ZION WORSHIPPERS TABERNACLE

NOT JUST A BELIEVER, BUT A FAITHFUL FOLLOWER!

What It Truly Means to Follow Jesus Christ

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE
John 8:31 (KJV)

> *“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.”*
> ***— John 8:31 (KJV)***

Central message
Genuine followers of Jesus Christ are not merely people who profess to believe in Him; they are people whose lives demonstrate an ongoing relationship with Him through faith, love, obedience, surrender, spiritual fruitfulness and perseverance.

A comprehensive, Christ-centred teaching manuscript
Suggested teaching duration: 60–75 minutes

SERMON OVERVIEW

Primary Scripture: John 8:31 (KJV)

Supporting Scriptures: Luke 9:23; John 10:27–28; John 13:34–35; John 14:15; John 15:1–8; Luke 14:25–33; Philippians 3:7–14; Colossians 1:21–23; 2 Timothy 2:11–13; Revelation 2:10.

Central message: Genuine followers of Jesus Christ are distinguished not merely by profession, but by a continuing life of faith in Christ, love for Him, obedience to His Word, spiritual fruitfulness and perseverance.

Teaching objectives

1. Understand what it truly means to follow Jesus Christ.
2. Identify the characteristics that distinguish faithful followers.
3. Understand why following Christ requires surrender and perseverance.
4. Recognise the dangers that threaten genuine discipleship.
5. See Christ Himself as the foundation and sustainer of our faithfulness.
6. Apply faithful discipleship to everyday life.

The controlling question throughout this teaching is: Am I merely someone who believes in Jesus, or am I genuinely someone who follows Jesus?

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

1. The difference between believing in Jesus and following Jesus

One of the most important questions every Christian must honestly confront is this: **Am I merely someone who believes in Jesus, or am I genuinely someone who follows Jesus?**

Christianity is not simply about religious identification. It is about a relationship with the living Christ that transforms the entire direction of a person's life.

There is a difference between knowing about somebody and personally knowing that person; between admiring somebody and submitting to that person's authority; and between agreeing with somebody's teachings and allowing those teachings to govern your life.

A person may attend church regularly, know biblical verses, participate in prayer meetings, sing Christian songs and serve in ministry. These activities, considered by themselves, do not establish the reality or maturity of discipleship. The fundamental question is whether that person's life is genuinely submitted to Jesus Christ.

> *“If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.”*
> ***— John 8:31 (KJV)***

Jesus connects genuine discipleship with continuing in His Word. He does not present discipleship as a moment of religious excitement or a temporary confession. He speaks of continuing.

This does not mean Christians never struggle, stumble or experience seasons of weakness. Peter denied Jesus but was restored. Thomas struggled with doubt, and Christ dealt graciously with him. The issue is not whether a believer has ever experienced weakness; the issue is whether Christ remains the object of faith and whether the believer continues responding to His grace, truth and correction.

Genuine discipleship is not merely demonstrated by how someone begins following Jesus, but also by a continuing life of faith in Him.

2. Understanding the language of discipleship

A. Believer

A believer is someone who places faith and trust in Jesus Christ. John 3:16 teaches that whoever believes in the Son should not perish but have everlasting life. Biblical belief involves more than acknowledging that Jesus existed; it involves trusting Him as the Son of God and Saviour.

B. Disciple

The Greek word *math■t■s* means a learner or pupil. A disciple of Jesus receives His instruction, learns from Him, follows His teaching and submits to His authority.

C. Follower

A follower is someone who goes after another person. Following Jesus involves allegiance, submission and a willingness to walk according to His direction. In Matthew 4:19 Jesus says, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

D. Faithfulness

Faithfulness involves reliability, steadfastness, loyalty and consistency. A faithful follower remains committed to Christ and His truth. Faithfulness does not mean a Christian never makes mistakes; it means Christ remains the object of trust, and the believer continues in repentance, dependence and obedience.

