

Dr. Craig Keener, Matthew, Session 15, Matthew 19-22

Podcast Audio Overview

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Welcome back, everybody, to another Deep Dive. Today, we're going to be looking at discipleship and leadership in the Gospel of Matthew. Yeah.

That's a good one. We're going to be using a really cool lecture series by Dr. Craig Keener, who is a leading expert on the historical Jesus. And we're going to be exploring some really, really challenging teachings, like the cost of following Jesus, the surprising nature of God's grace.

Right. And what it truly means to be great in God's kingdom. Yeah.

Matthew's Gospel is so interesting because, you know, it's presenting these timeless teachings, but within the context of first-century Jewish culture. And it makes you realize that these teachings weren't just abstract principles. Yeah.

You know, they were lived out by real people in a specific time and place. I think one of the stories that really brings that home is a story of the rich young man who couldn't give up his possessions to follow Jesus. That's Matthew 19.16-22. Yeah.

And it really begs the question, like, what does it mean to truly commit to Jesus today? It's easy to say we would follow him, but would we be willing to give up everything we hold dear? Yeah. That's a question we all have to wrestle with. Yeah.

You know, I mean, think about it. Yeah. What are some of the things we might be clinging to today that prevent us from fully following Jesus? Yeah.

Maybe it's not literal wealth, but could it be our careers? Yeah. Our reputations? Or the comfort zone. Even our comfort zone.

Definitely. Yeah. Yeah.

I think it's easy for people to read that passage and think, well, I'm not rich. Right. So this doesn't apply to me.

Yeah. But I think when you start to look at like, okay, what about your time, your energy? Your energy. Are you willing to invest those in God's kingdom, even if it means sacrificing your own comfort or convenience? Absolutely.

And this story also helps us to debunk that myth about the eye of the needle being a narrow gate in Jerusalem. Yeah. The reality is the eye of the needle was a metaphor for something nearly impossible, like trying to thread a camel through a literal needle.

Yeah. Good luck with that. Yeah.

Jesus was emphasizing how incredibly difficult it is to enter God's kingdom if we're holding on to worldly wealth or anything else that we prioritize above him. But it's not like all rich people are doomed. No, it's not a blanket statement.

I mean, you've got Zacchaeus, the tax collector who gave away half his wealth when he met Jesus, and Joseph of Arimathea, who was wealthy, but risked his reputation by claiming Jesus's body after the crucifixion. Yeah. He's a fascinating character.

He is, yeah. Most people don't realize the risks he took in doing that. Yeah.

So it's really not about wealth itself being evil. No, it's not. It's about the potential for anything to become vital.

Yeah. It's that thing that replaces our devotion to God. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. That's a good point.

The real question is, what are you willing to sacrifice for the sake of the kingdom? What are you holding onto that might be hindering you from following Jesus more fully? That's a really challenging thought. It is. Okay.

So let's move on to a parable that I think is also really challenging. And it's the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. This is Matthew chapter 20.

And it's about a landowner who hires workers throughout the day, but then pays them all the same wage at the end, even though some work longer than others. What do you make of this parable? Oh, it's such a puzzling one at first glance, isn't it? Yeah. But I think it's all about challenging the idea that God's grace is something we earn.

You know, in the parable, the landowner represents God, and he's incredibly generous. Even to those who come to work at the 11th hour, he shows the same grace and gives the same reward. Yeah.

I think it's interesting, though, because the workers who started early in the day, they weren't too happy about it. They weren't. No.

And it's like, I can understand that, because it seems like, well, they put in more hours. Right. So shouldn't they get paid more? Yeah.

And I think that's the point. You know, it really makes us confront our own ideas of fairness. Have you ever found yourself comparing your spiritual journey to someone else's? Yeah.

Maybe you've thought, well, I've been following Jesus longer, so I must be more deserving of his blessings. Right. This parable throws that whole idea out the window.

You know, God's grace isn't a limited resource that runs out the more he gives it away. It's infinite. It's overflowing and available to anyone who chooses to receive it.

