

LET JESUS DISCIPLE YOU

Repent and Believe

Two halves of one command — and a Master who is safe to follow

SPEAKER	Matt Ryniker
DATE	Sunday, August 9, 2026
PASSAGES	Mark 1; James 2; Ephesians 2; Matthew 11; Galatians 3
MESSAGE	Begins at 1:00:24 in the service

THE BIG IDEA

Jesus' first recorded command is not one thing but two — *repent* and *believe* — and they only work together. Turning without trusting is just self-improvement; trusting without turning is a theology the demons already have. Obedience isn't the price of grace. It's what happens when you actually believe the one giving the command is good.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◆ Jesus opens his public ministry with a command, and it comes in two inseparable halves: change your mind, and put your weight on the good news.
- ◆ Belief without repentance is demonic theology. The demons in Mark 3 had flawless Christology and zero trust.
- ◆ Repentance without belief is a diet plan. You'll turn from something, but not *toward* anyone.
- ◆ The reason obedience feels dangerous is that we quietly suspect Jesus isn't safe. Matthew 11 says the opposite.
- ◆ Beware of obeying a version of Jesus you assembled yourself. Read the whole Bible and let the real one confront you.

- ◆ The goal isn't a grade. It's a relationship where obedience is the natural next step, not the entrance fee.

► 1:00:24

Matt opened a new series by saying plainly where it came from: we had just finished walking through Romans, and he wanted to spend the next stretch on the things Jesus actually tells his disciples to *do*. Not the theology behind the commands — the commands themselves. Because “make disciples” includes “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you,” and it is very hard to lead a child somewhere you have never gone yourself.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”

MATTHEW 28:19–20 ↗

The question underneath the question: is he safe to obey?

► 1:02:38

Before you can talk about obeying Jesus, Matt said, you have to deal with the suspicion most of us carry around — that somewhere down the line there's going to be a switcheroo. You come in on grace and then get handed a bill. That fear is exactly what Paul confronts in Galatia:

“Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?” And it's what makes “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” sound like a threat instead of a description.

It isn't a threat. Jesus describes his own leadership in terms nobody would use for a hard master:

► 1:05:06

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

MATTHEW 11:28–30 ↗

“The spirit of this world and the selfishness we already walk in are much harsher masters than Jesus ever could be.”

► 1:06:56

And the fear of a bait-and-switch can't be blamed on the message of grace itself. Paul's standard in [Galatians 1:8](#) is severe precisely *because* the gospel of grace is worth guarding. Grace is not the problem. The problem is that we keep hearing a demand where God is offering a relationship.

The text: Mark 1:14–15

► 1:10:38

“Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.’”

MARK 1:14–15 ↗

Two verbs. Both imperatives. Matt's point was that we have a long habit of choosing one and quietly dropping the other — and either half, taken alone, produces something Jesus never asked for.

Belief without repentance: the demons have perfect theology

► 1:11:57

In Mark 3, the unclean spirits get Jesus' identity exactly right — better than the disciples do at that point in the story.

“And whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, ‘You are the Son of God.’ And he strictly ordered them not to make him known.”

MARK 3:11–12 ↗

Their doctrine was flawless. Their allegiance was nonexistent. James says the same thing bluntly — and it's worth noticing how sharp his tone is, because he is talking to church people, not to skeptics:

► 1:13:42

“You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe — and shudder! Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?”

JAMES 2:18-20 ↗

His conclusion: “as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.” Not “faith plus works saves you” — James is arguing that a faith that changes nothing was never the living kind to begin with. Which is entirely consistent with Paul:

► 1:17:06

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

EPHESIANS 2:8-9 ↗

Repentance without belief: a very religious diet plan

► 1:18:06

Flip it the other way and you get someone who turns from things but never turns *toward* anyone. Matt reached for everyday pictures: the day trader who knows the right move but won't place the trade; the personal trainer whose advice you nod at and never follow; the friend who knows how to fix your appliance but you never call. In every case the information is fine. The trust isn't there, so nothing moves.

