

Experiencing God
#8 – Adjusting your life
March 24, 2020

Good morning Southeast family. We're glad that you're joining us from your living room or your garage or the church parking lot or wherever you're joining us from. I'm glad to have you with us. Hope you're blessed by what you experienced this morning and we're going to continue in our series on experiencing God.

But before we do that, I want to run through a couple of announcements. One is I want to remind you guys that tomorrow night at 7:00 PM that's May 25th Memorial Day at 7:00 PM we're going to be broadcasting on our live stream, a documentary called Ethan's Reach. And this is something that's actually really significant to our community. It addresses some real issues that are going on -- this is a real need in our community and it's a real need in our people who have friends and family who have served in the military and some of the things that they struggle with coming back home. So this documentary is about that. I really encourage you guys to block that into your calendar and take a chance to watch that. It's going to be incredible.

The other thing that I want to make you aware of is that we are having virtual VBS that is coming up. It's going to be virtual this year because, obviously, we're not going to be able to have however many kids we usually have. What is it? Like 6 million kids show up or something like that. It's pretty awesome. What happens here, normally, during the VBS. So, this year is going to be different. The dates for it are going to be June 16th to the 19th, and it's going to be a take home, personalized VBS and we'll have boxes for each family who registers. Now, you can register for that@southeastcc.org/VBS. Here's the thing, you need to know that registration will close tomorrow. So, if you're going to jump in on that, you need to do it now. Here's the funny thing. We thought we didn't, we knew this was going to be different, but we thought we would have maybe 50 or 60 kids sign up for this. We've had over 350 kids sign up for this VBS experience. And so we're super excited about that. But, if you want to jump in on that, there's going to be a lot of supplies to make and so they're going to close the registration tomorrow and we want you to jump on that. Southeastcc.org/VBS.

We are in week eight. We have this week and next week. And today what we're going to do is pull out some points from last week and expand those points. This week we're going to talk about adjusting our life, if we're going to follow God.

Remember, we're working from the assumption that we've heard God speak. He speaks seven different languages. He speaks from the Bible primarily. That's his primary dialect. You cannot know God speaking without knowing the word of God. Then he speaks through people, prompting, and pain. Then he speaks through doors, desires, and dreams -- those are the seven languages that God uses and we are working from the assumption that God has spoken to us. Every time we hear God speak, we're going to face a crisis of belief. What that means is, are we going to do something with what we believe God has been saying to us? Because if God is

speaking, God isn't just going to talk for conversation's sake. God is coming to us to invite us to partner with him and be a part of his mission in the world. Because of that, we're going to have to make a decision. What are we going to do with what we believe God has said to us?

Now the next step then is if we're going to follow him, what that means is we're going to have to make adjustments to our life. It's just the way it is. The goal of following God isn't that we get to keep everything that we have and have God too. The goal of following God is that we have God, only, and that's enough. We wrestle with that in our lives because we live in a land of so much, so much abundance, so much over and above what we need. So it's really hard to, kind of, keep that focused. One of the things I love about the book of Job -- everybody has been reading the book of Job over the last couple of months just because you know, it's quarantine and I don't know if you heard, but, the world's shut down. So everybody's been reading the book of Job and wrestling with this, you know, why do bad things happen to good people? The problem is that's not the point of the book of Job. And once you get over that point, Job opens up into this whole incredible, deep, profound world. The point of the book of Job is this, when you strip everything away, is God enough? And we've been able to wrestle with that over the last couple of months. And I think that's been super profound for people who are followers of Jesus. For people who would claim that the church has been shut down, and I keep saying this, I'm going to keep saying that the church wasn't shut down. It has deployed people, people were sent out to go make a difference to their neighbors, and a lot of people were doing it, not even thinking about being Jesus. They were just being kind, not understanding that when you do those things in the name of Jesus, it takes the kingdom forward and that's what Jesus is calling us to. It's not complicated. It's not this big magnanimous thing, -- a word I chose just for the sermon. It's okay. It's simple. It's the simple acts of kindness that we do in the name of Jesus that changed everything about everything. And so today what we want to talk about is how do we get more and more and more engaged in those things. And what I want to be clear about is, if you're going to follow God, you're going to have to make adjustments in your life. That means you're going to have to take hold of some new things. And in order to do that, you're gonna have to let go some old things. And that's just the way it is. We're going to begin in Luke 14. This is a famous passage. I love it. And I have, every other week, I have a Bible study with the people from Treasure House of Hope on Zoom. I just love them! I just love those folks!