> **Salvation is God's gift through faith in Christ. Following and faithfulness are the fruit and expression of genuine Christian life. Ephesians 2:8–10 holds these truths together: saved by grace through faith, not by works, and created in Christ Jesus unto good works.**

PART TWO: THE TWELVE CHARACTERISTICS OF FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS

3. THEY GENUINELY BELONG TO CHRIST

Key Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 6:19–20

One foundational truth of discipleship is that a believer belongs to Jesus Christ. The Christian life begins with a change of ownership. Christ redeemed His people, not with silver or gold, but with His precious blood (1 Peter 1:18–19).

Belonging to Christ means recognising His rightful authority over our lives. Our bodies, minds, words, relationships, abilities, future and resources are to be brought under His lordship.

A faithful follower does not regard Jesus as someone who merely assists personal ambitions. Jesus is Lord. Ask: When I make decisions, do I consider what honours Christ? How do I use my resources? Does my private conduct reflect the One I profess to follow?

> **You cannot faithfully follow Christ while insisting that you alone have the final authority over your life.**

4. THEY LOVE CHRIST ABOVE EVERYTHING ELSE

Key Scriptures: Matthew 10:37; John 21:15–17

Christian discipleship is rooted in love for Jesus Christ. Jesus calls people into a relationship in which He is treasured above every competing allegiance.

After Peter's denial, Jesus restored him and asked three times, “Lovest thou me?” Jesus addressed Peter's love before entrusting him with the responsibility of caring for His sheep. Our service to Christ must flow from our love for Christ.

Loving Christ above everything does not mean neglecting family responsibilities. It means no earthly relationship, possession, ambition or desire may occupy the place that belongs to Christ. Ask whether you desire Christ Himself or only what He can give.

> **The faithful follower does not merely love the blessings of Christ; the faithful follower treasures Christ Himself.**

5. THEY SUBMIT TO THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST

Key Scriptures: Luke 6:46; Philippians 2:9–11

To call Jesus Lord is to acknowledge His authority. The New Testament word *Kyrios* communicates authority and rule. Jesus is not merely a religious teacher whose advice we accept only when convenient; He is the risen Lord.

Submission to His lordship means allowing His authority to govern our thinking, moral decisions, relationships, ambitions, priorities and conduct. The faithful follower asks not merely, “What do I like?” but, “What has my Lord said?”

Submission does not mean instant perfection. Christians continue growing in sanctification and need correction. But a faithful disciple does not deliberately establish a permanent position of rebellion against Christ.

> **Jesus is not merely Saviour to be received; He is Lord to be honoured and obeyed.**

6. THEY CONTINUE IN THE WORD OF CHRIST

Key Scriptures: John 8:31–32; James 1:22; Psalm 119:105

Jesus identifies continuing in His Word as a distinguishing characteristic of genuine discipleship. The Greek word associated with “continue” is *men*■, meaning to remain, abide or stay. The idea is ongoing commitment to Christ's teaching, not occasional contact with Scripture.

Faithful followers receive the Word, believe the Word, obey the Word and remain in the Word. They do not abandon biblical convictions merely because obedience becomes unpopular or uncomfortable.

The Word exposes false thinking, corrects behaviour, renews minds and directs steps. A faithful follower develops regular engagement with Scripture, careful study of context, meditation, obedience and discernment against false teaching.

> **The Word we claim to believe must become the Word by which we live.**

7. THEY DENY THEMSELVES AND FOLLOW CHRIST DAILY

Key Scriptures: Luke 9:23

Jesus says: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” This is one of the clearest descriptions of discipleship.

Deny yourself: Refuse to make yourself the ultimate authority over your life. This does not mean self-hatred or neglecting wellbeing; it means surrendering self-rule to God's will.

Take up your cross daily: Be willing to identify with Christ and endure the cost of discipleship. In Jesus' historical setting, the cross was associated with shame, suffering and death. It is more than a metaphor for ordinary inconvenience.