So it's not about who deserves it more or who's been working harder at being a good Christian. Exactly. God's grace isn't about fairness in a human sense.

It's about his overflowing love and mercy. It's about recognizing that we're all in need of his grace, regardless of how long we've been following him or what we've done. And it's about celebrating the fact that God chooses to extend that grace to all who come to him, no matter when they arrive.

What do you think about that? I think it makes you wonder if you are really celebrating when other people receive God's grace, even if they haven't been following Jesus as long as you have or whatever it is. Are you really happy for them, or are you secretly thinking, well, that's not fair? I think that- yeah. It's a heart issue, isn't it? It's about where our hearts are.

But it's important to remember, God is the one who extends the invitation, and he gets to choose who he invites and how he blesses them. Our job is simply to be grateful for his grace and to extend that same grace to others. I love that.

Yeah. And I think it leads perfectly into our next topic, which is the unexpected path to greatness. So in Matthew chapter 20, verses 20 through 28, we encounter James and John who want to snag the best seats in the kingdom.

Yeah. They want to be right up there. They want to be at the top.

Right there next to Jesus. Yeah. And what's interesting is that their mom- Oh, yeah.

... actually approaches Jesus- Yeah. ... to make the request. Oh, that's a good detail.

Dr. Keener points out that this detail is significant because in that culture, older women often acted as intermediaries and advocates, especially when it came to potentially sensitive or ambitious requests. Yeah. It's like she's going into bat for them.

Yeah. Yeah. So we might miss that detail if we're not- Yeah.

... paying attention to the cultural context. Right. But it shows us how social dynamics- Sure.

... played a role- Yeah. ... even in these interactions with Jesus. Yeah.

And how does Jesus respond to their ambitious request? Right. He doesn't just shut them down. Yeah.

He uses it as a teaching moment, you know? Yeah. He asks them- Yeah. ... if they're ready to drink from his cup.

Yeah. And Dr. Keener connects this to Jesus' later agony in Gethsemane- Right.

... where he prays for the cup of suffering- Yeah. ... to pass from him. Yeah.

It's a powerful image, isn't it? Oh, yeah. It really is. He's not dismissing their desire for greatness- Yeah.

... but he's reframing their understanding of what true greatness looks like. Yeah. It's not about power, prestige, or the best seats in the house.

Yeah. Right. It's about sharing in his suffering, his sacrifice, and his mission of redemption.

You know? It's about being willing to serve others- Yeah. ... even if it means giving up- ... our own comfort and desires.

And it's almost ironic because the places on his right and left- Yeah. ... that James and John were after ... end up being occupied- Right.

... by the two criminals- ... crucified alongside Jesus. Yeah. So much for getting the best seats in the house.

Yeah. Yeah. It really drives home the point that- ... greatness in God's kingdom.

... is often found in the most unexpected places. Yeah. That's so true.

It's not about- Yeah. ... outward appearances- ... or worldly success.

It's about- Yeah. ... inward transformation- Right. ... and a willingness to follow Jesus- Yeah.

... even when it's difficult- Yeah. ... even when it means suffering. Yeah.

I love that Dr. Keener uses an example from his own life- Oh, yeah. ... to illustrate this point. Yeah.

He talks about a humble neighbor- ... who had endured- ... and how she radiated joy, forgiveness ... and a deep connection with God. Yeah.

It's a powerful reminder- Yeah. ... that God sees the heart ... not outward appearances- Right.

... or social status. It makes you think about the people in your own life- Yeah. ... who might embody this kind of.

... hidden greatness, right? Yeah. The unsung heroes. Yeah.

The people who are quietly serving ... without any fanfare. Yeah.

Yeah. It really does.

It's a challenge to all of us to re-evaluate- Yeah. ... our own priorities and definitions of success. Right.

Are we seeking the kind of greatness- Yeah. ... that the world offers? Or are we pursuing the kind of greatness that Jesus modeled?

