

LET JESUS DISCIPLE YOU

Believe in the Gospel

How to steward a belief that goes beyond facts

SPEAKER	Matt Ryniker
DATE	Sunday, September 13, 2026
PASSAGES	Mark 1:15; John 6:28-29; Matthew 17:19-20; Mark 11:21-24; Luke 18:1-8; Hebrews 11:1; John 4:39-42; Acts 17:25-26; John 14:16-17; Colossians 1:9-11; Ephesians 3:14-19
MESSAGE	Begins at 1:05:10 in the service

THE BIG IDEA

The series opened with a command — *repent and believe in the gospel* — and this week Matt went back to the second half of it. Belief is not a quiz you pass once; demons have the right answers. It is entrusting yourself to a person, and like anything living it can be fed or starved.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◆ The gospel is not a better set of self-improvement steps. When Paul summarizes it he talks about who Jesus is and what he has done, and nothing else.
- ◆ Demons believe true things about Jesus and shudder. What they do not do is repent and entrust themselves to him. That is the difference between information and faith.
- ◆ “Little faith” is not no faith. Jesus corrects it, names it as small, and then says even a mustard seed of it moves mountains.
- ◆ Faith is rooted in truth, not willpower — it is not deciding something hard enough until you believe it. So the first way to protect it is to fill your head with the whole truth about God rather than the half-truths that make you anxious.
- ◆ The way you pray can quietly teach you lies. If you ask God to come be with you a thousand times, you are rehearsing the idea that he is not.

- ◆ The Spirit is not flighty, and he is not a bird. He is present precisely when you are weakest, and he is with you as a person, not as a percentage.
- ◆ When you cannot find words, pray the Bible — Colossians 1 and Ephesians 3 are already written and already true.
- ◆ You are not the responsible party in this relationship. The protector of your faith is the shepherd, who is unusually good at finding strays.

► 1:05:10

Matt began where he has begun every week of this series: obedience to Jesus is not a graduation from grace, and it is not something you grow into after a decade of walking with him. It is the invitation from the beginning, and it is an invitation into deeper grace — which only makes sense if you know the character of the one giving the orders. “A lot of the dominion of darkness is propaganda,” he said. “It’s things that look light, look free, but it’s actually just slavery.” The counter-offer is taste and see: try it, and find out for yourself whether he is good.

1. Repent *and* believe

► 1:06:43

The series started at Mark 1:15 — “the time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” — and Matt went back to it. The gospel is not an invitation to do good deeds slightly better than the other religions manage. When Paul tells the Corinthians what was handed to him as of first importance, he goes on and on about a person: Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was raised, appeared. Five or six steps to a better life never come up.

But the command has two verbs, and the second one needs the first. Demons believe and shudder; when Jesus cast them out they said true things about him. “I don’t want to have the same kind of belief a demon has,” Matt said. “I want to go to this wedding supper of the lamb as a bride.” What they never do is repent and entrust themselves to him.

► 1:09:50

“Then they said to him, ‘What must we do, to be doing the works of God?’ Jesus answered them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.’”

JOHN 6:28–29 ↗

Belief in the gospel and belief in Jesus overlap almost entirely, because we are not following a way, a set of true propositions and a new set of habits. He is the way, the truth and the life. And obedience is how that trust gets exercised: you do not know the outcome, he asked, you go.

2. Little faith is not no faith

► 1:11:00

The disciples could not cast out the demon and asked why ([Matthew 17:19–20](#)).

“Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.”

MATTHEW 17:20 ↗

Matt caught the oddity. Jesus diagnoses too little faith and then measures the sufficient amount as a seed you could lose in your palm. “I don’t know if you ever had a meal where the meal was a mustard seed, but you’re going to be hungry.” So it is not nothing — it is real and it is tiny, and the point is that it should grow. He made the same case from the withered fig tree, where Jesus answers Peter with “have faith in God” ([Mark 11:21–24](#)), and paired it with John’s confidence that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. God has a say in the outcome; what we are promised is that the request reaches someone who is listening.

