

Audio Teaching Sermon Message #6 Dying to Our Old Ways.

[A Intro – Pastor Jefferson 0:00 thru 1:22]

Hello friends. Pastor Jefferson once again. It is my prayer that this message **number 6** finds you eager and willing to listen to the word of the LORD being revealed on this day. May God put all irrelevant thoughts out of your mind while we study His word together. We’ve been discussing the happenings of Jesus following His bodily resurrection early Sunday morning. It was the first day of a brand-new and different week for humanity. These would be the first days when mankind had the sin of the world taken away by the shed blood of the long-awaited Messiah. Recall that Jesus spent the first 40 days teaching His disciples, using His power as the risen Son of God to convince them that He was indeed alive and real. It took a lot to convince His disciples that He actually fulfilled what He said He was going to do. When the end of the forty days came, Jesus issued some parting words to His disciples and was lifted up into the sky and was received in a cloud. Open up your Bible now to the first chapter of the book of **Acts**.

[B Gazing Intently upon Jesus 1:22 thru 2:44]

As we read in the last lesson, we see in **verse 9** that Jesus was **lifted up**. The Greek word present here is **ep-PER-they** and translates **‘to be elevated in rank, to be glorified or to be exalted.’** This is yet another word which only appears this one time in the whole of the Bible, and as before, it’s meaning must therefore be special. At His ascension, Jesus received all three things mentioned in the definition of the word. He was elevated in rank; He was glorified, and He was exalted. Now open your Bible to **Acts 1:10**. ¹ *“And as they were gazing intently into the sky ² while He was going, ³ then behold, two men in white clothing ⁴ stood beside them.”* The Greek word we find for **gazing intently** is **ah-ten-NID-zone-tes** and is a derivative of a word we discussed back in the intro lesson of this series. The disciples, as they watched Jesus ascend into the sky had their eyes **fixed** upon Him. They were looking away from all else and were focused exclusively upon Jesus.

[C Jesus Will Return the Same Way He Left 2:44 thru 4:09]

As the band of disciples watched Jesus being lifted up into the heavens and disappearing from their sight, they failed to notice two men appear among them, dressed

in white apparel. The word we see for **men** is *AN-dres* and means '**any male person.**' We know that these two men were angels, as they appeared out of nowhere and were dressed in white. And we read they were sent by God to deliver a message to the assembled disciples. We know from Scripture that it was not unusual for angels to appear in the form of men and God frequently uses them to bring down His word. Look now in **verse 11**. The angels spoke to the disciples, breaking their intense concentration, perhaps before they even realized that they were standing there. ¹ *They said to them,* ² *Galilean men,* ³ *why do you stand looking up into the sky?"* Jesus was no longer visible and was thus long gone, having returned to His father in Heaven. Next the angels delivered an important prophecy for all believers. They said, ¹ *"This Yeshua who was taken up from you* ² *into Heaven,* ³ *thus shall return in the same manner* ⁴ *as you watched Him go into Heaven."*

[**D** **A Rescue from Coming Wrath** **4:09 thru 5:17**]

This is a most important prophecy. They were saying that Jesus would return from the same place and in the same manner in which He just departed. His ascension marked the completion of His teaching His disciples. In the same way, when the church reaches the conclusion of its commission, it too will be removed up to heaven in an event the Apostle Paul describes as *"a rescue from the coming wrath,"* which Christianity of today calls *"the Rapture."* ¹ The **rapture** is defined as '**the final assumption of Christians into Heaven when Jesus Christ comes to gather them unto Himself.**' When Jesus returns in a cloud of angels from the sky on that day, the Bible says He will remove His true followers up to Heaven. And, just as His disciples watched Him depart, I fully expect that the true followers of Jesus will watch Him arrive in the same manner—with their eyes firmly fixed on the author and finisher of their faith.