A couple of weeks ago, we were doing Luke 14 and we had so much fun talking about it -- just a cool group of people. But we're going to begin in Luke 14 and take a look at this. When we start talking about making adjustments to our life, here's what Jesus says -- It says, "now great clouds accompanied him." Anytime that you see that statement, and you'll see it more than once in the gospels, but anytime you see that statement, "great crowds accompanied him" -- what you know is that Jesus is about to turn something loose on them, which is so not normal. Like he was so not about the crowds, just about faithfulness. So, "great crowds accompanied him and he turned and said to them, if anyone comes to me and doesn't hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple." Now, if you want to know what that means to hate people, cause that doesn't feel like very Jesusy. Talk to the people at Treasure House --they know. Then it says, "whoever does

not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” Now, they didn't know. We read that with the cross in the rear view mirror. That's a problem. They didn't know Jesus was going to be crucified, yet. This is just pulling on a cultural thing for them. He's like, look you don't get to just do whatever you want and call yourself my disciple, “for which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost.”

Let me give you a little historical background here that we don't have time for, but you're just sitting down in your living room on a Sunday morning. What else are you going to do today? So we're gonna do some teaching up in here. So here's what's going on. Jesus is walking from Jericho to Jerusalem. Now there's a valley that he walks up, -- I've walked it. It's about a 17 mile hike up the hill and you get to the top and then you walk across the ridge line into Jerusalem. Here's the thing. In that valley, Herod Antipas had actually started a tower that he didn't complete because he ran out of money from people's taxes and he didn't feel like he could tax them more. So, what's happening is, Jesus is walking with his disciples up this valley and he goes, ‘nobody's going to build a tower and not think about whether or not they could pay for it first. That'd be stupid.’ Like, in your face, Herod Antipas, and oh by the way, it gets better. He says otherwise, when he's laid a foundation, it's not, and he's not able to finish, all who see it will begin to mock him saying, this man began to build and was not able to finish it. That was in the Aaron Couch paraphrase version or, what king going out to encounter another King in war -- oh, by the way, let me set the stage for you -- Herod Antipas had a wife who was the daughter of the Parthian King. Now the Parthians live just beyond the Eastern border of Israel, where it turns into the desert, just past what we call today, the Golan Heights over on the other side of that and south, specifically down where the mountains of Moab are beyond that, the same mountain range, but beyond that, there's a desert, a big desert and they lived in that desert. Rome was never really able to conquer the Parthians. They were fierce warriors -- Herod Antipas had a wife who was the daughter of the Parthian King. Here's the story: when Herod the Great dies, he has three sons and he divides his kingdom up amongst the three sons: Herod Philip, Herod Archelaus, and Herod Antipas. At the time that they take over their sections, all three of them go to Rome to try to petition Caesar to-- they're like, hey, I want to be the one to rule it all. And then there was a delegation of Pharisees that went to Caesar and said, we don't want any of them. We'll follow you. Just don't put any of them in control. So, Caesar, after much deliberation, honors Herod the Great's will much as it was written, except for one caveat. Herod Phillip makes a King. Herod Archelaus makes a King. Herod Antipas -- he makes a tetrarch, which is a step below a King. Yeah. And the daughter of the Parthian King never lets him forget it. In fact, she is so embarrassed that she leaves him and goes back to her dad. Now, in an Eastern honor, shame culture, this is a slap in her dad's face that her Herod Antipas is not man enough. He gave his daughter to a man who was not man enough to care for her. And so he decides to go to war. So the Parthian King rallies 20,000 soldiers on camels and they charge in and Herod Antipas raises 10,000 soldiers to go against him. Now, just pure play on the odds. That's a bad idea. But when you go against Parthians, that's a really bad idea, okay? Now, let's read what Jesus says, this man begins or it says, “what King would go out to encounter another King in war. Will he not first sit down and deliberate whether he's able with 10,000” -- wink, wink, nudge, nudge – “to meet him who comes against him with 20,000. “ What's happening is, Jesus is stabbing at Herod Antipas, “and if not while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a