Follow Me: Christianity is not merely a list of things to stop doing; it is a life of knowing and following the risen Christ. Abraham's response to God's call in Genesis 12 illustrates trusting God's direction without knowing every detail.

Discipleship begins where self-rule ends and wholehearted submission to Christ begins.

8. THEY ABIDE IN CHRIST AND DEPEND ON HIS GRACE

Key Scriptures: John 15:4–5; Luke 10:38–42

Jesus uses the picture of a vine and branches. A branch has no independent life-producing capacity apart from the vine. In the same way, the believer's spiritual fruitfulness depends on Christ.

Abiding in Christ involves continuing in a living relationship of faith and dependence: trusting Him, remaining in His teaching, walking in fellowship with Him and depending on the Holy Spirit.

Jesus says, “Without me ye can do nothing.” He is explaining that spiritual fruitfulness cannot be produced independently of Him. Christian ministry can become so busy that fellowship with Christ is neglected. Martha's experience in Luke 10:38–42 warns against allowing service and distraction to displace attention to Jesus.

The branch does not produce fruit by independent effort; it bears fruit through its connection to the vine.

9. THEY OBEY CHRIST OUT OF LOVE

Key Scriptures: John 14:15; Colossians 3:13; Ephesians 4:25–32

There is a profound relationship between love and obedience in Jesus' teaching: “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” Obedience is not payment offered to purchase God's love; it is the response of a heart that loves Christ.

Obedience touches personal conduct, relationships, holiness, service and forgiveness. It may require apologising, forgiving, resisting temptation or speaking truth when dishonesty would be easier.

The faithful follower chooses to honour Christ even when obedience is inconvenient. Love for Christ is expressed not only in what we say about Him but also in how we respond to His Word.

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10. THEY LOVE OTHER BELIEVERS

Key Scriptures: John 13:34–35; Galatians 5:13; 6:2

Jesus identifies love among His disciples as a distinguishing mark. The word *agap*■ communicates self-giving love that seeks the good of another, reflecting the sacrificial love of Christ.

This love is expressed through forgiveness, patience, service, bearing one another's burdens and preserving the unity of the Spirit. A church may have excellent worship, preaching and programmes yet fail to demonstrate Christlike love.

A church that preaches Christ must also demonstrate the character of Christ. Forgiveness does not mean pretending wrongdoing never happened or abandoning appropriate boundaries; it means refusing to nurture revenge and entrusting justice to God.

We cannot claim to follow the Christ who loved us sacrificially while deliberately cultivating hatred towards those He calls us to love.

11. THEY PURSUE HOLINESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

Key Scriptures: 1 Peter 1:15–16; Romans 6:11–14; Titus 2:11–14

Sanctification is God's work of setting believers apart for Himself and progressively transforming their lives into conformity with Christ. It involves a changed relationship with sin and a growing commitment to righteousness.

Holiness is not legalism. Legalism seeks to establish righteousness through human performance or external regulations. Biblical holiness flows from belonging to God through Christ. We do not pursue holiness to make God

willing to save us; we pursue it because He has saved us and called us to Himself.

Holiness appears in integrity when nobody is watching, sexual purity, truthfulness, humility, self-control, rejection of bitterness, love for righteousness and willingness to repent.

> **Grace does not make sin acceptable; grace teaches us to reject ungodliness and live righteously.**

12. THEY BEAR THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Key Scriptures: Galatians 5:22–23; 1 Corinthians 13

One clear evidence of spiritual transformation is the development of Christlike character. Scripture speaks of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance.

Spiritual maturity is not measured simply by how much a person can preach, sing, teach or lead. In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul explains that even remarkable gifts and extraordinary acts are worthless without love.

Spiritual gifts are important, but they must never be confused with spiritual maturity. A person may be gifted but immature, or publicly influential but privately lacking godly character. The faithful follower desires both usefulness in service and Christlike character.

