



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

Week 5: They Key of Suffering for Jesus

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MONDAY

Daily Reading

Week 5: The Key of Suffering for Jesus

Matthew 5:11

BLESSED ARE YOU!

Matthew 5:11 ¹¹ ***Blessed are you*** when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for ***My sake.***

Don't take it too personally, they hate God not you! Are you willing to give "self" up for Christ in the sense that you deny self the right to vindication, and leave it to God? The word blessed in Greek is **makarios** which means: *Supremely blessed; by extension fortunate, well off; - blessed, happy.*

Prayer: Father, I am willing to give self-up for You and deny self the right to vindication against those that say all kinds of evil against me falsely. I realize it's really You they hate and I ask that You would work in their lives and bring them to salvation in Jesus name I pray.
Amen.

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TUESDAY

Daily Reading

Week 5: The Key of Suffering for Jesus

John 16: 33

BE OF GOOD CHEER

John 16: 33 ³³*These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation: but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world."*

The harsh truth is that we live in a world disconnected from God, and we run into trouble whether from our own choice or not. Jess said trouble surrounds us on all sides. However, so does the love of God and His divine grace and because of this truth we can rejoice and take heart! We sometimes try and go around the challenges in life, but God has given us the ability to go through and to come out on the other side victorious! Have you settled this in your heart?

Prayer: Father, thank you for the peace that floods my heart at just the thought of You. Even when trouble surrounds me and I lift my eyes and voice up in prayer Your peace that passes understanding keeps my heart anchored to the rock of Christ Jesus, my Lord; there You hide me in Your hand close to Your heart. Amen.

WEDNESDAY

Daily Reading

Week 5: The Key of Suffering for Jesus

Acts 1:8

YOU SHALL BE WITNESSES

Acts 1: 8 ⁸ *But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be **witnesses** to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (The Greek word for witness is “Martures” or our word “Martyr”).*

The Apostles were all but one, killed for their faith. Even today there are countries where Christians are not tolerated and even executed for their faith in Christ. What is your attitude toward the opposition you face as a Christian? When friends reject you, when people are uncomfortable in your company because you won't laugh at the same off-colour jokes, or go to the same entertainment they enjoy, or speak in the same way, do the same things they do? When they speak in a derogatory way about you, and misrepresent you? When they ignore you, or think you're weird? Persecute you with their tongues? When you are passed over in a job opportunity? Even doing the right thing can get you killed. Does your life testify of Christ?

Prayer: Father, sometimes I feel rejected, ignored, and some think I'm weird because I will not join in their off-colour jokes and ways. So I come to You for help. Help me not to be judgmental or condemning of them. But yet not to allow the enemy to have his way through them; give me the words to say in each situation that will bring and shine Your light to dispel the darkness. Thank You for the witness of Your Holy Spirit in me. Have Your way Lord Jesus. Amen.

THURSDAY

Daily Reading

Week 5: The Key of Suffering for Jesus

John 17:16-18

YOU REPRESENT THE PERSON OF CHRIST

John 17: 16-18 ¹⁶ *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

¹⁷ *Sanctify them in Your truth; Your word is truth.*

¹⁸ *As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.*

As a Christian you belong to God's Kingdom. You've been taken out of the devil's kingdom and out into the Kingdom of God and as such you are an Ambassador of God's Kingdom, an Ambassador of Christ; you represent the person of Christ. You have a mission, as Jesus was sent by God He has sent you and He gives you the power, ability to do what He's sent you to do. Are you willing? (Read chapter 2 Corinthians 5:17 for the message Jesus wants you to give).

Prayer: Father, thank You for taking me out of the kingdom of darkness and putting me into Your kingdom. It's an honour to be an ambassador of Christ and I take it seriously to represent You on this earth Father. "As you sent Jesus so You are sending me" seems like an impossible task to me, but I thank You for the Holy Spirit and His enabling me to do this. Be glorified I pray in Jesus name. Amen.

FRIDAY

Daily Reading

Week 5: The Key of Suffering for Jesus

Luke 21: 16-17

IDENTIFY WITH CHRIST

Luke 21: 16-17 ¹⁶ *You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death.*

¹⁷ *And you will be hated by all for My names sake.*

Note that it is Jesus in you who is the reason for and the target of persecution. When we share in Jesus' sufferings (Romans 8:17; hatred, exclusion, insults and rejection) we become heirs who will also share in His glory. Unfortunately many Christians today, operate under the assumption that persecution is a part of the Church's past. The truth is that there are members of the Body of Christ that currently face severe persecution and restrictions as a result of their faith in Jesus Christ. Every day of every year and on every continent men and women face persecution because of their belief in Jesus Christ. Are you willing to exclude vengeance from your heart, and leave it to God to answer for you? Are you willing to identify with Christ and stand for what is right?

Prayer: Father, in South Africa I don't face the kind of persecution that many of my brothers and sisters in Christ face in North Africa, Middle East and Asia. Help me to be unswerving in my faith and stand strong for You. I count it an honour to be called names and to be rejected because I follow You. I pray for my brothers and sisters being persecuted, that their faith will not fail, that their testimony will speak volumes and would be like the voice of God in the ears of their persecutors and turn them to You, in Jesus name. Amen.

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SATURDAY

Daily Reading

Week 5: The Key of Suffering for Jesus

James 1: 2

SEE BEYOND THE TRIAL YOU ARE IN

James 1:2 ² *My brothers and sisters count it all joy when you fall into various trials ...*

We are surrounded by trouble, temptations, sin and evil. Don't allow the devil to draw you away from God or to get you to lose your focus as a Christian. Philosophy may instruct us to be calm in times of trouble; but Christianity teaches us to be joyful, to rejoice, because this proceeds from love and not fury, or anger in God. Consider, think about it, see beyond the trial you're in: see God at work on your side for His glory and your good. So be joyful!

Prayer: Father, I stand steadfast determined to be joyful in every circumstance, giving praise to You. For I know that what the devil has determined to destroy me or bring me down, You will turn around for Your glory and my good. I will not be moved by what I see, but by Your Word and Your Spirit. Let it be. Amen.
