

The Elements of Apprenticeship

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[0 : 00] So Kara and I felt like this morning was a trip back in time to our time when we were at camp before we actually started dating and then we met at church but we really built our relationship at a church camp and then served there I think for 25 years.

We sang back when we were in high school. I'll tell you a great story about that one, Worthy is the Lamb. I love kid stories. You've probably already figured that out about me. When my youngest brother was three, I was 15, there's quite an age gap between us, he's in the bathtub talking to my mom and in the middle of his soak he says, Mom, why did they kill Worthy?

And she said, what? No, you know, why did they kill Worthy? And she says, Josh, I don't know what you're talking about. Who's Worthy? You know where this is going. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain for us.

That story has been always in my mind ever since, obviously. And you'll probably hear it again because I love it. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain. He deserves all that we give. All that we have to offer to him because he gave everything for us.

And that's something that we certainly want to remember. So, worship team, thank you so much for sharing with us this morning. So, this is the last family introduction for the Hopkins family.

[1 : 40] I always point this in the wrong place. There we go. So, this is our daughter, Kayla, her husband, Manny, and their three kids.

Sunny, Jonah, and Jesse. They live in Seattle. Sunny is five. Jonah is four. Jesse is 13 months. Kayla actually caught on video his very first steps.

She saw him stand up. And she said to Manny, quick, get your camera. And sure enough, he took his steps and then said, this is the dumbest thing I've ever seen. And he hasn't walked since.

Because he gets places a lot quicker by crawling.

You could definitely pray for them. Like I said, they live in Seattle. And that's a pretty hostile environment for believers. I don't know if you saw the news this week, but there was just a worship service, a pro-life rally at a park near downtown Seattle.

And it was invaded by a group of Antifa thugs. Got in fights with the police. There was something like 20 arrests. And then the mayor blamed the Christians who were there for causing the whole thing.

[2 : 53] Which was certainly not the case. So pray for their growth in the Lord and for their protection as they're living there. But they've got a great family.

Sunny is keeping Kayla on her toes. She is the queen of deep theological questions. That's one of the things that we don't appreciate about moms and dads of small children. They don't need to go to seminary.

Because their kids are going to ask them questions that are going to drive them into God's word.

And they're going to get that education just by answering their kids' questions. So that's part of the fun of parenting. So that's our family.

And now you know everybody and you'll recognize them when they come here. So let's think back to last week. And if you recall we were looking at a conversation between the Pharisees who were at a point where they were looking for reasons to attack Jesus.

They had moved from being curious to wanting to destroy him. Because he was breaking their rules. And Jesus, not being one to shy away from a fight when it was appropriate, challenged them on their challenging him about the disciples washing their hands.

[4 : 03] And Jesus ended the argument by pointing out that what goes into a person isn't what defiles them, but what comes out. And he talked about the evil of the heart of man. There's one piece of that conversation that I really want to point out to you.

Is that when he talked to the Pharisees and then to the crowd, he said that that point that what goes into the man or the woman doesn't defile them, it's what comes out of the heart.

That was a hard stop. That was the end of the conversation with the crowd. Later, when the disciples questioned him, help us to understand what you meant by that parable, Jesus.

He explained to them, well, stuff that goes into you doesn't make you sick. It goes into your stomach and out it goes. Or doesn't defile you, doesn't make you ritually unpure before God.

But what comes out of your heart. And he listed all these horrible things that are stewing and festering in the heart. It's important to note that he went in depth just with the disciples.

[5 : 09] And we're going to unpack that a little bit more this week as we get into this next section of Mark. But the heart of man is desperately wicked. Jeremiah wrote that in Jeremiah 17.

Ezekiel promised a heart transplant. Remember talking about that? Part of the promise of the coming Messiah is the old heart, the heart of stone. The heart that is impervious to God's work on it is put away.

And it's replaced with a new heart of flesh that is open to the things of God. That is willing to learn. That can be taught and understand and then teach other people. That's our hope.

That's what we rely on. And so we're going to talk for a minute about the process that God goes through to transform our hearts. And then we're going to go through, step by step, a list of things that Jesus was doing in the next part of the story to actually work on developing the hearts of his disciples.