> **The evidence of spiritual growth is not merely what God can do through us, but also what God is producing within us.**

13. THEY REMAIN FAITHFUL WHEN FOLLOWING CHRIST BECOMES COSTLY

Key Scriptures: John 16:33; Acts 5:40–42; 2 Corinthians 11:23–28

Jesus never promised His disciples a life without opposition. He prepared them for difficulties. Following Christ may involve rejection, misunderstanding, persecution, sacrifice and suffering.

In Acts 5, the apostles were beaten and commanded not to speak in Jesus' name, yet they continued preaching. Paul describes imprisonment, beatings, danger and hardship, yet remained committed to Christ.

Faithfulness is not measured by the absence of difficulty. Sometimes it is demonstrated precisely when obedience becomes costly. However, not every difficulty is persecution; we must distinguish suffering for Christ from suffering caused by our own misconduct or avoidable decisions.

> **The faithfulness of a follower is revealed not only in seasons of comfort but also in seasons of testing.**

14. THEY PERSEVERE IN FAITH UNTIL THE END

Key Scriptures: Revelation 2:10; 2 Timothy 4:7; Hebrews 12:1–2

Christianity is not temporary enthusiasm; it is a life of continuing faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus encouraged the church at Smyrna to remain faithful even unto death.

Paul's testimony was: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” The Christian life is a race to be completed with patience, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

Perseverance does not mean a Christian never stumbles. Peter stumbled, David sinned and Thomas doubted. Failure and final abandonment are not the same thing. The Gospel reveals Christ as the One who restores repentant sinners and sustains His people.

> **The Christian life is not about a temporary display of enthusiasm; it is about continuing to trust and follow Jesus Christ.**

PART THREE: THE COST AND CHALLENGES OF FOLLOWING CHRIST

15. Why following Jesus is costly

Jesus said in Luke 14:27: “And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” He wants people to understand the seriousness of discipleship. In Luke 14:28–33, He uses the illustrations of building a tower and a king preparing for war to teach the importance of counting the cost.

Following Christ may cost popularity. Some may reject biblical convictions. **It may affect relationships.** Loyalty to Christ sometimes requires refusing sinful expectations. **It may require surrendering ambitions.** Plans that conflict with God's revealed will must be laid down. **It may cost comfort and earthly opportunities.** We must not compromise biblical convictions for temporary advantage.

But what do we gain? Christ Himself. Paul writes in Philippians 3:8 that he counts all things loss for the excellency of knowing Christ Jesus his Lord.

> **The cost of following Christ must always be considered in the light of the immeasurable worth of Christ Himself.**

16. The enemies of faithful discipleship

Love of the world — 1 John 2:15–17

The sinful system of desires and values that stands in opposition to God can displace devotion to Christ.

Fear of people — Proverbs 29:25

Fear of rejection can lead believers to compromise biblical convictions. God's approval must matter more than human applause.

Spiritual complacency — Revelation 3:15–17

The church at Laodicea warns against self-sufficiency and outward religious comfort without spiritual seriousness.

Pride — James 4:6

Pride makes people resistant to correction. A faithful follower must remain teachable and humble.

Unforgiveness — Colossians 3:13

Bitterness damages relationships and undermines Christian love. Forgiveness rejects revenge while allowing appropriate boundaries.

Seeking Christ only for material benefits — John 6:26–27

Jesus confronted people who sought Him because they had eaten and been filled. The faithful follower treasures the Giver above the gifts.

Religious hypocrisy — Matthew 23:27–28

Outward appearances cannot replace inward integrity before God.

PART FOUR: CHRIST IS THE FOUNDATION OF OUR FAITHFULNESS

17. We are faithful because Christ first loved us

This is one of the most important theological foundations of the teaching. Faithfulness must never be presented as something human beings manufacture independently of God's grace. Christianity does not begin with human determination; it begins with God's initiative.