delegation and asks for terms of peace.” That's what you do. If you had half a brain Antipas was arrogant and he got whooped bad. “So, therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple. Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?” Now let me tell you what he's talking about here. How many of you have had salt in your cabinet for like a decade like you got salt that may be turned into a block again, like go get it and taste it. Has it lost its saltiness? Here's the thing. Salt doesn't lose its saltiness. It can sit in your cabinet for 50 years and go taste it. Guess what? It tastes like salt; just like it did back in when you first bought it. That salt can only be salt. So what's he talking about here? Remember how Jesus has already told them you're the salt of the earth. Great. Here's what you have to understand. Salt, in this world, is one of the most valuable things. They could have salt, they paid people in salt, they called it a solarium. We get our word salary from it. They paid people in salt. It was so valuable. It was currency. What are you saying to you to these people is, look, you can't be anything other than what you are. You have values. Stop trying to be other things that you're not and come and be my disciple so that you can be what you were always intended to be, which you can't do both ways. You can't be the disciple of Jesus and hold onto the things that you think give you value. That will never work out well. You'll start building towers that you can't finish and fighting wars that you can't win. That's what you'll do. Then he says, “it's of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears let him hear.

I want to walk through our five days of experiencing God. Chapter eight, unit eight here's what it says: Number one, making adjustments is essential to following God. There's a lot of biblical characters that God used to do things for his kingdom and I want to point out a few and what they had to adjust in their life. We talked about Noah last week. He had to leave his whole life to build an Ark. Abraham had to go to a land that he did not know. Moses had to go back and face down his mistakes and his fears, like, maybe we're going to have to do that to follow God. David had to leave his career and take up being the King of creepy, dysfunctional people. Jonah had to leave his home and his prejudice, which is, that's a big deal cause we all carry prejudices at some level and we're gonna have to leave those behind. Paul had to leave everything he understood to be true. Everything that he understood about being a follower of God, he had to leave it to follow Jesus and that I, I know that there's this popular thing in the Christian world and I've talked about it before and I will continue to talk about it, but people will say to me or to other people, wouldn't God want me to be happy? Ask Paul how God feels about his happiness, ask Noah. And what I know is, people, this is what happens in our life over and over again is that we get a call in our life. We have a nudge from God and then what happens is God takes us down into the Valley to develop our character, to match the assignment that he's calling us to and it takes time and so there's this lag and so many people give up in that interim time. Paul, his Damascus road experience is 14 years before his first missionary journey. Noah's call to build an arc lasts 120 years before the flood comes. Abraham gets the call that he's going to have a child 40 years before he has the child – like, again and again and again. Joseph is 17 when he has a dream that his brothers are going to bow down to him. He's 42 when it's fulfilled and he has to go through prison and slavery and being falsely accused all through that time. The question that we have to decide in our own life is, in between the call and the fulfillment, will we be faithful? Will we allow God to develop our character so that when the fulfillment comes,

we are ready for it? God develops our character to match the assignment because the worst possible thing that could happen to a person is big assignment and no character. We see that all the time -- people who get a big dose of influence and they don't have the character to handle it. We see that happen in like the music industry where people all of a sudden they're just an up and comer, they're hungry and then all of a sudden they hit it big and their life changes and they don't have the character for it. Like they don't have the character developed to handle it and it consumes them. The worst thing that can happen in our life is to have a big assignment and small character and so when God gives us a call, he starts helping us adjust our life so that when the fulfillment of that call comes, we're ready. The question is, will you be faithful in the gap? This is where we begin to adjust our life.

Number two, I want to give us some examples of some of the kinds of adjustments that we might have to make because it's really easy to say, God will ask us to make adjustments. Well, what does that even mean? Like what kind of adjustments are we talking about? Okay, here's one: circumstances. We might have to change our circumstances. Maybe that's a new job. Maybe that's moving to a new town. Maybe that's letting go of some relationships, whatever we have to do to change our circumstances. Maybe it's letting go of some things that have got us crippled in debt and we can't move forward because we're sucked down so deeply in debt that we're being consumed in it. Maybe that's it. Let's look at Matthew 4, it says this, "while walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers. " This is Jesus -- "he saw two brothers, Simon, who's called Peter and Andrew, his brother casting a net into the sea because they were fishermen." So that's a good thing for them to be doing. Be dumb for them to cast a net into a sea if they were electricians. Of course, if they were electricians, we'd have to answer a whole new set of questions cause they're in the first century. But like they're fishermen. So they're casting a net into the sea. And he said to them, "Follow me and I'll make you fishers of men. And immediately they left their nets and followed him and going on from there, he saw two brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother in the boat with Zebedee, their father, mending their nets. And he called them and immediately they left their boats and their father and followed him. Like the cost -- the adjustment for them was to change careers. That's a lot. That's a lot. Maybe we've got to change our circumstances.