I have to tell you this morning, I'm going to break one of the cardinal rules for preachers of the Bible or speakers in general. There's some things you just don't do.

[6 : 20] Number one, you never talk about time. Because as soon as you talk about time, what do people do? What time is it? How long is this going to go? Is he ever going to end? This guy talks a lot. Is he going to stop? I'll give you a hint.

This isn't true of me, certainly. But a guy who talks a lot about time almost certainly is going to go long. We had a man that was an elder at our church when Kara and I first were married.

I'll never forget this Sunday, 35 minutes into his sermon, he said, and now moving from my introduction, and you could see the whole congregation go, what?

And he went so long-winded that the elder sat down with him and said, brother, you can't preach anymore. What was interesting, he was the best teacher in the church.

If he had a Sunday school that was open-ended so he could move to next week, his class was always the first one to fill. Because Tim could really, really teach God's Word. He just couldn't confine himself to 40 minutes or so.

[7 : 21] So that's the first rule. The second one is never talk about how many points you have. And that's the rule I'm going to break. This is a record, 14 points today. But you don't have to worry.

Don't look at your watch. I'm aware of the time. We're going to touch on these briefly because there's actually a lot more that we could pull out of how Jesus was working to develop his disciples. But these are a list of things that he's doing that I want you to be aware of to apply to your own life because he's doing the same thing with us. But don't worry. I'm aware of the time. And we got food downstairs.

I don't want it to get cold because you'll all blame me. So let's talk about the heart transplant. The Bible talks about the process of sanctification.

I'll give you a theological word today. Sanctification. And there's three tenses that are used in the New Testament for sanctification. The first one is past tense.

[8 : 17] The idea is think about 2 Corinthians 5.21. He who knew no sin became sin on our behalf that we might have the righteousness of God in him.

What happened at the cross, in part, was Jesus took our sin. And when we trust him, when we receive him, he gives us his righteousness.

It's a completed act. Think also of Romans 5.1. Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God. We are already accepted. It's a done deal.

When you put your trust in Christ, you are made righteous before God. As the judge of everything, God bangs his gavel, says, you're clean.

Done. Recognize that, brothers and sisters. You have been made clean before God. Remember that. The next tense is the future tense.

[9 : 18] That's where we're headed. So, for example, a man that many of you know that was here often, Leroy passed away on Tuesday night. His funeral is tomorrow.

And in a moment, he went from a broken body that he couldn't speak. He had pneumonia. He was really just even struggling to breathe when Jim Potter and John and Cassie and I were at the hospital on Tuesday night.

A few minutes after we left, he died. And I say it was a... I choke up when I say it. Which begs the question, why?

Because he was instantly, in a moment, he's before God. And a man who had a stroke as a three-year-old is well. And he's clean before God.

That's what we have to look forward to. 1 John 3, 1-3. See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called the children of God.

[10 : 29] And such we are. For this reason, the world does not know us, because it did not know him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. But we know that when he appears, we will be like him, because we will see him just as he is.

That's what Leroy experienced on Tuesday night. That's what we will experience when the Lord returns, or when we die, and go into his presence. So it's future. So our heart transplant is a past event.

It's a future event. And it's something that's in the present. It's an ongoing process of God working in our lives. That's the process of discipleship, or apprenticeship.

If you recall, early in Mark, early in Matthew, Jesus goes to the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and he sees these fishermen. And he says to me, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

He was calling the disciples. In that case, Peter, James, John, I think Andrew, and Philip were all there. And he called them to follow him. In your life, if you have received Christ as your Lord and Savior, you have accepted that call to follow him, to walk in his footsteps.

[11 : 43] It's a process that happens over the course of your entire life. I heard an illustration once. I don't know if this is true or not, but Michelangelo was asked about his statue, the David.

And they said, well, how did you do that? He said, I just chipped away everything that didn't look like David. Until all that was left was that statue. That's what God is doing in our lives.

He's chipping away at everything that doesn't look like Jesus, using our spouse, our children, our jobs, illness, good things in life as well.

I said that very poorly. Spouses and children are part of the good things. I promise. But God uses those things to shape us to be like Christ.

That's the ongoing work. Think of Romans 8, 28 to 30. And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose.