> *"We love him, because he first loved us."*
> ***— 1 John 4:19 (KJV)***

Before we loved Christ, He loved us. Before we could offer anything to God, Christ offered Himself for us. Romans 5:8 declares that God demonstrated His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

1. **Christ loved us when we were sinners.** He did not wait for us to become worthy before He died for us.

2. **Christ redeemed us through His blood.** Ephesians 1:7 teaches that in Him we have redemption and forgiveness according to the riches of His grace.

3. **Christ sustains His people.** Hebrews 7:25 teaches that He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He ever lives to make intercession for them.

4. **Christ is our example.** Hebrews 12:2 directs us to look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

5. **The Holy Spirit works in believers.** Galatians 5:16–25 teaches that believers are to walk in the Spirit, who produces godly fruit.

Avoid two extremes: thinking human determination can produce Christian life independently of God, and thinking grace makes obedience unnecessary. Philippians 2:12–13 holds together the believer's responsibility and God's work: God works in His people both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

We do not follow Christ to persuade Him to love us; we follow Him because His love has already been demonstrated towards us.

18. The relationship between faithfulness and salvation

We must distinguish three important biblical truths:

Justification Our standing before God	God declares the believer righteous through faith in Jesus Christ. We are not justified by religious achievements or personal goodness. **Scriptures:** Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:8–9
Sanctification Our growth in Christlikeness	God works in believers, transforming their character and conduct. This involves growth, obedience, repentance and spiritual fruit. **Scriptures:** 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 2 Corinthians 3:18
Glorification Our future completion	God will ultimately bring His saving work to completion when believers are fully conformed to the likeness of Christ. **Scriptures:** Romans 8:29–30; Philippians 3:20–21

Ephesians 2:8–10 gives the proper order: saved by grace, through faith, not by works, and created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Good works are not the root of salvation; they are its fruit.

The faithful follower is not working to become worthy of Christ; the faithful follower is living out the new life received through Christ.

PART FIVE: BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

19. PETER: THE FOLLOWER WHO FAILED BUT WAS RESTORED

Scripture: John 21:15–19

Peter confidently declared his loyalty, but denied Jesus three times. After the resurrection, Jesus restored him and entrusted him with caring for His sheep. Peter's story teaches that confidence in self is insufficient, believers can fail seriously, and Christ's grace restores repentant sinners to renewed obedience.

20. PAUL: THE FOLLOWER WHO CONSIDERED CHRIST HIS GREATEST TREASURE

Scripture: Philippians 3:7–14

Paul had religious credentials, education and zeal. Yet he counted these things loss compared with the surpassing worth of knowing Christ. He pursued Christ, depended on righteousness through faith, pressed towards the goal and remained committed despite suffering.

21. MARY OF BETHANY: THE FOLLOWER WHO TREASURED CHRIST'S WORD

Scripture: Luke 10:38–42

Mary sat at Jesus' feet and listened. Jesus did not condemn service; He corrected anxiety and distraction and commended Mary's choice. Fellowship with Christ must not be displaced by religious busyness.

22. TIMOTHY: THE FOLLOWER CALLED TO FAITHFUL SERVICE

Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:1–2

Paul told Timothy to be strong in the grace that is in Christ and to entrust what he had learned to faithful people who could teach others. Faithful ministry preserves and communicates the truth rather than replacing it with popularity.

23. DEMAS: A WARNING AGAINST LOVING THE PRESENT WORLD

Scripture: 2 Timothy 4:10; Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24

Demas appears among Paul's fellow workers, but later Paul reports that he deserted him because he loved the present world. Scripture does not give all details of Demas's later spiritual condition, so we should not speculate. His example warns that association with ministry does not remove the need for personal faithfulness.

PART SIX: FAITHFULNESS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

24. Faithfulness must be visible in our daily conduct

It is easy to speak about faithfulness in church. The real test is how we live when we return home, go to work, relate to family and interact with people who disagree with us. Christian discipleship must affect the whole of life.