3. “Will he find faith on earth?”

► 1:13:34

Luke hands you the meaning of the parable before the parable starts — Jesus told it “to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart” ([Luke 18:1–8](#)). A widow wears down a judge who fears neither God nor man, and then comes the question.

“And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

LUKE 18:7–8 ↗

Read the first verse against the last one and you get a definition. Great faith looks like asking again for what you have not yet received, and again after that. Conversion at an altar is real; this is the continual thing Jesus is looking for when he comes back.

4. Fill your head with the whole truth

► 1:16:52

From there the message turned practical, and Matt was careful to label what followed as pastoral advice rather than law. First: faith is rooted in truth, not in raw willpower.

“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” — a conviction about what is actually there, not a phrase repeated until you talk yourself into it. Biblical hope is not “I hope I win a lottery I don’t play.”

► 1:18:32

Second: see for yourself. The Samaritans came out because of the woman’s testimony, stayed two days, and then told her it was no longer her word they were relying on. Matt has been telling the church to go ask an older saint what obeying Jesus cost them and what it was like. His hope is that the answer becomes first-hand: not only because of your testimony, but because I have seen for myself that he is trustworthy.

► 1:23:35

Then he showed his own work — what he tells himself when he is anxious. About violence: the worst anyone can do is kill the body and not the soul, which means he is always and only in God’s hands. About the church: “There’s never been a moment where Jesus has kind of dozed off at the wheel.” About nations, Acts 17:25–26 — he needs nothing from human hands, and he set the allotted periods and the boundaries. “I don’t have the compassion to be the Messiah of the world. I don’t have the brains to be the commander of the church. But there is someone who is capable, and the role is already filled.” And about provision: he is responsible for me, not I for him — which is why the request is for daily bread and why anxiety about food and clothes is ruled out. Feeling dependent is not a failure. It is the arrangement working.

5. Be careful what your prayers teach you

► 1:25:10

The second habit is stranger and more useful: watch your own words, for your own sake. Matt tries not to ask God for things God has already done, because he does not want to rehearse doubt. He was quick

to fence it — daily bread, deliverance from evil, forgiveness of sins are all things he keeps asking for, because those are still being answered and he is still growing.

► 1:26:42

The example he gave was loneliness. Rather than asking God to come be with him, he says he knows God is already there and asks for help feeling it. “I don’t want to say a thousand times a day, ‘God be with me,’ and then teach my subconscious that he’s not with me.” Behind it is David’s question about where he could possibly flee. The method is to ask what you actually want — comfort, reassurance, a miracle — and say that instead.

6. The Spirit is not a bird

► 1:28:12

He pressed the same point into charismatic practice, and this was the longest stretch of the message. What is your baseline assumption about the Spirit — that he leaves when the service does, and has to be talked back every Monday morning? “Is that because my default assumption is that he wants to be anywhere but with me? That’s no way to shepherd your soul.” Praying “come, Holy Spirit” is not illegal, he said, and prayed it from the platform to prove it. The caution is about what you are quietly training yourself to believe.

► 1:33:15

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”

JOHN 14:16–17 ↗

Dwells, not drops in. And not in gradations: “The Spirit is with you and in you, not as percentages, but as a person, the whole person” — not the barely twitching apprentice version while the saints get the real thing. Luke 5:17 notes that the power of the Lord was present to heal, which does imply intention; Matt’s reading is that the Spirit has a mind of his own and is doing different things at different times, not that he has left whenever he is not doing the one thing we can recognize.

► 1:35:59

He picked one fight by name — the idea that the Spirit came as a dove and doves are easily startled, so avoid anything that scares birds. “The Holy Spirit is not actually a bird. He came upon Jesus in the form of a dove, sure, but that doesn’t mean he’s a dove.” The pastoral stake is obvious once he says it: on that

theory, the moment you most need him — overwhelmed, sinning, unable to pray — is the moment he is gone. “He is present precisely when we need it the most.”