A greatness rooted in- Yeah. ... humility, service- ... and sacrifice? That's a question, isn't it? What do you think, listener? Yeah. What kind of greatness are you pursuing? Yeah.

That's a great question. Yeah. Yeah.

It leads perfectly into our next topic- ... which is Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Okay.

Yeah. We'll pick that up. We'll pick that up in part two.

In the next section. All right. See you guys there.

All right. We were talking about Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Right.

We often picture this grand procession ... with Jesus riding in on a war horse like a conquering hero. Yeah.

Right? Like something out of a movie. Yeah. But that's not what happens at all.

Yeah. Jesus actually rides in on a donkey- yeah. ... which was a symbol of peace and humility.

Yeah. It was a very deliberate choice- Oh, absolutely... on Jesus's part, fulfilling the prophecy- Yeah.

... in Zechariah 9.9- ... about a king who comes humble and riding on a donkey. Yeah.

He was subverting expectations right from the start. Yeah. He wasn't coming in as a military conqueror- Right.

... but as a humble king- Yeah. ... bringing a message of peace. Yeah.

And it's fascinating how Dr. Keener connects this- Yeah. ... to the concept of meekness in the Bible. Yeah.

Yeah, because we often think of meekness as weakness. Right. Yeah, like a doormat or something.

Yeah. But Dr. Keener's saying ... that in this context, it doesn't mean weakness at all.

Oh, not at all. It's actually a powerful strength under control. Yeah.

It's like a gentle strength- yeah. ... a compassionate heart- yeah. ... that cares for the lowly and the oppressed.

Yeah, it's the kind of strength that Jesus embodied- Right. ... throughout his ministry. Yeah, he was powerful but not domineering.

Right. Authoritative but not authoritarian. Yeah, he welcomed the outcasts.

... healed the sick- Yeah. ... and challenged the religious elite- Right. ... who were abusing their power.

Exactly. And speaking of challenging the religious elite- Okay. ... let's talk about Jesus cleansing the temple.

Yeah. Now, Dr. Keener even suggests that cleansing might not even be- Yeah. ... a strong enough word.

Right. He sees it as a symbolic act of judgment- Mm. ... against the corruption and hypocrisy that he finds there.

Yeah, it wasn't just about tidying up a messy marketplace. Right. This was a prophetic act- yeah.

... aimed at the heart of the temple system itself. Yeah, a system that had become more concerned- Right. ... with rituals and prophets- Yeah.

... than with genuine worship and compassion. Yeah. It's easy to lose sight of the heart of it all, isn't it? Yeah, and it's wild to think about the historical context here.

Oh, yeah. Dr. Keener explains how the temple courts ... were segregated- Right.

... with Gentiles relegated to the outermost areas. Yeah, and that segregation- Yeah. ... was a blatant violation of God's original intention- Yeah.

... for the temple to be- Yeah. ... a house of prayer for all nations- Wherever. ... as Isaiah 56:7 puts it.

It's a system that- Yeah, yeah. ... excluded anyone who didn't fit the mold- Right. ... of the religious elite.

And it's heartbreaking to think about how this ancient segregation mirrors the racism and discrimination- ... that still plagues societies today. It really is. Yeah.

It's a sobering reminder- yeah. ... that the human tendency to exclude and marginalize those who are different- right.

... is nothing new. Yeah. You know, Jesus's actions in the temple call us to confront these injustices.

... because they're not welcomed- ... and valued- Yeah. ... regardless of their background or beliefs. Yeah.

And it's not just about overturning tables, you know? No, yeah. Jesus is also quoting- Right. ... from Isaiah and Jeremiah- Right.

... connecting his actions to the prophets- Yeah. ... who condemned Israel's idolatry and injustice. Yeah.

He's showing that this isn't a new problem. It's a recurring pattern of turning away- yeah.

... from God's heart for justice and mercy. It's a stark warning. It is.