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Marriage	Love, sacrifice, respect and commitment	Ephesians 5:25–33
Parenting	Raising children in God's instruction	Ephesians 6:4
Workplace	Honesty and diligence	Colossians 3:23
Relationships	Forgiveness and patience	Colossians 3:13
Finances	Faithful stewardship	1 Corinthians 4:2
Speech	Truthful and edifying words	Ephesians 4:29
Church	Serving others in love	Galatians 5:13
Private life	Integrity before God	Matthew 6:4–6
Suffering	Endurance and trust	James 1:2–4

In marriage: The love of Christ must influence how husbands and wives treat one another. **In parenting:** Faithfulness includes teaching, loving, correcting and nurturing children in the Lord. **At work:** Our conduct must reflect our commitment to Christ. **In relationships:** We must not preach forgiveness while deliberately cultivating bitterness. **In ministry:** A faithful minister serves Christ rather than building a personal kingdom. **In private life:** God sees beyond public appearances.

> **Following Jesus is not an activity reserved for Sunday; it is a way of life that must influence every day.**

PART SEVEN: PERSONAL EXAMINATION AND SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

25. Are we really following Jesus?

2 Corinthians 13:5 says: “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.” This is not an invitation to live in constant fear or doubt. It is a call to honest spiritual examination.

1. Is Jesus Christ truly the Lord of my life?
2. Do I love Christ above the things He gives me?
3. Am I continuing in His Word?
4. Do I obey Scripture even when it challenges my preferences?
5. Am I willing to deny myself for the sake of Christ?
6. Do I depend on Christ or on my own strength?
7. Is the fruit of the Spirit becoming increasingly evident in my life?

8. Do I love other believers sincerely?
9. Have I allowed bitterness, pride or worldly desires to weaken my devotion?
10. Am I faithful in my family, workplace and private life?
11. Am I pursuing Christ Himself or merely the benefits of Christianity?
12. Am I continuing in the faith?

A word to those who have stumbled

Perhaps someone has experienced serious failure, become spiritually distracted, allowed worldly ambitions to take priority or become discouraged because growth has been slow. The Gospel is not that Christ only receives people who have never failed. Jesus Christ saves sinners and calls people to repentance and faith.

Do not use grace as an excuse to remain in sin. Equally, do not allow failure to make you believe that Christ's grace is insufficient. Look to Jesus, return to His Word, walk in repentance, depend on His grace and continue in faith.

PART EIGHT: FINAL CHALLENGE AND CHRIST-CENTRED CONCLUSION

26. The ultimate question: Who are we really following?

> *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”*
> ***— John 10:27 (KJV)***

Jesus identifies His sheep through three expressions: they hear His voice, He knows them, and they follow Him. This speaks of relationship, belonging and discipleship. Following Jesus means that we are no longer satisfied with living independently of His authority. We want to know His voice through His Word, understand His will, reflect His character and bring glory to His name.

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Knows about Jesus	Seeks to know Christ
Enjoys religious activities	Treasures fellowship with Christ
Wants blessings	Treasures the Blesser
Follows when convenient	Remains committed when costly
Hears the Word	Continues in the Word
Seeks recognition	Seeks God's glory
Relies on self	Depends on Christ
Displays religious appearances	Pursues inward transformation

This comparison is not intended to suggest that every struggling Christian is a false believer. Rather, it challenges us to examine the direction, foundation and fruit of our Christian lives.

27. The greatest example of faithfulness is Jesus Christ Himself

We cannot conclude a teaching about faithful followers without looking again at Jesus. Before considering how faithful we must be, consider how faithful Christ has been. He faithfully accomplished the Father's will, lived in perfect obedience, loved His own unto the end, laid down His life for sinners, endured the cross, rose bodily from the dead and is exalted at the Father's right hand.

> *"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."*
> ***— John 17:4 (KJV)***

Jesus completed the work the Father gave Him. His earthly ministry was marked by obedience, love, holiness and faithfulness. Our calling is not to replace His perfect work but to live in response to what He has accomplished. He is our Saviour, Lord, Shepherd, example and life.

