



***HILLSIDE'S JULY – AUGUST SERMON SERIES AND DAILY MATERIAL***

**It is not easy to follow the Lord Jesus.**

**He said things that sometimes seem to us to be impossible or undoable. Should you mutilate yourself (“If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off”) or love your enemies (“I tell you: love your enemies”) or never find fault (“Do not judge”)?**

**But behind all these statements of Jesus there are the most wonderful keys to life. Not only do they make life possible, but are secrets that create the way for us to a meaningful life and good relationships.**

**Week 1: The Key of Being Poor in Spirit**

**Week 2: The Key of Commitment**

**Week 3: The Key of Living a Pure Life**

**Week 4: The Key of Denying Oneself**

.....  
**MONDAY**

**Daily Reading**

**Week 4: The Key of Denying Oneself**

**Philippians 2:3 -11**

---

**BE A LOSER!**

Philippians 2:3-4 <sup>3</sup> *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, <sup>4</sup> not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*

Have you noticed at a fair that people tend to like the pond fishing games more than the ball throwing games? Nobody wants to be a loser; we all want to be winners. That's why it is much safer to play the fishing with the magnet on the end game. You are sure to be a winner! Get a fish and claim your prize (however small and inexpensive it might be). Most of us go through life like we are playing the pond fishing game. We are constantly fishing for compliments and affirmation. "Is this ok?" "Was that all right?" "Am I ok?" The way we ask the questions actually forces our respondents to say: "Yes, of course you are ok." In essence we are all very selfish.

Our text today shows us that as Christians we shouldn't play the pond fishing game. Selfishness is not part of who we are supposed to be. It states very clearly that we should not do anything out of selfish ambition. Selfish ambition is blind to other people. It only thinks about oneself and one's own needs. Selfish ambition only sees the worth in other people insofar as you can gain something from them. Vain conceit makes you think that you are better than others, superior and more important than they are. You constantly compare yourself to others and think that you are always right. Worst of all, you do not keep it to yourself, but blubber it out for all to hear. Those controlled by vain conceit hardly ever admit that they have made a mistake and when they do it was not their fault. Martin Luther puts it well: "God created the earth out of NOTHING and as long as we are NOTHING, He can do SOMETHING with us." Are you willing to be NOTHING? Are you willing to focus on more than just yourself?

---

*Prayer: Dear Lord, save me from myself. Forgive me when I focus only on myself and help me to see the needs of others,. Please change my attitude through your Spirit. Amen.*

---

---

TUESDAY

Daily Reading

Week 4: The Key of Denying Oneself

John 13: 1-16

---

### CHECK THE TEMPERATURE!

John 13: 5, 15 <sup>5</sup>*After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him...*

<sup>15</sup>*I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.*

What is your least favourite chore around the house? We all have chores that we do not like. In the time of Jesus there was a chore that nobody liked. It was so bad that they reserved this chore for the lowest and least among them. From walking on dusty dirt roads with only sandals on, peoples' feet became very sweaty and dirty. And the greatest gesture of hospitality one could offer your guests when they arrived at your home was to wash their feet. Well you wouldn't wash their feet, your heathen slave would. Jesus knelt before his disciples and washed their feet. He then orders them to do the same to one another. This is what true love is. It is a self-sacrificial love. It is a love that gives without expecting anything in return. When we wash someone's feet you always need to check the temperature of the water:

- ♥ Don't wash with **boiling water**. If you are upset or mad because of something that happened in the past, don't do it with a grudge in your heart.
- ♥ Don't wash with **ice water**. Do not wash someone's feet with an attitude of I am right and I'm oilier-than-thou or I'm better than you are.
- ♥ Don't wash **without** any water. Do not dry-clean someone's feet with a bit of your own will.

There is only one way to do it. The temperature must be **just right!** Jesus demonstrated it to us. The right temperature is when we wash out of **LOVE** for one another. What is the temperature of your water?

---

*Prayer: Dear Lord, make me a servant. Check my temperature and change it if you need to.  
Amen.*

---

---

WEDNESDAY

Daily Reading

Week 4: The Key of Denying Oneself

John 12: 20--26

---

**LIVE TO DIE? OR DIE TO LIVE?**

John 12: 24-25 <sup>24</sup> *Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.*

<sup>25</sup> *Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.*

The law of wheat determines that there must be death before life is possible. A grain of wheat needs to fall into the ground – die – change shape completely before any fruit can be produced. If the farmer keeps the grain of wheat in a bag behind the barn, it will never yield a crop. This is also true of the life of Jesus. Only He could yield a crop of millions of children of God by sacrificing His own life. He needed to die to bring in the harvest.

But this is also true of us. Many people think that faith does not ask much of them. All you need to do is believe that Jesus died for your sins and sometimes abstain from certain sins. Usually the list of things from which they abstain is not too long. Jesus challenges this way of thinking. To follow Jesus has serious implications for your life. There is no room for half measures when it comes to following Jesus. You need either, to commit to following Him completely and re-evaluate your priorities, or to not follow him at all. Even those things that are most dear to you need to take a place in the back of the line. To follow Jesus comes at a price. Fortunately the price comes with a promise. Whatever you sacrifice to love Jesus above all and serve Him, will certainly yield the desired harvest.