Maybe number two, we're gonna have to change our relationships. Look at this. Matthew 5, Jesus said this, "you've heard it said, 'you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." Like, how hard are we working at loving people who are difficult for us, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven." By the way, anytime you see that phrase, 'son of' you need to pay attention to it because in a Jewish mind that doesn't mean that that was your father. Even though that may be true, like when you see a lineage, there's, it's interesting, sometimes lineages will skip people. This person was a son of this person. There's that phrase 'son of' means more than just, this was my dad. The phrase 'son of' means, I take on the character of the person before me, I absorb and live out the legacy of the person who walked before me. I'm the son of this person. So when Jesus says, "when you love your enemies, when you love the people that are difficult for you to get along with", what he's saying here is "you never look more like your father in heaven than when you do that". When you love people that are difficult, and by the way,

consider your own relationship with the Lord and how much he loves you and you know exactly what that means. "For he makes the sun to rise on the evil and the good. And sends the rain on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward will you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same. And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same. You therefore must be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect" and it's not a great English translation, but here's a rabbinic discussion that goes on in the first century. One of the things that they debated was this, which one is more valuable? Rain or salvation? And here's what they said, rain, because salvation is only reserved for a few, but rain is given to everyone equally. So, Jesus pulls on this illustration, like God's not playing favorites when he sends the rain. Why are you playing favorites when you send your blessings?

Maybe we're number three. Maybe we're going to have to change how we think. If we were going to change how we think about a lot of things. This is what Matthew 20 says, "then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up with him, uh, with her sons and kneeling before him she asked him something. And he said to her, what do you want? She said to him, say that these two sons of mine are to sit one at your right and one at your left in your kingdom." By the way, I bet some people are like, how dare you, I love her chutzpah. I love the boldness of a mom to say, Hey, my boys are awesome. Now, every mom thinks her boys are amazing or something, but this mom has the chutzpah to say it to Jesus to the point where she's like, they're worth some kind of important seats. Jesus answers. "You don't know what you're asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink? And they said, we are able," they didn't have a clue what that meant. And then he said to them, "you will drink my cup." By the way, what cup is that? That's a, maybe that's a Wednesday Q and A with Pastor A question. "But to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my father. And when the 10 heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers. But Jesus called to him and said, you know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and their great ones exercise authority over them it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant." You've got to change the nature of how you view a relationship. Like, relationship isn't about coming to it to see what I can get from it. It's about coming to it to see how I can make the relationship better. How do you become a better version of what God intended you to be because I was in the room. And if we're not thinking about that, then we're thinking from a wrong place.

Then he goes, "whoever would be first among you must be your slave. Even as the son of man came, not to serve, but not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Maybe we're going to have to change our commitments. What are we committed to? What do we give our energy to? What do we give our passions to? I know a lot of people that the closer they walk to the Lord, the more they have to lay down some idol like sports or like they work too hard. And the problem is we live in a culture that's like, yeah, I'm a workaholic, but we say that with a bit of a smile, right? Let me tell you this, you work too much. It's sin. That doesn't mean you shouldn't work hard. You should work hard, but when you work too much, it's sin. We shouldn't celebrate workaholicism we should weep and repent .

If we don't get that right, we ruin everything. That's important. Cause what we do is we give all

our energy to the wrong things. Then we come home and got nothing for our family. Look at Deuteronomy 6: it says, hear oh Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.” Here's what you're committed to. Love the Lord your God with all your soul, with all your strength, all your mind, all your heart. This is what we're called to. If we're committed to anything else that's not following God, then those are things that we're going to have to adjust if we want to consistently be used in God's kingdom.

Number five thing that we're going to maybe have to change is actions that we take. Matthew 6 says this, “and when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door.”