[12 : 46] For those whom he foreknew, he predestined to become, and here's the kicker, conformed to the image of his son. He's making us like Jesus. So that we would be the firstborn, so that he would be the firstborn among many brethren.

And these whom he predestined, he also called. These he called, he also justified. These whom he justified, he also glorified. In that passage, you actually see all three tenses of sanctification.

Justified. Made, conformed over time, glorified. That's the process. And that's what we're going to look at in the lives of the disciples here.

So turn in your Bibles to Mark chapter 7. We're going to talk about this morning about apprenticeship to Jesus. And while we do, I'm going to tell you a story.

It's another kid's story. So, if you were out and looked in the church office, you might have noticed that there's a new couch and some chairs in there. Those are for you to use.

[13 : 50] They're not just decoration. We got those because we want that area to be a place where if you need to talk to somebody, or if you're a mom with a little kid that needs to be nursed, or just is a little bit rambunctious, you can go in there and there's a comfortable place to sit.

That's what it's there for. The furniture got here, Jim, helped me bring it over to the church, and then the two little boys helped me to put them together.

Now, I want to tell you about these boys. Uriah and Asher and I have been spending some time together while Kara's been gone, so I've had a couple of weeks of stories about them. But it's been fun.

But one of the things I noticed about the boys is they got a good eye to know where I needed to be, where I needed them to be at the next step of the process. You know, a lot of times with little kids,

it's more of a, hey, move out of my way so I can get this done.

But in their case, Asher in particular was right where I needed him to be, which is a great trait in a boy. And so I was talking to Ben about it this morning, and Ben said, well, I learned how to do that by working on a job site.

[14:56] So somebody taught him how to be at the right place, how to anticipate needs. That's apprenticeship at work. That was God's plan, is that he would teach his disciples, who would teach other people, who eventually would teach us, to continue to do what he wanted to have done, and to make us to be like Christ.

That's exactly the process that we're talking about. So we're going to look at 14 things that Jesus did in just a short passage.

Disclaimer. Listen to this. Put it in your head. And remember, because I'm going to mention this again at the end, this is not a checklist. Next, I'm not giving you a new law that you have to obey in order to be pleasing to God.

This is a list of things that God is doing in your life, in partnership with you, to cultivate Christ-likeness, to make you more like Jesus.

But don't think of it as a set of rules. If you think of it as a set of rules, you're missing the point, because we're free from the law. Instead, we're in partnership, working with God, to see these things accomplished.

[16:07] So, Mark chapter 7. You can follow along with me on the monitor or in your Bibles. I'll be perfectly honest. I prefer that you follow along in your Bibles, but whatever is easier for you.

So I'm going to start at verse 31. Again, Jesus went out from the region of Tyre, so he's on the coast of the Mediterranean, and came through Sidon, which is to the north.

It's about a 25-mile walk north. Came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee within the region of Decapolis. The Decapolis is on the south. So he went north, and then he went to the east, to the southeast corner of the Sea of Galilee.

It's a long walk, and he did not take the direct route, which will make sense to you in a moment.

Verse 32. They brought to him one who was deaf and spoke with difficulty, and they implored him to lay hands on him.

Jesus took him aside from the crowd by himself and put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting, he touched his tongue with the saliva. And looking up to heaven with a deep sigh, he said, Ephatha, be opened.

[17:16] And his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was removed, and he began speaking plainly. And he gave them orders not to tell anyone, but the more he ordered them, the more widely they continued to proclaim it.

They were utterly astonished. This is the crowd was utterly astonished, saying, He has done all things well. He makes even the deaf to hear and the mute to speak. In those days, when there was again a large crowd and they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples and said to them, I feel compassion for the people.

Because they have remained with me now three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them away hungry, send them to their homes, they will faint on the way, and some of them have come from a great distance.

And his disciples answered him, Where will anyone be able to find enough bread here in this desolate place to satisfy these people? About a month ago, in the biblical text, they fed 5,000 people.

And Jesus provided. Do you ever, for those of you who are parents or bosses, had to repeat yourself and just want to bang your head against the wall because your children just don't listen?

[18:36] Jesus felt that. He feels your pain. Because they just saw this, and here we are again.