28. Final sermon appeal: Not just a believer, but a faithful follower!

Dear brothers and sisters, the question before us is not simply whether we have attended church, know how to pray, quote Scripture or participate in Christian activities. The question is: **Are we genuinely following Jesus Christ?**

When Christ speaks through His Word, do we listen? When He commands, do we obey? When following Him becomes costly, do we remain committed? When we stumble, do we repent and return to Him? When the world offers alternatives, do we continue to treasure Him?

Let us not settle for superficial Christianity. Let us pursue Christ, treasure His Word, depend on His grace, walk in the Spirit, love one another and remain faithful. Let us make Jesus Christ the centre of our lives.

> **The world does not merely need more people who identify themselves as Christians. It needs to see the transforming power of the Gospel expressed through people who genuinely belong to Jesus Christ.**

FINAL DECLARATION

> ***NOT JUST A BELIEVER — A FAITHFUL FOLLOWER OF JESUS CHRIST!***
>
> *I will not merely speak about Christ; I will live for His glory.*
> *I will not merely hear His Word; I will continue in His Word.*
> *I will not merely seek His blessings; I will treasure Him above all things.*
> *I will not depend on my own strength; I will abide in Him.*
> *I will not allow the world to determine my values; I will follow the truth of His Word.*
> *By His grace, I will continue trusting, loving and following Jesus Christ.*

> *"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."*
> ***— Revelation 2:10 (KJV)***

CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

We come before You in the precious name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Thank You for the gift of Your Son. Thank You for His sacrificial death, His glorious resurrection and the salvation You have provided through Him.

Father, forgive us for the times we have allowed religious activities to take the place of genuine fellowship with Christ. Forgive us for the times we have professed devotion with our lips while our hearts have been distracted by

other things.

Teach us to love Jesus above everything else. Give us hearts that delight in Your Word. Help us to submit to the Lordship of Christ in every area of our lives.

Holy Spirit, work in us. Produce in us the fruit that glorifies the Father. Teach us to walk in love, holiness, humility, patience, faithfulness and obedience.

Strengthen those who are discouraged. Restore those who have stumbled and come to You in repentance. Encourage those who are facing difficulties. Help those who are struggling to remain faithful.

May our marriages, families, workplaces, relationships, ministries and private lives reflect the character of Jesus Christ. Father, let our lives bring glory to Your name.

May we not merely be people who speak about Jesus, but people whose lives demonstrate that we belong to Him. Keep us faithful to the end.

In the mighty and precious name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SERMON SUMMARY: THE TWELVE MARKS OF A FAITHFUL FOLLOWER

1. Belongs to Christ.
2. Loves Christ above everything else.
3. Submits to the Lordship of Christ.
4. Continues in the Word of Christ.
5. Denies self and follows Christ daily.
6. Abides in Christ and depends on His grace.
7. Obeys Christ out of love.
8. Loves other believers.
9. Pursues holiness and righteousness.
10. Bears the fruit of the Holy Spirit.
11. Remains faithful when following Christ becomes costly.
12. Perseveres in faith until the end.

SUGGESTED TEACHING PLAN

Session	Subject	Duration
1	The difference between believing and following	10 min
2	The twelve characteristics of faithful followers	25 min
3	The cost and enemies of discipleship	10 min
4	Christ as the foundation of our faithfulness	10 min
5	Biblical examples and practical application	10 min
6	Personal examination and closing appeal	10 min
	TOTAL	75 min

Final theological takeaway

Christian faithfulness is not the foundation upon which we earn salvation; it is the fruit of God's saving grace working in people who belong to Jesus Christ. We are saved by grace, through faith, and created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Our confidence is not in our ability to make ourselves faithful. Our confidence is in Jesus Christ, who saves, transforms, sustains and keeps His people.

TO GOD ALONE BE THE GLORY!