I love that. When you pray, don't pray to anyone else. Um, years ago when I was in youth ministry, there was this video that every youth ministry showed probably -- it was great. It was on prayer and it was this guy sitting at a kitchen table and he didn't really know how to pray. So there was a pastor behind him in the kitchen interpreting the prayer for God. And so, this guy sitting at the table and he's like, ‘Lord, I don't really even know where to begin’. So, then the pastor's like ‘heavenly father, he's just blessed.’ He just goes on and with the big parallel, which I like, we feel like we got to do it right. And what Jesus is saying is stop trying to worry about being all in the routine of it. Be real. That's what I'm asking from you. Be real with God. That's more important than anything else. And then he says, “and your father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you pray, don't heap up empty phrases like the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Don't be like them for your father knows what you need before you ask him.” You don't have to be all religious and whatnot, and I think in the culture that we're living in right now, the less religious that passionate followers of Jesus are, the more that we have a voice into the lives of people around us because people aren't looking for the relevance of religion. What they're looking for is the realness of what a relationship with God looks like. What does it matter if it doesn't work for you?

Number six. Things that we might have to change is what we believe. Acts 10 says this, “at Caesarea, there was a man named Cornelius.” I love this story by the way, “a Centurion of what was known as the Italian cohort, a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people and prayed continually to God.” So, this is a guy who does all the things that a follower of God is supposed to do. The problem is he's a Gentile. “And about the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come to him and say, Cornelius,” --cause that's his name. It would have been weird if he'd have come to him and said Bill or Joe or something. If he, if he was at Southeast, he would've said Jeff or like Chris. That would have been what he said. And he said, but he said Cornelius, cause that's his name. “And he stared at him in terror and said, what is it Lord? And he said to him, your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God and now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. He's lodging with one Simon, a tanner whose house is by the sea. When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants, and a devout

soldier from among those who attended him and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa. The next day they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the house top about the sixth hour to pray and he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance and saw the heavens open and something like a great sheet descending being let down by its four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. And there came a voice to him: rise Peter, kill and eat." Now, what a lot of people have done with this vision is they've said, I don't know exactly what that means. That's when Jesus, when God ended the kosher dietary law. Hold that thought and let's see what we read here. "But Peter said, by no means Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. And the voice came to him again a second time, what God has made clean do not call common. This happened three times and the thing that was taken up at once to heaven. Now, while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what this, what the vision that he had seen might mean," -- Here's what I want to say about that. At this point, if Peter in the moment doesn't have a clue what the vision means, maybe we need to look at it a little deeper before we just pop off 2000 years removed from the event, Oh, I know what it meant and then I can eat bacon. "While Peter was still perplexed, behold the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there. And while Peter was pondering the vision, the spirit said to him, behold, three men are looking for you. Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation for I've sent them." Now what we know is Peter goes to Cornelius's house and what happens there is just exactly what it looked like on the day of Pentecost and what Peter will say back in Acts 11 is he, when he goes back to the elders at the Jerusalem church is he'll say, look, I went to Cornelius's house and it happened to them, just like it happened to us at Pentecost. When he's there at Cornelius's house, he goes, 'Oh, that's the meaning of the vision' -- didn't have anything to do with whether or not you can eat bacon. What's fascinating to me about this is Peter, like, I don't think we take enough stock in what that for Peter, that the Gentiles were allowed into the church. Like that would be, that's the most upside-down thing. I don't even know how to give us an equivalent. That would be like whoever you're out people are, like there's people that are in and then there's people that we don't know what to do with them and then there's the for sure out people, right? We know those people are out. Whoever that you're, those people are. The Gentiles, especially a Roman soldier, that is Peter's out people. Those people, there's no way they're in and God comes to him and goes, Hey, they are in -- mind blown for Peter.

Maybe one of the things that God's going to ask us to adjust is what we believe. Maybe God is bigger than our beliefs. And maybe when we fight for theology, which theology is important, but when we fight for it, we better fight for it with an open hand because if you close your fist around theology, you're God's too small and God's about to blow it up. He'll blow it up cause he's bigger than our theology.

So those are some things, six things that we might have to adjust. Now in third, third thing we want to talk about is that obedience is costly to you. Let's move through this quickly. Obedience is costly to you. It costs something to obey. Now, by the way, that might be hard, but I promise you it's worth it. It's not responsibility without reward. 2 Corinthians 11 says this, "are they servants of Christ? I'm a better one." This is Paul defending his apostleship, which this feels very