Jesus knows he has to repeat things. And actually, that's the 15th point that I didn't catch when I put together this passage.

Jesus has to repeat himself to get the lessons into our heads. And his disciples answered him, Where will anyone be able to find enough bread here in this desolate place to satisfy these people? And he was asking them, How many loaves do you have? And they said, Seven. And he directed the people to sit down on the ground, and taking the seven loaves, he gave thanks and broke them and started giving them to his disciples to serve to them, and they served them to the people.

They also had a few small fish, and after he had blessed them, he ordered those to be served as well. And they ate and were satisfied, and they picked up seven large baskets full of what was left over of the broken pieces.

About 4,000 were there, plus women and children, so probably 12,000 to 15,000 or more people. And immediately he entered the boat with his disciples and came to the district of Dalmanutha.

[19 : 41] So they went back across the Sea of Galilee by boat to the west shore of the Sea of Galilee. Let's always remember, this is the Word of God.

Let's pray together. God, it's amazing how you do things that are counterintuitive.

You do things that don't make sense to us. Certainly that's true in our own lives, and then we look back in time. We look through the 20-20 vision of hindsight, and God, we see that you really know what you're doing, that you have laid out a plan, that you know what you want to accomplish in us and through us, excuse me, and for us.

And we want to rest in that. Lord, we also want to be obedient to you. We want to partner with you to allow your work in our lives to come to fruition.

So as we talk about how you worked in the disciples' lives, help us to recognize that you are also working in our lives as your apprentices. And I pray this in Jesus' name.

[20 : 48] Amen. Excuse me. So, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart that you have given me the best job I've ever had.

Truly. To be able to sit down and really think about what the Bible says, to take it to heart, to think about how I can extract lessons and truth out of God's Word and give it to you, and get paid to do it, is the greatest gift I've ever, one of the greatest gifts I've ever received.

And I'm really grateful for that. Because it's fun. Now, some of you might think, I'd rather have a root canal. That's not my thing. Because we have different gifts. But you have blessed me more than words can say by letting me do this.

Thank you. That's applause for all of you. So, I got to verse 31.

And part of the fun is, I've read Mark 50 times. But this forces me to pause and think. So, a verse I routinely went over was that verse 31.

[22 : 09] It's just the road map. It's a verbal road map of where Jesus traveled. Not that interesting. You skip over it to get to the good stuff. It is the good stuff. So, I got on Google Maps, which has become my new habit.

And I looked, and I went up, measured, tired of Sidon. And then I measured and looked at the geography from Sidon down to the Decapolis. And I learned that Jesus was probably walking for two to three weeks.

And his path was very intentional. It certainly wasn't the shortest path. But it was logical for two reasons. Number one, it avoided the Pharisees, who were a royal pain in the backside.

They were a distraction. And number two, it avoided people. There were not a lot of population centers on the path that he chose once he went through Sidon and went down to the Decapolis. Decapolis is Greek for ten cities. That was the name of that region southeast of the Sea of Galilee. And I thought, well, what was he doing for two weeks?

[23 : 17] Why was he there? And then I thought, well, I probably should have thought about this when I started studying the book of Mark rather than at the midway point, but I guess better late than never. What was Jesus' mission?

What was he trying to accomplish? Have you ever really stopped and thought about it? I mean, the Sunday school answer is he was going to the cross. And that's not wrong. But was that it? And I'd say, no, I don't think it was.

I think that what he was doing is, first of all, he was preaching the gospel. Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand. John the Baptist started it. Jesus continued that same message.

Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand. And part of that message was teaching people what it meant to repent. When you repent, it's not just that you leave the old thing behind and stop.

No, the work's not done at that point. You've got bad behavior over here that you've been doing that you need to repent of. You turn away from it and you go to something else.

[24 : 23] And what Jesus was teaching was what that something else was. You see, frequently, Jesus sees a crowd. You see this in the feed of the 5,000. He was teaching them as well as healing them.

I really think, I've been starting through Mark, that the core of Jesus' teaching was the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount was not a to-do list. What it was, was saying, hey, if you're in the kingdom, this is what your life will look like.