But it's also a call to repentance and renewal. Yeah, absolutely. Okay, so let's shift gears a little bit- all right.

... and talk about the parable of the wedding feast. Oh, yeah, that's a good one. So this is Matthew 22.

And it's all about a king- yeah. ... who throws this huge feast- right.

... but when he sends out invitations ... the guests make all sorts of excuses- Yeah. ... and refuse to come.

And that was a big deal back then. Yeah. You know, to refuse a king's invitation.

Yeah. In the ancient world, was a grave insult. Yeah.

A direct challenge to the king's authority. So it's not just about being rude or RSVPing. No.

No, at the last minute. No, it was much more serious than that. These guests are blatantly disrespecting the king.

Absolutely they are. And the king's response- yeah... shows just how serious their offense was.

Right. He sends his army to destroy those- Yeah. ... who rejected him.

Now, of course, this is a parable. Right. So we're not supposed to take it literally.

Right. But this escalation- ... from sending messengers- Yeah. ... to burning the city.

... is meant to emphasize the severity- ... of rejecting- Yeah. ... God's offer of salvation. Wow.

So refusing God's invitation- Yeah. ... isn't just about missing out on a good time. No.

It has eternal consequences. That's right. Think about it this way.

Yes. God has prepared a feast for us.

A place at his table. Right. Right.

... where we can experience his love- Yeah. ... joy, and fellowship forever.

But he also gives us the freedom ... to choose whether or not ... we accept his invitation.

Right. And the parable warns us- yeah... that rejecting his offer.

... is a grave mistake. Yeah. One with eternal consequences.

And it really makes you think about- It does. ... how we respond to God's invitations in our own lives. Are we treating his invitations as a priority? Yeah.

Are we eagerly accepting his offer? Right. Of grace and salvation? Yeah. Or are we making excuses?

... and putting other things first? Yeah. Those are good questions to ask ourselves. Yeah.

There's another fascinating detail in this parable. Okay. The guest who shows up without a wedding garment.

Oh, yeah. What was up with that guy? What was that about? It's like showing up- oh... to a black-tie event in jeans and a T-shirt.

Right. You know, scholars have different interpretations- yeah... of what this symbolizes.

Yeah. But one common idea is that it represents a lack of spiritual preparation. Yeah.

It's like trying to enter God's kingdom- ... without putting on the garment of righteousness- Right. ... that comes through faith in Jesus. So it's not enough to just show up.

Yeah. You need to be wearing- Yeah. ... the right attire, so to speak.

Yeah. You got to have the right clothes on. Yeah.

Yeah. And this adds another layer of warning to the parable. It does.

Yeah. It suggests that even among those- ... who claim to follow Jesus- Yeah. ... there will be some who aren't truly prepared for his return.

Right. They might look the part outwardly- Yeah. ... but they haven't experienced the inward transformation- Right.

... that comes through genuine faith. Yeah. So it's not just about.

... saying the right words- Yeah. ... or going through the motions. It's about having a heart.

... that's truly changed by God's grace. Yeah. It's about allowing God's grace to transform us- ... from the inside out- ... so that our lives- ... reflect his righteousness and love.

Okay. Now, Dr. Keener. ... also summarizes.

... a few other encounters that Jesus has- Yeah. ... with the religious leaders in Jerusalem. Okay.

There's the exchange with the Pharisees and Herodians ... about taxes... the debate with the Sadducees.

... about the resurrection- Right. ... and the discussion with a scribe ... about the greatest commandment.

Yeah. It's like- It's like a crash course ... in a theological debate.

I know, right? And what's amazing is how Jesus... navigates these- ... complex issues- Right. ... with wisdom and authority.

Yeah. He doesn't shy away from the tough questions. He doesn't.

Yeah. He uses them as opportunities- Yeah. ... to expose the hypocrisy of his opponents- Yeah.

... and to reveal the truth of God's word. Like in the encounter with the Pharisees and Herodians- Right. ... about taxes- Yeah.

