

Don't you think that those of us that are older have all the answers to your problems? We don't. We sometimes don't have the answers to our own problems. But I looked at him and I wondered whatever could I say and then I thought, I know.

When I opened the Bible, I said, shall we read a few verses together? I'd like to read you a story and I read the story of two men who went in company with ten others to spy on a land who came back and said, we're not prepared to be grant-offered. You can be a grant-offer if you like, but not us. Caleb the Magistrate.

He said, God will go in and we'll fight the giants and we'll conquer the land. If you're with us, God will do anything. Thirty-eight years.

God didn't take a bit of notice of them. Thirty-eight years, they went round and round and round and round and round and round and round in the wilderness. One day, Moses climbed Mount Nebo, spoke to his God and languished in death.

And God said, Joshua, thirty-eight years ago, you said you'd go in and conquer the land. Thirty-eight years ago, you said the giants weren't too big and you were not prepared to be a grant-offer. Are you still prepared to go in? Oh God, don't let me wait thirty-eight years before you let me go in.

God, make it that every year of thirty-eight years, it be necessary that every year I'll be able to say, Lord, I'm still ready. I'm still ready. If there be, if there be past the winning heart, that's what God's looking for, winning hearts and winning minds to say, Lord, oh Lord, my affections, I'll put you first.

My ambitions, I'll put you first. I'm prepared to bear the cross. Bear not, he said.

You cannot. You cannot. What does it mean, bear the cross? I suppose every one of us would say to a worldly man, a cross is but the sign of death and desperate disappointment.

Death and desperate disappointment. That's what the cross means to a worldly man. What does it mean to a Christian man? The man who's willing to be a disciple, the man who's read and pondered Galatians 2 and 20? I am crucified.

I'll take the cross, Lord. I am crucified with thee. Nevertheless, I live.

I live. Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life that I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

All the wonder of it all, I live. I say, that's regeneration, isn't it? That's regeneration. I am crucified, but I live.

Did I not, when I was with you the last occasion, speaking on the resurrection of Jesus Christ, remind you that I took him from that cross, placed him in a tomb, and wore the stone in front of it, and set a seal on it, and stood a soldier by it. No stone or seal or soldier could keep him in the tomb. Brethren, sisters, if you all come to know Jesus Christ, if you all be born again, if you all trust Him, you'll be able to say, I live.

I live. There's regeneration. But there's not only regeneration, there's cancellation.

I like that, don't you? I live. Yet not I. Not I. That old life has been cancelled. God's got a new life for us.

Why is it that you and I spend so much time in trying to patch up an old life? Why is it we spend so much time in trying to veneer it with film and paper and lovely people? God says, I'll give you a new life, and not only will I give you a new life, but that old life I'll cancel. Cancel forever I live. Yet not I. Oh, but listen, there is not only regeneration and cancellation, but there's transformation.

I wish some of you would shout hallelujah. Really I do. Really I do.

For you see, He cries, I live. Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. Christ liveth in me.

I don't know where first I learned it. It was in a Bible class somewhere. Some place I was in, and Sunday afternoon I went along to the Sunday school Bible class, and spoke to the children and remained to speak to the Bible class.

And then the Bible class leader taught us these words. He didn't teach them to me very well, because I had to sort of bang them out on the typewriter to try and remember them. But this is what he got the class to say.

Lord, will my will to will thy will. Then to will is where the willing will that will thy will within God's will will dwell. You got that? No? You're as dull as I was.

Listen. Lord, will my will to will thy will. Then to will is where the willing will that will thy will within God's will will dwell.

When we cry, I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, but not I. Christ liveth in me. Will my will to do thy will. Oh, but the trumpet blasts, hate not, cannot.

They are not, cannot. But on its third blast it crimes, forsake not, cannot. If first we face together life's priorities and our affections, if then we face life's purpose and our ambitions, now we face life's possessions and our activities.

Life's possessions. The Lord tells the story of two men who are sent out to work. One of them says, I'll take a shovel.

And the other one says, I'll take a sword. One of them says, I tell you what I'll do, I'll go and build. And the other one says, I'll go and battle.

One of them looks and says, I'll go, and my work will be a work of destruction. I'll go to fight. And the other one says, and my work will be a work of construction.