► 1:38:24

Same logic with “open up the heavens.” If you are in Christ you are seated with him in the heavenly places, and the veil that needed tearing was torn by his death. “If there is a barrier, I’m on the right side of it.” Imagine, he said, if tearing it were your job — how many hours of prayer is that?

7. Pray the Bible, then rehearse what he has done

► 1:39:48

When you are stuck, borrow words that are already true. Colossians 1:9–11 is a whole prayer: filled with the knowledge of his will, bearing fruit in every good work, strengthened with all power for endurance and patience with joy.

“...that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith — that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge.”

EPHESIANS 3:14–19 ↗

Paul is asking for supernatural help just to grasp how large the love is. “You don’t need to write poetry for God,” Matt said. “When I can’t trust myself to think properly, I am not my own compass — but I know scripture is true, and I can pray it.”

► 1:42:36

The last habit is memory. He keeps journals of times he is convinced God interacted with him, and once brought one to the pulpit — a healing he prayed for at the community college where he used to work, written down the same day and signed and dated by the woman herself, so that a future doubting version of him could not argue with it. As a youth pastor he kept a binder of photocopied missionary testimonies and read them aloud with the group when faith was low, taking an honest inventory before and after. His offer was concrete: if you have nowhere to start, ask someone what God has done in their life, or email the church and someone will hand you a book.

8. You are not the responsible party

► 1:44:36

Matt closed by taking the weight back off. Four practices — fill your head with truth, stop messing with your own head, pray scripture, rehearse testimony — and none of them are the thing holding you.

“Legally speaking, God is my parent.” When he is weak and stuck in the mud, there is a rod and a staff to turn him around.

► 1:45:28

“The real protector of our souls is Jesus Christ, the good shepherd. He’s really good at finding strays — dropping everything he’s doing and finding strays.” Entrust yourself to him, Matt said, and not only on the strong days. Then he ended where he started: he is trustworthy, so start obeying today and find out. He prayed one question over the room rather than a summary — *God, how would you like me to respond to this? What is a way I can obey you today?* — and asked for the grace to actually do it.

FOR FURTHER STUDY**SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE**

- Psalm 34:8
- Mark 1:15
- 1 Corinthians 15:3–5
- James 2:19
- John 6:28–29
- John 14:6
- Matthew 17:19–20
- Matthew 17:20
- Mark 11:21–24
- 1 John 5:14–15
- Luke 18:1–8
- Luke 18:7–8
- Hebrews 11:1
- John 4:39–42
- Matthew 10:28
- Acts 17:25–26
- Matthew 6:11
- Matthew 6:25
- Psalm 139:7–8
- John 14:16–17
- Luke 5:17
- Ephesians 2:6
- Hebrews 10:19–20
- Colossians 1:9–11
- Ephesians 3:14–19
- Psalm 23:4

FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP

1. Where is your belief mostly information — true things you could pass a quiz on — and where has it become trust you have actually acted on?
2. Jesus called it “little faith” and then said a mustard seed is enough. What is the thing you have stopped asking for because the asking felt pointless?
3. Matt listed the truths he tells himself when he is anxious. What half-truth or dark narrative does your mind reach for first, and what is the fuller version of it?
4. Listen to how you pray this week. Is there anything in your own wording that trains you to believe God is distant, reluctant or already gone?
5. Pick one: a testimony you will write down, a passage you will pray back, or an older believer you will ask what obeying Jesus was like. Which one, and when this week?

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Matt Ryniker introduced himself simply as Matt, the senior pastor at Hope Chapel, and he has been carrying this series on the commands of Jesus week by week. He also teaches on Wednesday nights at Hope 2011, where he had raised this same question about the Holy Spirit earlier in the week. He was a youth pastor before this, and once worked at a community college, where he prayed for a healing he still keeps written down and signed in one of his testimony journals.

Watch the full message:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-coAtihSGdI&t=3910s>

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.