... Jesus comes up with that brilliant response- Yeah. ... render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's ... and to God the things that are God's.

Yeah. It's such a clever way of- Yeah. ... acknowledging the legitimate authority of the government- Yeah.

... while also affirming God's ultimate sovereignty- Right. ... over everything. And it's a principle that we can still apply today- Absolutely.

... when we're trying to navigate ... the complexities of living in a world- Right. ... where God's kingdom- Yeah.

... and earthly kingdoms ... often seem to clash. Yeah.

Like, where's the line? Yeah. Yeah. So we need to respect the laws of the land.

... but our ultimate allegiance- Yeah. ... is to God. That's right.

And then there's the debate with the Sadducees- Yeah. ... about the resurrection. Right.

Now, they didn't believe in the afterlife. Yeah. They were kind of the skeptics of their day.

Yeah. Yeah. So they tried to trip Jesus up.

... with this ridiculous- I know. ... hypothetical scenario- Right. ... about a woman who had been married to seven brothers.

Oh, yeah. That one, it gets pretty complicated. Yeah.

But Jesus uses it as an opportunity- He does. ... to teach about the nature of the resurrection. Yeah.

He points back to Exodus ... where God identifies himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Yeah.

But here's the thing- Okay. ... by the time Moses is having this conversation with God- Yeah. ... those patriarchs are long dead.

So what's the point? Well, Jesus is showing that even though those patriarchs ... had physically died- Yeah. ... they were still alive to God- Whoa.

... he was still their God. Right. And that challenges our limited understanding- It does.

... of life and death. Yeah. It suggests that there's a deeper reality beyond our earthly existence.

... a realm where relationships with God continue- Wow. ... even after a physical death. So it's not just about our bodies being resurrected.

It's about our souls continuing to live- Wow. ... in relationship with God. That's a really powerful thought.

It is a message of hope- yeah... and comfort that transcends- yeah... the boundaries of our physical existence.

What do you think, listener? Does this change how you view the afterlife? Yeah. How does this make you think about things? And then there's the encounter with the scribe- yeah.

... who asks Jesus about the greatest commandment. Right. And it's interesting because this was a topic of debate- Oh, yeah.

... among the Pharisees. They loved to debate. At the time- Yeah.

... they had all sorts of interpretations- Right. ... arguments about which laws- Yeah. Which one's the most important? Yeah.

But Jesus cuts through all the clutter- He does. ... and gets straight to the heart of the matter. Yeah.

And he says ... you shall love the Lord your God- Yeah. ... with all your heart.

... and with all your soul ... and with all your mind- And then he adds a second commandment. Yes, he does.

That's just as important. Equally important. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

It's so simple- Yeah. ... yet so profound. It really is.

And if we truly love God- Yeah. ... and love our neighbor- Yeah. ... then all the other commands will flow naturally from those two- Yeah.

... core principles. It's like they sum up- Yeah. ... everything else.

They do. And what's really cool is that ... Jesus affirms the scribe- Yeah.

... who understands this truth. Yeah. He's not just dismissing everyone- ... who is a religious leader.

Yeah. He's showing that even among the religious leaders ... there were those- Yeah.

... who had genuine insights into God's heart. Yeah. And even though Jesus often clashed- Right.

... with the religious leaders- Yeah. ... he wasn't completely dismissive of them. No.

He recognized that there were some- Yeah. ... who were genuinely seeking- Right. ... truth and understanding.

And it reminds us that- Yeah. ... we shouldn't write people off- ... just because they hold different beliefs- ... or belong to a different group. Right.

There might be common ground and shared understanding- ... if we're willing to listen- Yeah. ... and engage with each other respectfully. Yeah.

And, you know, before we move on, I want to touch on one more crucial passage. Right. Jesus' question to the Pharisees- okay.

... about the Messiah's identity. Uh-huh. Now, this is where things get really mind-blowing.

Okay. Yeah. This is a key moment in Matthew's Gospel.