This is the behavior that comes from somebody who has this type of a relationship with God. And so, he's helping the people of Israel, and the Gentiles that heard him as well, understand, you're turning from something and this is what you're turning toward and this is the life that it looks like. So that's one of his purposes. The second one was to proclaim himself the promised Messiah by word and deed and that was setting him on the path to the cross because we know the Messiah suffered and died.

Isaiah 53, I think it's Psalm 22, a couple that tell us very clearly that the Messiah was to suffer. And Jesus is telling them in word, I am the Messiah. He said that when he appeared in Nazareth right after the temptation.

[25 : 32] He said it to the woman at the well in John chapter 4, I'm the Messiah. He was declaring that and he was proving it by fulfilling Isaiah 61. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because I have been anointed and he was healing the sick, he was healing the lame, he was bringing in good news.

That was the message he brought in Nazareth. So he's proclaiming himself the Messiah. The kingdom is at hand and it's embodied in me. The third purpose was to make disciples because here's the reality.

If there wasn't a plan, then Jesus would have died on the cross, raised, ascended, end of story. Because there wouldn't have been a reliable way to bring the message forward generation after generation after generation after generation to today without a plan.

And God always has a plan. And the plan was his disciples. And so he's raising up disciples. So what we're going to do for the next few minutes is we're just going to zip through this passage and we're going to look at some things.

What was Jesus doing to develop the disciples? And this is the big question I want you to put in your mind. What is Jesus doing in my life through the Holy Spirit that's an echo of what we see him doing here?

[26 : 57] Okay? You ready? So, the first one. Pure and simple. Jesus had time alone with his disciples. He was walking with the guys.

It was just the 12 at that point. Maybe a few other people. But if you've ever gone on a hike with a group of people, you tend to mill around and over the course of time, you're with this guy, you're with Peter, then you're with John, then you've got a few minutes with Philip, you talk to, Jesus even talked to Judas Iscariot.

And as he's talking, what is he doing? He's building the relationship with them. He's establishing a friendship. I no longer call you servants.

He said in John 15, I call you my friends. That's the foundation of discipleship. Apprenticeship is always built upon relationship.

It's not a teacher situation where you've got one speaking to a crowd kind of like this. No, it's more intimate. And so Jesus was establishing that intimate relationship. And it's important because knowing God relationally is at the heart of our salvation.

[28 : 09] In John 17, Jesus prayed. It's a high priestly prayer of Jesus. And this is eternal life. That they may know you, know you, the one true God in Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

Now in English, we have one word for know that applies to every type of knowing. In Spanish, they have two. One of them, saber, I think I'm remembering that right, is to know facts.

I know that Jesus was born in 4 BC. I know that he was crucified right around 30 AD. I know that Jerusalem fell in 70 AD.

That's one type of knowledge. Conocer is a relational knowledge. I know my friends. They know me.

I'm predictable. They know what I'll do. Some of my friends who've known me a long time even know what stories I'm going to tell and say, yeah, we heard that one like a dozen times. Thanks. Got it. But that's conocer.

[29 : 13] That's what Jesus is talking about. That's what he's developing. So that's the first part of discipleship is just walking with Jesus. Think of the scene of John chapter 14.

I'm going to read this to you. Jesus is telling them I'm leaving. John 14 is the center point of the upper room discourse that happened early in the Passion Week.

If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on, you know him and have seen him. This is another one of those moments where Jesus is going, do you guys never listen?

Philip said to him, Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us. Jesus said to him, have I been so long with you and yet you have not come to know me, Philip? Philip, and here's the main point. He who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, show us the Father? When you walk with Jesus, you're seeing the Father. Hebrews chapter 1, God, after he spoke long ago to the fathers and the prophets in many portions and in many ways, the written word of God, in these last days has spoken to us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the world.

[30 : 27] And he is the radiance of his glory, the exact representation of his nature. Jesus was showing the disciples God. That's the foundation of our apprenticeship to God is our relationship with him.

We cultivate that and God wants us to have a relationship with him. Keep seeking him. Read his word. Pray. Talk about him whenever you have a chance because that's how it's built.

That's element one. Element two is God is, Jesus is teaching them core principles. As a leader, I can tell you as I've developed different programs and that over the years, you have to have core operating principles.