I'll go and build. The Lord takes these two men, as it were, and he tells them their story. He uses it to illustrate the fact that when it comes to our activities, when it comes to life's possessions, that Jesus Christ has the right to be in charge of all our activities, whether it be our building or our battling.

First of all, there was a man who went forth to build. Do you remember what he did? He said, I'm going forth to build. But the problem was this, he wasn't pleased with what was built.

Because when he started, he didn't count the cost. He never took into account that inflation was a very real thing. He never took into an account that sometimes there was work to be done that you never estimated for.

And he searched his job, and the tragedy was, when he came towards its close, he didn't have enough material. Of course he didn't. That's what happens when we go forth with our human effort to build something for God.

There is no human material that can build a house that will stand eternity. We've got to go forth building in His charge. We've got to say, Lord, Lord, I want to learn a simple lesson.

The lesson I want to learn is just this, that I don't want you to do your work through me, says God. I don't want you to do your work through me. I want to do my work through you.

If you step forth to do your work through me, then you'll provide the materials, you'll provide all that's necessary. But if you'll go forth to do God's work through God, He provides the materials. He's there, available with everything that's necessary.

And if you and I are prepared to say, as to our activities, we are prepared to forsake our own effort, our own work, and it's the hardest thing in the world. There's not a brother or sister in this place tonight that doesn't like to feel I should do something for God. I'm afraid you can't do anything for God.

That person gives you all to God and receives both your instructions and material from him. Then there was a man who went forth to battle. The difficulty was, he went forth to battle with 10,000.

Oh, what a congregation. I say, wouldn't we be thrilled if next Sunday we had 10,000 in the gospel? Oh, we're going to build from Him for God. Look at our numbers.

The difficulty was, he forgot that he went to fight against 20,000. He's going forth in his own strength. He's going forth with his own power.

He's going forth into battle 10,000 against 20,000. He went forth underestimating the enemy. If you and I are going to be disciples of the Lord Jesus, brethren, sisters, don't let's underestimate the enemy.

Don't let's do it. But the Lord dares to say this, if you'll forsake all, then you can be My disciples. If you do not forsake all, you can't be.

But if you want to be My disciples, then please remember this, that this isn't your labor. This isn't your effort. It's your simple coming to Me and allowing Me to work out My life through you.

Channels only. Blessed Master, thou with all Thy love and power flowing through Me, thou can choose Me every day and every hour. Any sort of appeal.

But I feel like making an appeal tonight. Oh, I'm not going to appeal for anyone to leave their seat and come to the front. I'm not going to appeal for anyone to put their hand down.

But I want to make an appeal, and this is the appeal I want to make. Are you a Christian? What sort of Christian are you? Are you tonight prepared to say to the Lord Jesus, Lord Jesus, as far as my affections are concerned, as far as my ambitions are concerned, as far as my activities are concerned, I'm prepared to bow my knee to Thee and prepared to say, Lord, You're going to be first. That's going to cost.

But oh, hallelujah, what fruit it will bring. For I said a moment or two ago, putting Christ first in our marriage makes a marriage of joy. Putting Christ first in our family life makes a family of thrilling.

Putting life, Christ first, in the purposes of our life. Oh, cannot we borrow the words of Lindsley Clegg and cry, Life with a capital L? Putting Jesus Christ first as to our possessions. Does it make a man poorer? No, no, no, no, no.

It makes him richer to be with Christ, to have the blessings of His presence and one day, one glorious day, to stand before Him and be able to say, Lord, if on life's journey I've won a crown, don't I want it because You were with me, so it's not mine, it's Yours, to cast it at His feet and hear Him say, Well done. It'll be worth it all. Worth it all then.

Could I appeal that tonight someone here may be willing before God to say, I will be thy disciple. I'm going to ask those three present if they would come up again please and sing to us as we close the words of that little chorus. I scribbled those words when we were in Durham just two weeks ago.

I wanted to express what I felt. I wonder if there is someone here tonight wants to say Amen. Amen.

I want to see Him glorified. Do you want that? No, no, no, no. Not just Jesus.

I want to see Him glorified as God's beloved Son. I want to see the saints in joy. The triumph see as well.

I'm going to ask my brethren just to sing it to us and then I'm going to close the prayer. I want to see Him glorified. In the quietness of these moments dear Lord together we want to face the fact that life can be so full.

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**