Yeah. Jesus asks the Pharisees ... what do you think about the Christ? Yeah.

Whose son is he? And they respond- Yeah. ... with the traditional understanding- ... the son of David. Makes sense.

Right. Right. That's what- That's what the prophecies had foretold.

Yeah. That's what they were expecting. Yeah.

But then Jesus throws them a curveball- Yeah. ... by quoting Psalm 110:1. Yes. The Lord said to my Lord- Yeah.

... sit at my right hand ... until I make your enemies your footstool. And here's where things get really interesting.

Okay. The Hebrew word for Lord in this passage- Yeah. ... is Yahweh.

... which is the divine name for God. So if David is referring to the Messiah- Yeah. ... as my Lord- Right.

... then the Messiah must be someone greater- Yeah. ... than David himself- ... who is also divine. Exactly.

Jesus is subtly but powerfully- Yeah. ... revealing his true identity. Yeah.

Not just as the son of David- Right. ... but as the son of God- Yeah. ... the divine Lord who is worthy of worship.

Mind blown. I know, right? It's no wonder the Pharisees couldn't wrap their heads around it. No, they were so stuck in their traditional understanding- yeah.

... of the Messiah- ... that they completely missed- Yeah. ... the revolutionary truth that Jesus was presenting. And it's a challenge to us, too, isn't it? Oh, absolutely.

Are we willing to let go of our preconceived notions- ... and assumptions- Yeah, yeah, yeah. ... to be open to the possibility- Exactly. ... that God might be doing something new and unexpected- Right.

... something that challenges our- Yeah. ... traditional ways of thinking? That's a good question to think about. Yeah.

Yeah. Wow, we've covered a lot of ground- We have. ... in this section.

Yeah. From Jesus' subversive entry into Jerusalem ... to his prophetic act in the temple, from the parable of the wedding feast- Right.

... to his profound teachings ... about love, grace, and the resurrection- Yeah. ... it's been a whirlwind of insights and challenges.

It's amazing how much we can learn- Yeah. ... from just a few chapters of Matthew's gospel- Right. ... when we take the time to really- Yeah.

... dig in and unpack the deeper meaning. Yeah. I'm feeling inspired.

... challenged ... and maybe even a little overwhelmed by it all. That's the beauty of engaging with God's word, isn't it? It is.

It always leaves us wanting more. Yeah. Always stretching our minds and hearts.

Yeah. Always inviting us to go deeper- Yeah. ... in our understanding of who God is- Yeah.

... and what it means to follow him. I completely agree. Yeah.

Now, let's wrap up our deep dive in part three- okay. ... with some final reflections and takeaways. Okay.

Sounds good. We've journeyed with Dr. Keener through discipleship and leadership in Matthew. Yeah.

Some really challenging stuff. What are some big takeaways that are sticking with you? I think one of the most powerful things- yeah... is just how radical and countercultural Jesus's message is.

Yeah. He's not offering us a comfortable, easy path. He's calling us to a life of ... sacrifice, service, and surrender- Yeah. ... to something much greater than ourselves. It's easy to get caught up- It is.

... in thinking about discipleship- Right. ... as just following a set of rules- Yeah. ... or checking off boxes.

Yeah. Just going through the motions. Yeah.

Yeah. But what Dr. Keener's really challenging us to see- Yeah. ... is that it's a complete transformation of our hearts- Yeah.

... our priorities, and our way of life. Yeah. He keeps reminding us- Yeah.

... how important it is to understand the cultural and historical context- Yeah. ... of Jesus's teachings. Yeah.

Because if we just try to extract these abstract principles- Right. ... without understanding the real-life- Yeah. ... situations Jesus was addressing- Right.

... we could really miss a lot of the depth and nuance- We miss the point. ... of his message. Yeah.

We got to put ourselves in the sandals of those first-century listeners- Right. ... and try to see the world through their eyes. Yeah.

For example, when Jesus calls the temple a den of robbers- Yeah. ... it takes on a whole new meaning- Yeah. It does.