They're the core values. Experts today said you really should only have three to five core values. And what do you know? Jesus must know something. Because I came up with three.

Actually two. Love God, love others. Matthew 22. He's asked, what are the greatest commandments? The greatest commandment is love God with all your heart, your soul, your mind, and your strength.

[31 : 38] Your entire being is invested in loving and growing your love for God. And love your neighbor as yourself. Of course, in John 13, Jesus raised the bar and said, oh, anybody can do that.

I want you to love your neighbor as I have loved you. And remember, I'm going to die for you. So that's how we're to love the people around us. But those are the core principles.

So as Jesus is walking, he's talking to his guys about what does it mean to love God? Let me show you some things about God. Let me talk to you about your neighbor and what it looks like to love your neighbor and how that's fleshed out.

And I really think that he was unpacking the Sermon on the Mount with them because if you look at the Sermon on the Mount, that's really an exposition of how we're to love each other and how we're to behave toward each other and toward God.

So, Jesus was establishing the relationship. He was teaching core principles. Two down. Let's look at verse 32.

[32 : 42] They brought to him one who was deaf. Stop. They brought to him. Jesus is going to model and then give them opportunity later.

We're not going to get to it today. Core behaviors. He was approachable. Did you ever notice that? Children came to Jesus. The crowds came to Jesus.

The disciples responded to him very quickly. Even the Pharisees were comfortable approaching Jesus. They were looking for a fight but he was approachable. That's part of how we are able to share the gospel is we create a hospitable area around us.

You know, we talk about personal space and everybody, you know, some parts of the country people are very prickly and want big space around them. Other places, people are really tight and their personal space is smaller.

what we want to convey to people by our demeanor, by our actions, is you can talk to me. I'm willing to listen to you. It's a great way to show love but that's an element of a disciple is to be approachable.

[33 : 52] Just keep that in mind. This is where we're going to pick up the pace a little bit. I'm going to give you these things and by the way, I'll tell you now, I'm going to list them at the end of the message and I put some handouts on the back table that you can take with you that these are listed.

So, you want to be approachable. Back to 30, back to, now to verse 33. Jesus took the man aside from the crowd by himself and put his fingers into his ears and after spitting he touched his tongue with the saliva.

I thought about splitting this into two but it works as just one. Jesus showed respect for this man. He's deaf. He can speak to some degree.

Jesus didn't just heal him on the spot. He didn't make a spectacle. He took him aside. I think that's a feel of real respect that he took this man and didn't do anything that would embarrass him, didn't do anything that would make him uncomfortable.

He pulled him aside. Have you thought about that? If you meet somebody who is in need, you pull him aside or you figure out other ways to show them respect and then he touched the man very intimately.

[35 : 06] I don't put my fingers in anybody's ears. It grosses me out when people share earbuds. That's just disgusting. My kids would say, can I use your earbuds?

No! I don't love you that much. Jesus put his fingers in his ears. I think he spit on his fingers and he touched his tongue and the man was healed.

He touched him. That's an interesting note that the gospel writers repeat. Jesus touched people. Nasty, disgusting people.

Children. People are really looking at the kids when they're out playing. They're stinky. They're smelly. I remember hearing this guy on a podcast during COVID talking about the fact, you know, we're so paranoid about getting sick and yet we pick up toddlers without a second thought. Have you ever looked at a toddler? They're gross. Except for Sunday mornings. He touched lepers. He touched lepers. They were to be completely outcast.

[36 : 10] You know, he made himself unclean by doing that. Not just by the rules of the Pharisees, but actually by the Old Testament law. Touching a leper, he made himself unclean.

That's love. That should be our hallmark. We should be willing to touch people. Now do it respectfully. Do it, asking first, especially if it's somebody you don't know.

But when you touch somebody, when you take their hand, when they're, especially if they're expressing emotion or they have a need and you touch them, you establish a bond. That's what it is.

That's what Jesus would do. That's what we should do as his disciples. So, Jesus was establishing the relationship. He was teaching them core principles.

He was showing it to be approachable. He was showing respect and touching people. Element number five. We're going to jump down.

[37 : 09] Or not too far. Verses 34 and 8. 6. And looking up to heaven with a deep sigh, he said to him, Apatha, that is to be opened.