Have you come to appoint in your faith journey where you feel stuck and cannot move forward? Maybe it is because your grain is hoarded in the barn. To grow spiritually we need to die to ourselves and allow God to transform our lives to bear fruit for Him.

---

*Prayer: Dear Lord, You have showed us the way. May I die to myself in order to live with you!  
Amen.*

---

.....  
**THURSDAY**

**Daily Reading**

**Week 4: The Key of Denying Oneself**

**Romans 6: 6-11**  
-----

**DIE WITH HIM AND RISE WITH HIM!**

Romans 6: 8 <sup>8</sup> *Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.*

An unborn baby goes through exactly the same experiences that his mother goes through. If she gets into a car, he gets in with her, he moves when she moves, he stops when she stops. And if she would die in an accident, he would die with her.

Something of this is also true for us as Christians. Because we are in Christ we were crucified with Him on the cross. This is awesome and wonderful! This means that something of us has died: the terrible predilection to sin, our severe selfishness, the power of our sinful nature, the urge to hate or keep a grudge against someone, or to be greedy ... Unfortunately we don't always live from that revelation and understanding. We allow our sinful nature to play yo-yo with us and to lure us back into our old lives.

Even more wonderful than dying with Christ, is that we were raised with Him from the dead. When Jesus broke the power of death and got up on that Easter Sunday morning from the grave, we stood up with Him. Now the person of Jesus lives inside of us: pure, honest and steadfast against sin, loving ...

Awesome! Live like that today!

-----  
*Prayer: Dear Lord, I am so sorry that I do not live out or experience the fullness of blessing in my identity in You. I am often so weak and susceptible to the luring power of sin. I rise up with You today into a new life: strong, Spirit-filled and loving. Let the person of Jesus become clearer in every aspect of my life. Amen.*  
-----

.....  
**FRIDAY**

**Daily Reading**

**Week 4: The Key of Denying Oneself**

**1 Corinthians 10: 31 – 11:1**  
-----

**FOLLOW ME ... I FOLLOW JESUS!**

1 Corinthians 11:1 <sup>1</sup> *Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.*

There was a dad who often would walk from his house to the bar. Time after time he came home drunk. There was no family life, until one night when he saw his four year old son at the counter of the bar next to him. Quite surprised and embarrassed he asked: "How did you find me here?" The little boy answered: "I just followed your footprints in the snow."

Regardless of whether you like it or not people, especially your children, are watching you. They start to absorb who you are and your values. They even absorb the way you live. How does that make you feel? Are you satisfied or do you feel embarrassed about it?

Pau tells the believers in Corinth that they must do everything to the glory of God. He does not want them to offend others, but to value the needs and interests of others as more important than their own. He thinks of a practical example to give them and realises that this is how he desires to live. Why? Because he learnt it from Jesus!

Follow me, as I follow Christ. This is the essence of what this week is all about. Your life must be a living demonstration of the fact that you have crucified yourself and that you gave up your own interest to follow Jesus.

Live this to the full!

-----  
*Prayer: Precious Jesus, what an awesome privilege to walk in Your footsteps. I know I fall drastically short, but I truly desire it. This is why I crucify myself anew today and I ask that You will fill me with Your Spirit so that I will display Your image more clearly. Amen.*  
-----

.....  
**SATURDAY**

**Daily Reading**

**Week 4: The Key of Denying Oneself**

**Ephesians 5: 1-2**

-----  
**FOLLOW LIKE A CHILD ...**

Ephesians 5: 1-2 <sup>1</sup> Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children <sup>2</sup> and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

A man and his son went to church one Sunday morning. The boy was about three years old and walking behind his dad with his little book clenched underneath his arm the exact same way that his dad was holding his Bible. He was taking long, heavy steps, just like dad. It was so evident that he wanted to be like his dad.

Paul uses the same argument in this Scripture when he says that we are God's children and that He loves us very much. It is normal for children to copy their parents, especially when they know how much their mom and dad loves them.

And we as children of God; how much more shouldn't there be an urgency and desire in us to live like our Father and to become like Him? What is the essence of the Christ-like? *"Live in love as Christ also loved us ..."* – live in the love of Jesus. Someone with this quality of love has an unselfish attitude and is willing offer up anything for others.

Is there quality in your Christianity? Do people around you experience you as someone who portrays the image of Jesus? Do you carry the essential quality of someone that walks in the footsteps of Jesus – love?

-----  
*Prayer: Loving Lord, I want to portray Your image brightly and with clarity. I want to walk in Your footsteps. I want to become more like You. Help me, Lord. Give me a heart like Yours and put the words of Jesus in my mouth today. Teach me to love like Jesus. Amen.*  
-----