

# The Lord of Your Home. The Lord of Your Family.

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Preacher: Hunter Quinn

[ 0 : 00 ] Following Jesus is not comfortable, and you and I love our comforts.! Today's passage is Matthew 8, verses 18-22.

! In this passage, Jesus is going to address our hesitation in following him. So, the context of this passage, Jesus has finished preaching his sermon on the mount, and then he goes back to the city he's staying in at this point in his ministry, Capernaum.

It's on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. And he's spent time in Capernaum. He's been healing people. He's been throwing out demons from the demon-possessed. And then he decides he's going to go somewhere else.

He's going to cross the Sea of Galilee. And this is where our passage picks up. Matthew 8, verses 18-22. In this passage, we are going to ask a question to guide us through.

We're going to ask, what does Jesus demand of his disciples? What does Jesus demand of his disciples? And we're going to see him demand two things.

[ 1 : 11 ] That his disciples surrender their home, and that his disciples surrender their family. Jesus asks his disciples to surrender their life to him because he first surrenders his life for them.

Now, with that framework in mind, let's read Matthew 8, verses 18-22. And as we read, remember, this is the word of the Lord.

When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake. Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.

Jesus replied, Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head. Another disciple said to him, Lord, first let me go and bury my father.

But Jesus told him, follow me and let the dead bury their own dead. The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of our God stands forever.

[ 2 : 21 ] Please join me in praying for this time in the word together. Almighty God, you see our hearts, you see our hesitations, you see exactly where we hesitate when it comes to your word.

Would your word be at work among each and every one of us, your Holy Spirit's pressing the truth of the gospel deep into our hearts so that we would believe, that we would put our faith in Christ Jesus, and that we would follow.

It's in your Son's name that we pray. Amen. So what does Jesus demand of his disciples? Well, he demands that they surrender their homes.

In verse 18, Matthew indicates that Jesus is going to take a break from the crowds. It's something that he does very often. He performs miracles, people swarm him, and he takes a break.

And in this case, he's going to hop in the boat that is at the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and with his disciples, he's going to cross to the other side. But at the moment, right at the moment of departure, something happens.

[ 3 : 36 ] The passage says that a teacher of the law comes up to Jesus. And a teacher of the law, also known as a scribe, is a professional in the law of God.

It's their job to tell the people what God's word says in the Old Testament, and how to apply it in their daily lives. And this scribe apparently wants to learn Jesus' interpretation of the law.

Jesus has been doing that. If you go back and read the Sermon on the Mount, you can see how Jesus interprets the Old Testament law. And this scribe apparently wants to learn Jesus' interpretation.

But Jesus answers him in a surprising way. In verse 20, Jesus says, Foxes have dens, and birds have nests. But the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.

Now, to understand what Jesus is saying, you have to understand the context of first century Judea. Back then, there was no formal educational system.

[ 4 : 45 ] There was no university education system. If you wanted to learn, you had to go find a teacher. And you had to literally sit at the teacher's feet.

You had to follow the teacher wherever the teacher went. And eventually, once you learned from that teacher, especially if you were a scribe, you could set up your own practice. You can start practicing what you learned.

And evidently, this teacher of the law wants to be a junior scribe to Jesus. Who is the master scribe. But Jesus is no master scribe.

He's a little different. He's the Son of Man. This is the title that Jesus takes for himself. And it's his favorite title in the Gospel of Matthew.

This is the first time that Jesus will use that title, Son of Man. And it comes from the book of Daniel, chapter 7, verses 13 through 14. And in this Old Testament book, the prophet Daniel writes this about a vision that he had.

[ 5 : 52 ] Daniel 7. In my vision at night, I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven.

He approached the ancient of days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory, and sovereign power. All nations and peoples of every language worshipped him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away. And his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. By taking the title, Son of Man for himself, Jesus is identifying as the promised Messiah, as the divine figure who receives authority from God, worthy of that authority and worthy of worship.

Yet this Messiah, who is worshipped by all, is homeless. Jesus is homeless. When the scribe informs Jesus that he will be Jesus' disciple, Jesus says, you must be like me.

I have no home. Animals have home. I have nowhere to sleep. I travel around. Being Jesus' disciple, is not the path to riches, to the quiet life, to setting up one's own scribal practice.

[ 7 : 26 ] Jesus is on earth for a very specific purpose. He is on a mission. He is out to proclaim the word of the Lord, to go to Jerusalem, and be crucified there.

To be crucified for the sins of his people, and rise again on the third day. That is Jesus' mission.

Jesus surrendered his heavenly home in order to dwell among sinners and die for sinners.

If this scribe wants to follow Jesus, he must follow him to Jerusalem. He must surrender his home just as Jesus surrendered his home.

Now, it's important to note that Jesus doesn't always ask his disciples to surrender their homes. In the scene immediately after this, Jesus is going to sail across the Sea of Galilee to a region called the region of the Gadarenes.

And there he's going to cast out lots of demons from a man. And this man is going to be overwhelmed with thanks and ask Jesus to allow him to follow.

[ 8 : 43 ] And Jesus is going to tell this man, no. Stay here. And share how I have saved you. So what's the difference?