Looking up to heaven, he was praying. 8. 6. He gave thanks and broke the bread. 8. 7. He saw the fish, blessed them. He gave, he prayed over it.

Jesus prayed with gratitude. The work that we do cannot be done without prayer. prayer. We have to be people who pray. I talked about that a few weeks ago.

We need to have the habit of prayer. We need to be people who stop, drop, and pray in the moment. We don't put it off. Let's pray right now. And we pray in community. I want to remind you again, there's a group of people who prays downstairs every Sunday morning at 9 o'clock.

It's not that long. It's 15 minutes. Come down and pray together. God likes us to pray together because we build off of each other's prayers. It's a healthy thing, so I want to encourage that.

[38 : 15] But we pray and we pray with gratitude. Philippians 4. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything with prayer, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

We want to be thankful for the good things God has done because a lot of times we're so focused on the bad stuff that we miss the good stuff. I mean, even with this guy, I mean, it doesn't say in the text that Jesus was thankful necessarily, but he had a lot to be thankful for.

Okay, he couldn't hear and he couldn't speak, but he could walk. His hands worked. He could probably hold a job. He was intellectually fine. He had a lot to be thankful for. So we want to pray with gratitude.

Element number six, and looking up to heaven with a deep sigh. We want to identify with the pain of others. We read about Jesus showing compassion of hurting with people.

In John chapter 11, right before he raises Lazarus, he wept. Now, why would he weep? He knew that he was about to raise Lazarus from the dead because he saw the sorrow of the people around him who didn't know, who didn't really have in their heads that Jesus is the resurrection and the life. [39 : 26] And he wept because he identified with them. It says in Romans that we should laugh with those who laugh and cry with those who cry. We share each other's sorrows and joys.

And I think that's part of what Jesus was doing. That word for deep sigh in Romans chapter 8 is translated three different times as a sort of groan. Different tenses and forms of the verb. But the same basic idea, the first one, is all of creation is groaning under the oppression of sin and waiting for the redemption of us.

The next verse is we groan because we're stuck in these bodies that are not functioning and they're wearing down over time.

So we're groaning. And then in verse 26, oftentimes, I'm sure you've had this experience, we see somebody in need and we just don't know what to pray. We're at a loss. God, what do we pray?

[40 : 26] And the Holy Spirit groans within us and prays in our behalf. Jesus was identifying with a man who had been deaf most or all of his life and had been cut off from fellowship, from being deaf.

My grandfather died when he was 94. Last 10 years of his life, he was about 75% deaf. I have never yelled so much in my life as when I'd go to visit my grandfather for a weekend and my whole neck and mouth hurt from yelling at him.

But he would write to me, and it was a very rudimentary conversation, but he'd write to me and it was very, I mean, he was sharp as a tack until the day he died. But that poor man was so lonely because there was rich things that he wanted to share he just couldn't because he was deaf.

That's what this man endured. Jesus identified with that. We should identify with the people that we meet as we go through our day. Pause long enough to feel their pain.

Connect. And then we have hope, don't we, that we can offer them. So element number seven. This is in verse 34.

[41 : 44] And looking up to heaven with a deep sigh, Jesus said to him, Ephatha, that is, be opened. Then in verse 34, or I said, I already read verse 34, sorry.

In chapter 8, verse 8, and they ate and were satisfied. What's the element here? Expect God to show up. If you are following God, if you are obedient to him, reading his word, implementing what you read, but also obedient to that still small voice, God tells us times to step in to touch somebody. Obey that voice. Expect God to intervene and to be in the moment. Hudson Taylor was a pioneer missionary in China in the middle of the 1800s.

And his philosophy of fundraising was no fundraising. They never shared needs. They just talked to God about their needs. And Hudson Taylor famously said, he's done it.

Depends on it. God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply. He is too wise to frustrate his purposes.

[43 : 07] Count on it. God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply. When you approach somebody and you think, God, I just don't have what they need.

I don't have the emotional reserves. I don't have the wisdom. I don't have enough money. God says, great, you're just where I want you. Step in.

Step into the moment. And I'll tell you, a lot of times, God doesn't show his hand until you take the step. Pastor Jack and I were talking about this a couple weeks ago and a very dear friend of mine that's with the Lord now used to use this analogy all the time.

