

Becoming like Jesus in abandonment

(Based on Chapter 19 of *Costly Grace*)

The Big Idea

We must abandon ourselves to the life of Christ that now works to produce the character of Jesus with us, and from his life in us, fruit will grow.

Biblical Foundation

... You will know them by what they do. Thorn bushes do not bear grapes, and briars do not bear figs. A healthy tree bears good fruit, but a poor tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a poor tree cannot bear good fruit. And any tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown in the fire. ... Matthew 7:13-23 (TEV)

It is only the Spirit of the living God working within us that enables us to live the extraordinary life Jesus plans for us. If we try to live such an extraordinary life through external commands, willpower, etc., we'll eventually realize it is humanly impossible and give up.

Jesus says we are like vines that run off his branch. As long as we are connected to him, we bear fruit (John 15). Without him, we cannot bear fruit. What does that mean to you? What sort of fruit should we bear?

The Word of God says we can do all things through Jesus, but we can do nothing apart from Jesus. There is no middle ground. We either do it with Jesus or what we do amounts to nothing in the kingdom of heaven. Why is this such revolutionary thinking in the world we live in?

“There is nothing in us that allows us to claim that we are capable of doing this work,” Paul says. “The capacity we have comes from God; it is he who made us capable of serving the new covenant, which consists not of a written law but of the Spirit. The written law brings death, but the Spirit gives life” (2 Corinthians 3:3-6 TEV).

If we understand this verse, how should our life change? If there is a gap between the way our life should change and the way our life remains, what should we do about that?

The Cost of Discipleship

It is not enough to just hear the Word, we must also do the Word. But Jesus says the doing must be done through an intimate connection to him. We are not called to run off and save the world for Jesus; we are called to join Jesus in his mission to save the world.