Why does the Gadarene get to stay home, but this scribe must surrender his home? I think Jesus is able to see the heart.

Jesus could see the heart of the Gadarene and see that he had already surrendered his home in his heart. And the scribe had not yet surrendered his home.

Perhaps because he didn't understand Jesus' mission. The scribe needed to surrender his home in his heart. So what does Jesus demand of his disciples?

He demands that they surrender their homes. Jesus demands that his disciples surrender their homes. Now my father, he was a pilot in the U.S. military.

[ 9 : 51 ] And in the U.S. military, it's required of the service members that they live on a new base, that they go to a new location every three to four years. And it results in a lifestyle where you don't necessarily belong anywhere.

you surrender your home when you join the military. In this passage, Jesus makes it clear that his disciples must surrender their homes.

If the king of creation must surrender his home, so too must his disciples surrender their home. Now what's interesting here is that Matthew doesn't tell us what the scribe chose.

We don't know. Did the scribe follow? Did the scribe surrender everything? We don't know. Matthew keeps the focus on Jesus, the Messiah who surrendered his heavenly home to rescue sinners.

Jesus and his journey to the cross in Jerusalem. When you put your faith in Jesus, he saves you because he died for you.

[11:07] He's your righteous Messiah. When you put your faith in Jesus, you receive God's love. You receive God's grace. You receive Christ's righteousness for you.

But you also receive a new home. Jesus gives you a new home. When you belong to Jesus, this world is no longer your home.

The new heavens and the new earth that Jesus is ushering in is your home. You are an exile on this earth because you belong to Jesus.

He's pulled you out of your earthly home and put you into your eternal home. So when your master commands you to surrender your home, you must listen.

You must listen when your master commands you to surrender your home. Now you may be Cape Town born and raised. You may have gotten here as quickly as you could.

[12:17] In God's providence, you may never leave Cape Town ever again. Nevertheless, because you belong to Christ, Cape Town is not your home.

You are in exile in Cape Town. Have you surrendered Cape Town in your heart? Have you surrendered Cape Town in your heart?

heart? Now I'm an American and sometimes all I want is to spend my Saturdays eating Chick-fil-A and watching college football.

Sometimes all I want is a blazing hot Fourth of July and an ice-cold Christmas. And that's because I've not yet surrendered my home from my heart.

I get homesick for these things. Do you get homesick for your heavenly home? Do you get homesick for your heavenly home?

[13:27] Do you want to trade Table Mountain in the Clouff Street scene for drinking heavenly wine with your heavenly Savior?

Ask God to give you grace to surrender Cape Town in your heart. But perhaps for you the problem is not surrendering Cape Town.

I know the demographics. I know that people from all over the nation are moving here for work opportunities, for infrastructure. You're here for education.

You're here to climb the corporate ladder. You're here for a time but really you want to go back home wherever home is. But what if God in his providence has called you here for a purpose beyond your job?

For a purpose beyond your education? What if the Lord in his providence has called you to Cape Town to be his witness?

[14:32] to be a witness to Christ in your work? To be a witness to Christ in your flat?

What if the Lord has called you here to build deep roots in this church, in this town for his glory? Have you surrendered your home in your heart? Now the only way to know this is by asking the Lord. Go to him in prayer.

Ask him, are you calling me to surrender my home elsewhere in South Africa or Africa and be here for your glory? Is this something you want me to do?

Ask the Lord in prayer. Ask others to pray for you. Ask people in your community groups. Ask the elders. The Lord may ask you to go back.

[15:28] you don't know. But he may ask you to stay. And there will be sacrifice for that with the cost of living, with the way of life in Cape Town.

But the Lord may call you here. Jesus asks his disciples to surrender their home, but he also asks his disciples to surrender their families.

Look at verses 21 through 22. Matthew writes, another disciple said to him, Lord, first let me go and bury my father.

But Jesus told him, follow me and let the dead bury their own dead. That seems like a really insensitive response, doesn't it?

and that response has resulted in a lot of division between commentators when they talk about this passage. Now there are some who say, well, Jesus is elevating the status of a disciple above that of a priest because a priest couldn't touch a dead body unless it was their close family member and then they could touch a dead body.

[16:48] But disciples are more important because they are with Jesus. I don't think that's the right answer because Jesus is in the process of doing away with the ritual categories of the law because

he is fulfilling those categories in his person on the cross.

I think the other interpretation is more likely. Now in first century Judea, the people there buried bodies quickly. Think of Lazarus when he died.

When Jesus got to where Lazarus died, he was already buried. Funeral preparations were over.

When someone died, they had to rush to bury them according to the cultural practices of the time.

I think that if this man in the passage were truly engaged in the hectic work of burying his father, he would not have time to spend with Jesus.

He would be busy with funeral preparations. I think that this man is wanting to delay following Jesus until his healthy father passes away.

[18:06] Now we don't know his motivations. Maybe he didn't want to be separated from his father. Maybe he wanted to receive his father's inheritance. Maybe he didn't want to disappoint his father's expectations for him.