... when we understand the economic exploitation and injustice- Right. All that was going on. ... that was happening there.

Yeah. Yeah. And that's what makes Dr. Keener's lectures so fascinating- it is.

... is that he weaves together these historical insights- Yeah. ... biblical scholarship- ... and practical application- Yeah. ... in a way that makes these ancient texts come alive for modern listeners.

I appreciate how he connects these ancient teachings to our lives today. Me too. It's not just about- Yeah.

... what happened 2,000 years ago. Right. It's about how those same principles can challenge and transform us today.

Yeah. We might not be facing- Right. ... literal Pharisees or Roman tax collectors.

Yeah. But we all struggle with the same temptations- Yeah. ... to prioritize wealth, power, and comfort over God's kingdom.

Yeah. Yeah. We all have blind spots in areas- ... where we need to grow- Yeah.

... in our understanding and application of Jesus' teachings. I think one of the most challenging aspects- it is... of discipleship is that... it's an ongoing process.

It is. We never arrive. Yeah.

You never get to the point where you're like- Yeah. ... okay, I've got it all figured out. Yeah.

I'm done. I'm a perfect disciple now. Yeah.

There's always more to learn. Right. More to surrender.

Yeah. More to grow into. Yeah.

And that's actually good news- it is... because it means we're always... on a journey of discovery. Right.

Always deepening our relationship with God. Yeah. Always being challenged to become more like Jesus.

Yeah. I love that. Yeah.

Yeah. Now, Dr. Keener points out- yeah. ... how often Jesus' opponents- yeah.

... completely misunderstand or misinterpret his teachings. Right. They're so stuck in their own- They are.

... narrow interpretations and traditions- Yeah. Right. ... that they miss- Yeah.

... the radical countercultural message that Jesus is presenting. And it's a reminder that we can be- Oh, yeah. ... just as blind to our own- Absolutely.

... biases and assumptions. Yeah. We might think we understand what it means to follow Jesus.

Right. But are we really open- Yeah. ... to being challenged- Right.

... to having our comfortable perspectives shaken up? Yeah. Are we willing to let go of our own agendas ... and embrace God's will- Yeah.

... even if it means- Yeah. ... letting go of our own comfort- Or security. It's a lot easier to follow Jesus- It is.

... when it aligns with our own- Yeah. ... desires and goals. Right.

But what about when it requires us to- Right. ... make sacrifices- Yeah. ... to go against the grain.

... to stand up for what's right- Right. ... even when it's unpopular? That's the true test of discipleship, isn't it? Yeah. It is.

It's not about following Jesus when it's convenient. You're right. It's about following him wherever he leads.

... even if it's costly- Yeah. ... even if it's uncomfortable- ... even if it means going against the crowd. So as we wrap up this deep dive- Yeah.

... I'm going to leave you with a final question- Okay. ... to ponder. Right.

If Jesus were physically walking among us today- Yeah. ... how would our actions and choices ... reflect our commitment to following him? That's a powerful question.

That is. You know, it challenges us to move beyond- Yeah. ... empty words and superficial professions of faith.

Yeah. It invites us to examine every area of our lives- yeah... our relationships, our work, our finances, our use of time- yeah.

... and ask ourselves, is this what Jesus would do? Is this how he would want me to live? Yeah. It's a question that can be- Yeah.

... both challenging and inspiring. It is. It reminds us that discipleship is not a- Yeah.

... passive activity. Right. It's an active, ongoing pursuit- Yeah.

... of becoming more like Jesus in every aspect of our lives. Thanks for joining us on this deep dive- Yeah. ... into discipleship and leadership.

... in Matthew's Gospel. Yeah. We hope you've been challenged, inspired- Yeah.

... and maybe even a little provoked- Yeah. ... to think differently about what it means to follow Jesus. Keep seeking, keep questioning.

... and keep diving deep into the inexhaustible riches- Yeah. ... of God's word. Thanks for joining us.

See you next time.