When the Israelites were going into the Holy Land for the first time, the priests went first carrying the Ark of the Covenant on their shoulders. And God said, the waters are going to stop on the River Jordan so you can go across on dry land.

But not until the Levites step into the water. You've got to get your feet wet. And then God acts. Why? Because he wants, he knows what he's going to do.

[44 : 11] He wants us to step into it. Does that make sense? So expect God to show up. Element number eight. This is in 36 and 37.

And Jesus gave the crowd orders not to tell anyone but the more he ordered them the more widely they continued to proclaim it. They were utterly astonished saying he has done all things well. He makes even the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.

Expect to be misunderstood. They totally miss the point. And often times you're going to be misunderstood. Sometimes for bad like Jesus was with the Pharisees. Sometimes people will just

miss why you do what you do.

They'll miss it. It's okay. Expect it. That's part of being an apprentice. Element nine I talked a little bit about already. When you feel compassion act.

Jesus felt compassion for the people and he acted. We want to step into that emotion that we feel is God calling us. Element ten.

[45 : 12] Sometimes God gives you a challenge and then goes silent. Look at the transition from verses 8.3 to 8.4. Jesus said if I send them away hungry to their homes they will faint on the way and some of them have come from a great distance.

Hard stop. I'm sure the disciples were going and then they asked the question where will anyone be able to find enough bread here in this desolate place to satisfy all these people? Sometimes God goes silent to draw you to think about and ask him how are we going to do this? So expect God's silence. Element number twelve.

This is in verse six of chapter eight. He directed the people to sit down the ground and take in the seven loaves. He gave thanks and broke them and started giving them to his disciples to serve to them and they served them to the people.

Element twelve is organization is necessary. God wants us to organize ourselves. He gives us that ability. There are people here with the gift of administration, gift of leadership.

[46 : 22] We need to be organized. Also in that verse, disciples serve. What does it say? If you're a leader, you are to serve.

The greatest shall be like the least, Jesus taught. That was a hard and fast principle and he modeled it. And then element fourteen that we need to remember as disciples is God is generous. Verse eight, and they ate and were satisfied and they picked up seven large baskets full of what was left over of the broken pieces. God is extravagant.

He's generous to us. We need to recognize that and operate out of that principle even if it's not obvious to us. So look at that. We made it. Fourteen point sermon and we're on time.

Aren't you proud of you were nervous. I know. Pastor Jack I know was nervous because I told him in advance I was doing a 14 point sermon. Now remember this is not a checklist.

[47 : 26] This is not a checklist for you. These are things that God is doing in your life to develop you as his apprentice. And it's an ongoing process.

And it's a partnership. Philippians 2 12 and 13 says so then my beloved just as you have always obeyed not as in my presence only but now much more in my absence work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

We want to put a period there. Oh I gotta get to work. And off we go. It's a semicolon sentence not over. For it is God who is at work in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

So when we see a list like this it's not to trudge off and get to work it's to look to the Lord say God what do you want me to do how can I follow you so what I want you to do with this is to pray to ask God to show you Lord what do you want to work on in my life I going to!

tell you! right out the gate the first two he's doing all the time establish the relationship and teaching core principles he's always doing put yourself into position to experience those but look at the other twelve and think about God how can I do pick a couple I think the Holy Spirit will highlight them and how can I incorporate this into my life how can you give me opportunity to practice this particular element of being a disciple at the back there's handouts if we run out just shoot me a text my number is in the bulletin and I'll be happy to send you a link to give you that information so let's pray together Lord it's astounding to me that we get to work with you to accomplish your work that you have included us that you've given us a role to play and that you've entrusted the most important message in human history to people such as us your plan just doesn't seem to make sense and yet here we are in 2025 and we have seen the gospel faithfully passed down from one generation of disciples to the next to the next to the next

[49 : 49] God in the fullness of time we have received baton it's our turn help us Lord to execute well to walk in relationship with you in obedience to you loving you loving others in a way that glorifies you and we want to be your partners in the work and to see people saved disciplined and then released for the next generation reach the world with the gospel I pray this in Jesus name Amen Thank you.