[**E** **The Beginning of His Earthly Ministry** **5:17 thru 6:43**]

So, let's summarize what we know thus far. I've long held in many of the books I've written based on in-depth Bible Study, that Jesus lived His life as an example to us all. Just as He did with His ascension, Jesus always shows us the way, graphically depicting with

¹ **1 Thessalonians 1:10** *And to wait for His Son from heaven, who He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.*

His own life what we ourselves are to do. For example, when it was time for Jesus to begin His earthly ministry, He was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan river. And when He arose out of the water, those witnesses observed the Holy Spirit descend upon Him like a dove. This signified the beginning of His ministry of making His disciples. In the same way, after we come to the point where we cognitively believe in what Jesus did and we agree to become a true follower of Him, we too are then baptized. This public event signifies our sincere and genuine start on the journey to holiness. This marks the start of what the Bible calls our immersion learning. We now have access to God’s Holy Spirit when we begin learning the Word of God as delivered by Jesus, teaching us all we can know about Him, His Father and the Holy Spirit of God.

[**F** That We Might Understand God’s Word 6:43 thru 8:26]

Jesus spent the next three and a half years educating His disciples. During this time, Jesus and His followers avoided any interaction with the religious elite, they stayed away from the Temple and largely remained out of the city of Jerusalem. This was because Jesus would be their teacher and God’s Holy Spirit would be the translator. We read in **1st Corinthians 2:12**, ¹ *“What we have received,* ² *is not the spirit of this world,* ³ *but the Spirit who is from God.”* Paul is talking about the Holy Spirit here. In the last half of the verse, he answers why; ¹ *“So that we may understand* ³ *what God has freely given us.”* The words written in the Bible are truly the words of God. But human instructors are wholly inadequate for the task. Look now in **verse 13**: ¹ *“This is what we speak,* ² *not in words taught by human wisdom,* ³ *but in words taught by the Holy Spirit,* ⁴ *explaining spiritual realities* ⁵ *with Spirit taught words.”* Can you see that is precisely what we are attempting to do with Discipleship Training? We go back to God’s Word as seen within the original languages, and we rely on the Holy Spirit to explain their meaning, just as God intended. As fledgling disciples, they too are to avoid any institution or teachers which do not reflect this approach to immersion learning, else they risk having the message of God polluted and/or tainted by false teaching.

[**G** Crucifixion and Resurrection 8:26 thru 9:58]

So, when Jesus had completed the necessary training of His disciples, it was time for

what I refer to as “***the final exam***.” Jesus knew that the prime purpose for His trip to earth was to pay a ransom for many. He knew His next task was to die for the sins of the entire world. And so, when He was captured by the Romans, His disciples scattered to the winds. Following six sham trials conducted by the religious elite and the Romans, Jesus was crucified on Friday. I want you to note that Friday was the sixth day of the week. And just as God did during creation week, His work was conducted and finished during daylight hours. As the Bible then says, ¹ “*There was evening* ² *and there was morning.*” The next day Saturday was the Sabbath, when God prohibits any work—defined as any effort done towards our own business, or anything accomplished for our own gain. Jesus remained in the tomb on the Sabbath day. It was He and He alone who secured the full ransom for our sin. “*There was evening and there was morning.*” At the crack of dawn on Sunday morning, defined as the very first ray of light, Jesus was resurrected, the rock was rolled away and His job of securing the salvation of mankind was finished.

[**H** **The Disciples Left Jesus and Fled** **9:58 thru 11:15**]

Thus, in keeping with the idea that everything Jesus did was an example for each one of us, we must consider the impact of His disciples fleeing from His side following His arrest and crucifixion. Did you ever stop and think about the ramifications of that? When the Romans came and arrested Him, it was Judas, the disciple who betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver who led them to His location. ² Once the soldiers identified Jesus as the One who they were seeking, Jesus sought to have His disciples let go. At this point Simon Peter, drew his sword and struck the high priest’s servant, named Malchus, cutting off his right ear. Jesus immediately restored his ear, while rebuking Peter. ¹ “*Shall I not drink the cup* ² *which My Father has given Me?*” Jesus made it plain that He was willingly surrendering as His Father would have brought down more than twelve legions of angels at His request, had He so asked. ³ Jesus then said, ¹ “*But all this has taken place* ² *to fulfill the Scriptures of the prophets.*” ³ Then the disciples left Him and fled.

