

Faithful Disciples

The background of the slide is a photograph of a person's feet walking on a sandy path. The person is wearing dark shorts and white socks. The path is sandy and has some dark, possibly wet, patches. The overall tone is warm and earthy.

By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. - 1 John 2

Off The Top

So Far

Gospel Is the Basis

- Created with a purpose
- Sin brought separation
- God is redeeming his creation, people
- Invited to be a part of His plan, now and eternity
- You need to respond

God is For You – He is not About You

Never Second

- God is not your 'co-pilot'
- Clear in Ten Commandments
 - no other god's
 - do not worship created things
 - jealous God
- Greatest Commandment
 - Jesus clear in what must come first
- Faith Matters
 - salvation, courageous living out of our faith

1. God Wants the First Things

- not the left overs, extra stuff

- a) clear in the rules for His children

- Exodus 13:1 *“The Lord said to Moses, “Consecrate to me all the firstborn. Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine.””*

- Nehemiah 10:35ff

- Deut. 26

- Exodus 22:29-30 *“You shall not delay to offer from the fullness of your harvest and from the outflow of your presses. The firstborn of your sons you shall give to me. ³⁰ You shall do the same with your oxen and with your sheep: seven days it shall be with its mother; on the eighth day you shall give it to me.”*

- Lev. 27:30-32 *“Every tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the Lord's; it is holy to the Lord. ³¹ If a man wishes to redeem some of his tithe, he shall add a fifth to it. ³² And every tithe of herds and flocks, every tenth animal of all that pass under the herdsman's staff, shall be holy to the Lord.”*

b) Example of Jericho

- deliverance from Egypt – wandering
- promise of land overflowing
- slaves, without stuff, no opportunity to have
- commission, crossing, consecration

Joshua 6:17-19 “And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent.”

¹⁸ But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it. ¹⁹ But all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, are holy to the Lord; they shall go into the treasury of the Lord.”

- Story of Achan
 - took devoted things
 - 36 men killed, nation distressed
- 7:11-13, 15

Joshua 7:11-13 "Israel has sinned; they have transgressed my covenant that I commanded them; they have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings. ¹² Therefore the people of Israel cannot stand before their enemies. They turn their backs before their enemies, because they have become devoted for destruction. I will be with you no more, unless you destroy the devoted things from among you. ¹³ Get up! Consecrate the people and say, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow; for thus says the Lord, God of Israel, "There are devoted things in your midst, O Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the devoted things from among you."

Joshua 7:15 “And he who is taken with the devoted things shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he has done an outrageous thing in Israel.”

- serious matter to God
- clear that first fruits matter to God, serious consequences for disobedience

2. Heart and Worship Issue Here

- don't just place it in the obedience bin

a) Jesus on Treasure and Heart

Matthew 6:19-21 *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

b) teaching and witness issue

- Exodus 13:8-9 *“You shall tell your son on that day, ‘It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.’⁹ And it shall be to you as a sign on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the law of the Lord may be in your mouth. For with a strong hand the Lord has brought you out of Egypt.”*

- when the offering were made – clear cost to the family

- Exodus 13:14-16 *“And when in time to come your son asks you, ‘What does this mean?’ you shall say to him, ‘By a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery. ¹⁵ For when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the Lord killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of animals. Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all the males that first open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.’ ¹⁶ It shall be as a mark on your hand or frontlets between your eyes, for by a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt.”*

- Phil. 4:19 *“And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”*

c) blessing issue

- Malachi 3:8-10 *“Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, ‘How have we robbed you?’ In your tithes and contributions. ⁹ You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. ¹⁰ Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.”*

3. Importance of Faith

- Heb. 11:1 *“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”*

- Heb. 11:6 *“And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”*

a) Addresses our Trust and Anxiety Issues

- God supplies, even when we can't see how

- Luke 12:32-34 *“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”*

b) reminds us it is his – we are stewards

- practice what we believe

So What

1. God is unchanging
 - first fruits demonstrate our recognition of his provision and place in our lives
 - giving as an act of worship is his plan
2. This is a heart and worship issue
 - hearts that can be molded and grow
 - opportunity to demonstrate and teach
3. Takes faith to practice