► 1:21:41

Repentance in the New Testament is a *change of mind* — and a genuinely changed mind changes direction. That's why the two commands are one command. You turn because you finally believe there's Someone better to turn to. Peter doesn't step out of the boat because he's brave; he steps out because Jesus says “Come”. The rich young ruler walks away sorrowful not because the command was unreasonable, but because he trusted his portfolio more than the person in front of him.

“The more we know Jesus, the more we want to obey him. And the more we obey him, the more we know him. Rinse and repeat.”

Matt's hot take: which Jesus are you obeying?

► 1:22:21

Here Matt got specific. The danger isn't only disobedience — it's submitting to a version of Jesus we assembled from our favourite verses. He named two. There's the gentle, agreeable Jesus who exists to affirm us and never says a hard word. And there's the severe, religious-elitist Jesus who is mostly disappointed in everyone. Both are fabrications, and both are comfortable, because a Jesus you built will never confront the thing you don't want confronted.

► 1:24:15

The real Jesus is unpredictable in exactly that way. He tells one man to sell everything and tells another to go home to his family. He confronts what actually grips the person in front of him. The remedy, Matt said, is unglamorous: read the whole Bible. Let the parts you didn't choose have a vote. *He's real. He has opinions.*

So what's the goal?

► 1:26:33

Matt told a story about a college professor, Dr. Dwire, who handed back an essay with "Overall, this is terrible" written across the top — and then, in the next breath, sat down and taught him how to write. And another about a mentor teacher in New York who didn't grade him so much as walk with him. The point of both: in a real relationship, correction isn't a verdict. It's attention.

► 1:29:38

That's the difference between a Master who is scoring you and a Shepherd who is leading you: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." We were, after all, already rescued before we were ever asked to obey:

"He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son."

COLOSSIANS 1:13 ↗

Where to start this week

► 1:30:54

Matt closed with a prayer he invited everyone to actually pray: *Jesus, what's the next thing you want me to do to follow you?* Not the whole roadmap — the next thing. He added two practical nudges. First, an evangelism angle that doesn't require a script: instead of arguing someone into agreement, tell people what you are currently trying to obey and how it's going. Second, find an older believer and interview them. Ask what Jesus has asked of them over the years, and what it cost, and what it was worth.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE

- [Matthew 28:19–20](#)
- [Galatians 3:3](#)
- [John 14:15](#)
- [Matthew 11:28–30](#)
- [Galatians 1:8](#)
- [Mark 1:14–15](#)
- [Mark 3:11–12](#)
- [James 2:18–20](#)
- [James 2:26](#)
- [Ephesians 2:8–9](#)
- [Matthew 14:28–29](#)
- [Mark 10:17–22](#)
- [John 10:27](#)
- [Colossians 1:13](#)

FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP

1. Which half of “repent and believe” do you personally tend to drop — the turning, or the trusting?
2. Where do you catch yourself expecting a bait-and-switch from God? What would change if Matthew 11:28–30 were simply true of him?
3. Matt named two counterfeit Jesuses: the one who only affirms, and the one who is only disappointed. Which is closer to the picture you carry?
4. What is one thing you know Jesus has asked of you that you haven’t done yet?
5. Who is an older believer you could interview about a lifetime of obedience?

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Matt Ryniker is Hope Chapel's senior pastor — his own description of the job — and reports to the church's governing board, who he cheerfully calls his boss. He and his wife Mandy have been held up from Hope's own pulpit as an example to the congregation. He spent a stretch of his working life as a public school teacher, and he still teaches the parent dedication classes where families commit to raising their children to follow Jesus — a theme that runs straight into this message.

THE SERIES

Let Jesus Disciple You — working through the commands of Jesus.

- **Aug 9** — Repent and Believe (you are here)
- **Aug 16** — Fasting
- **Aug 23** — Make Disciples
- **Aug 30** — Follow Me

Watch the full message:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ad7FVApo36g&t=3624s>

These notes summarise a message preached at Hope Chapel in Austin, Texas. They are a reader's aid, not a transcript — scripture references link to the full passage so you can read it in context.