² **John 18:2-3** Now Judas, who betrayed Him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with His disciples. So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

³ **Matthew 26:53** “Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?”

[I Disciples Abandoned and Deserted Jesus 11:15 thru 12:56]

The reaction by Peter was not indicative of bravery or courage. No. It was nothing more than an impulsive and foolhardy reaction and not a real attempt at saving Jesus from the Romans. In fact, it was this same Peter who denied Christ three times, before even a young servant girl, none-the-less. Open your Bibles to **Matthew 26:56**. The Greek word we see for **having left** is *af-FEN-tes* and translates **‘to abandon, to forsake or to desert.’** The disciples didn’t just leave as in walking away from the area. No, they deserted Him. When Jesus initially called His disciples to Him, telling them He would make them fishers of men, they **abandoned** their nets. They left behind their expensive nets and abandoned them in the water, their only manner of making their living. This same word is used here for the disciples **abandoning** Jesus. The word we see for **fled** is *EFF-ee-gone* and means **‘to flee or escape from danger, threat or undesirable situations.’** It conveys a sense of urgency and deliberate action. And not just physically, but also morally and spiritually. The disciples abandoned Christ and did so purely in regard for their own personal safety. In the military, fleeing in the face of the enemy—which is precisely what the disciples did—is punishable by death.

[J We Each Must Be Born Again 12:56 thru 14:23]

But believe it or not, this too is one part of becoming a fully-fledged follower of Jesus. It is just the next step down the road to holiness. This process can be described as **‘dying to self.’** The Apostle Paul wrote in **Romans 6:6** that, ¹ *“For we know that our old self was crucified with Him* ² *so that our body ruled by sin* ³ *might be done away with,* ⁴ *that we should no longer be slaves to sin.”* Listen friends, we don’t sin because we have to. We sin because we want to. The proof is when Jesus said he would prevent any and all temptation from being able to overcome us. When we come to comprehend that our sin was what caused Jesus to be crucified, this should be reflected in our daily desire to avoid sinning to the max possible. Jesus said in **John 3:3**, ¹ *“Very truly I tell you,* ² *no one can see the kingdom of God* ³ *unless they are born again.”* Obviously, we don’t reenter the womb and come out once again. Jesus is talking about a mental and spiritual rebirth, where our personal welfare is no longer the focus of our life. Our eyes are now firmly fixed on Him.

[**K** We Must Die to Our Old Ways 14:23 thru 16:09]

Jesus must become the central focus of our lives. Our intimate relationship with Him is what causes us to be reborn. We must allow the old ways to die and embrace the new. Otherwise, we will not see the Kingdom of God. And in **2 Corinthians 5:15**, Paul says, ¹ *“And if He died for all, ² then those who live ³ should no longer live for themselves,”* but in order for that to happen, we must abandon our old lives. When the disciples abandoned Jesus and fled, they had not yet done that. They were still seeking their own self-preservation. In order to die to ourselves, we must first come to realize that we are indeed in eternal, mortal danger. Failing that, we have no need for a savior, right? It is impossible to convince someone to flee their home from an approaching wildfire, if they remain convinced there is no danger. Up until this point in time, the disciples were just going to school. They failed to realize the very real threat that sin posed to their eternal fate. Once they fled the presence of Jesus, the reality of their dire situation became up close and personal. They had but two choices: 1. Keep trying to preserve their own lives. 2. Trust that Jesus, and Jesus alone would save or rescue them. It’s the same decision we all must make. We must learn to die to ourselves.

[**Z** A Few Final Thoughts 16:09 thru 17:01]

In the next lesson, we continue with this discussion. Everything God does has very strong purpose attached. I recommend that you go back and read the surrounding verses to those that I referenced in this teaching sermon. Go and get as much of the context as you can. In the next lesson, we are going to begin speaking about the resurrection of Christ and how that affects our education and relationship with our Savior. Go back and relisten to any of the sermons. I guarantee you will hear something new each time you do. That’s how the Holy Spirit works. Remember, God loved you first. And He loves you more than you will ever know. **Until next time my beloved, this has been Pastor Jefferson, speaking in God’s Holy name and for His glory alone. Amen.**