We don't know. But he wanted to stay with his healthy living father. And Jesus gives a stark answer to that. No.

Let the dead bury the dead. Everyone is dying as a result of sin. Follow the Lord of life for life.

Jesus is telling the man that in order to be his disciple family must come second. Jesus must come first.

Now don't hear what Jesus is not telling the man. Jesus is not telling the man abandon your father.

Jesus is not telling the man don't provide for your father.

[19:13] Jesus is not telling the man let your father die alone and in poverty with no funeral preparations. Jesus is not saying that.

We know that because Jesus said himself that he did not come to break the law of God. He came to fulfill it, to bring it to completion. Jesus would agree that one must honor their father and their mother.

And then one of Jesus' later disciples, Paul, will write in 1 Timothy chapter 5 verse 8, anyone who does not provide for their relatives and especially for their own household has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Rather, Jesus is telling the man that he must surrender his personal presence with the father. He must surrender his personal presence with his father.

father. Now, obviously, this might cause division between this man and his father. Why would any father want their son to go following a homeless miracle worker?

[20:27] father? But Jesus, later in Matthew 10 verses 37, Jesus will say, anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.

Anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Jesus calls his disciples to not only surrender their home, he calls his disciples to surrender their family because Jesus is worth more.

Jesus is worth more than your family and he brings you in to an eternal family. family. Now just before my family and I left the United States to move to South Africa, my grandfather was near the end of his life.

He was still alive but he had advanced Alzheimer's and I knew that likely during the gap that I would be away, the four year gap, that he probably wouldn't survive.

And so before we moved here we had one last dinner together and it was really painful because I knew that this was the last time I would spend with him.

[21:48] And I loved him. He was like a father to me. And sure enough, last March I got the call that he had passed away.

But you know what? Jesus is worth it. Jesus is worth it. He died for me.

He died for you. He gives me an eternal home with you all here, an eternal family, and he gives you an eternal home and an eternal family.

family. This is what the man in Matthew needed to learn. He needed to learn that he had an eternal home and an eternal family in Christ.

So church, surrender your family. Surrender your family because Jesus is worth it. in him you will find eternal life, eternal love, eternal forgiveness, an eternal home and an eternal family.

[23:13] And one day when you pass away and you go meet Jesus in heaven, he's going to smile at you and say, well done, good and faithful servant.

Now, I don't know where the Lord is asking you to surrender your family. I don't know. Maybe it involves staying here in Cape Town and building deeper roots in this city, in this church, as you work and witness for his name.

Maybe you will need to surrender your family one day in the future. maybe there will be another church plant, not in Cape Town, but in another portion of the country.

And the Lord calls you to that church plant away from your family. Maybe one day in God's providence, this denomination will start sending out missionaries to other countries.

And he might call you to be a missionary to another country. And you have to go far away from your family. You don't know. Pray now that when the Lord asks you to surrender your family, you'll be ready.

[ 24 : 37 ] Pray now that the Lord will give you grace to follow his call. And if he's calling you to stay here, ask for grace.

Or perhaps simply being a Christian upsets your family enough. Perhaps following the Lord in growing in grace, putting off the works of the flesh, putting on Christ, that is disruptive enough. And the Lord is calling you to surrender your family. family. As you yourself grow in grace, grow in your love for Jesus, he's going to change you.

And your life is going to look different from your family's life. Now when that friction comes, ask the Lord for grace.

grace. There might be some of you whose relationship is so fraught with your family because of your walk with the Lord that you're experiencing rejection.

[ 25 : 50 ] That it's even difficult to spend time with your family, not because you don't want to, but because they're rejecting you. If that's the case, dig into your heavenly family.

Dig into your heavenly family. Tell your heavenly family here at Union Chapel what is going on. Tell them where you are lonely.

Tell them where you've been cut off from your family members. As Vilko said, reach out to the deacons so they can help you. Dig into your heavenly family.

family. In Matthew 8, 18 through 22, Jesus demands two things from his disciples.

He demands that they surrender their homes and that they surrender their families. Disciples must surrender their lives to Jesus because Jesus first surrendered his life for them.

[ 26 : 53 ] Tiosoga was a Kosa man who became the first Kosa Presbyterian pastor.

He's famous for translating the Bible and Pilgrim's Progress into Kosa and for his deep passion and love for the Lord. Now, when he was a young man, another minister recognized his potential for gospel ministry and said, you need to go to Scotland to be educated for the ministry.

And Soga's mother was a woman named Nosutu. And she had to be confronted with the reality that her son was going to get on a sailing ship and sail to Scotland, which is a long way from here.

These are her words. My son belongs to God. wherever he goes, God is with him. He is as much in God's care in Scotland as he is here with me.

Nosutu followed Jesus and laid everything down for him. May God give us the grace we need to lay everything down for him.

[ 28 : 16 ] God, thank you for the salvation we have in Christ.

We thank you that Jesus gave up everything that he laid down his life to bear your wrath for our sins. sins. We thank you that we share in his resurrection life, not because we have done anything to earn it, not because we are good enough, but out of sheer grace and sheer mercy.

Thank you, oh Lord, for your grace. It's in Christ's name that we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.