like, are they servants of Christ? I'm a more good or one. "I'm talking like a madman with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings and often near death." By the way, the thing that Paul uses to justify that he's a better Christian than everybody else is how hard it's been for him to be faithful. We want to leverage how God has blessed us and that would be the exact opposite of the way that the early church defined it. "Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the 40 lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned"-- that means they threw rocks at his head until they thought he was dead. "Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea, on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers and danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, dangers in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from all these other things, there is the daily pressure for me of my anxiety for all the churches." So you want to be used by God. Like God comes to him on the Damascus road and says, Paul, you are going to be my messenger to the Gentiles-- holy moly, what a privilege? That came with a price. I think for a lot of us, God has been inviting us into big things for a long time. We're just not willing to pay the price for it. We want to be used in the miracles of God and have a cost us nothing. Then that's not how it works. He says, "who is weak? Am I not weak? Who is made to fall and I am not indignant? If I must boast, I will boast of these things that show my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he has blessed me forever, knows that I am not lying. At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me, but I was let down in a basket, through a window in the wall and escaped his hands." Like, Paul goes on and on and on like, listen, obedience is costly. Obedience is not going to lead you to happy and comfortable life. What we want to do is stick God into our life as a protection mechanism so that we can spiritually bubble wrap our life. Listen, when you invite God into your life, you cut the bubble wrap off. You walk around exposed for God to use as he sees fit. And it's hard. I'm just telling you that it's worth it. It's worth it.

So obedience is costly to you, but number four, obedience is costly to others. Your obedience will cost other people around you, like, especially if you're a parent. Every decision I make affects my whole family, good or bad. Your obedience for a cost. Other people. Look at this. Some examples in scripture. Moses goes to Pharaoh in obedience to God and Pharaoh makes the Israelites suffer. There you go. Israelites take that. Well, that's not fair to them. What'd they do? Jesus's mother had to watch him die. All Jesus's disciples were martyred for their faith. They're obedience -- Jesus's commitment to how the world should function cost them their lives. Paul preached the gospel in Thessalonica, and there was a guy there named Jason who Paul was staying at his house. He was arrested and fined because of Paul's preaching. These are all, there's lots of examples like this in the scripture, but when you're obedient, it will cost you, but when you're obedient, it will also cost the people around you and all I can tell you as well, that's not easy. It will always be worth it. It will always be worth it, and too many times we trade the little bit that we have for the more that God wants.

Number five, obedience requires total dependence on God. John 15:5 it says this, "I'm the vine. You are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for

apart from me you can do nothing.” You can only live at about 40% of your capacity right now. What it says is, “for apart from me, you can't do anything.” You can't do anything. So if you want to be a part of something in the world that makes a difference, that matters, you've got to be rooted and anchored in who Jesus is. Because if you're not, you can't do anything. You can try. It just won't work. Galatians 2:20 says this. This is what Paul said, “I've been crucified with Christ. It's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me.” Like, Paul's reality of his own life is, I don't push my own rights anymore cause they're not my rights. It's not my life. It's not my issues. It's God's life to do with as he sees fit and, now -- just to kick a hornet's nest because there's nobody in here to yell at me -- for a lot of people going through this quarantine time ,with the church shut down, they've tried to stir a riot about the church's right to have public assembly. And I would just say this, the church could rise up and meet anyway. Some churches have. And what does the government do about it? Nothing. You know why? Cause if they fight it, they'll lose because it is our right to do that. However, that doesn't make it something that we should do. Because we're not just representing our own rights as followers of Jesus, we're representing him and how we engage these dilemmas is as important as what we believe about the God that's at work in us. We don't represent ourselves. We represent him. Like, nobody's been picking on the church that like baseball players should rise up and have baseball games and rockstar should rise up and have rock concerts. Oh well that would be silly. Well, it's a matter of social responsibility. This isn't about religious persecution. We have to represent things in a way that accurately represents the character of God because it's not about our rights. It's not about what we have the right to do and not do. It's about how we best represent God's character in the world. And that's way more important than anything else because my life is not my own, anymore. I died. That's what baptism is. I get buried with Christ. I resurrect as a new creation. I now belong to God. It's his life and I wish that we would remember that when we go out to lunch, whenever restaurants open, what's rumor is it might be pretty soon. That would be exciting. When we go out to lunch and we try to tell the waitress off because we think she did something wrong, like you ought to just be quiet because it's not you that you're representing, you're representing God and you're not helping move the kingdom forward in that person's heart when you're telling them everything they did wrong or the bank teller or the grocery store cashier that didn't ring it up right, and we blow a gasket and then, and talk about how we went to church. Like if you're going to blow a gasket, don't put a Christian bumper sticker on your car because; it's not, we want to be like, I have the world -- you don't represent you. You died. You represent the God who's at work in you. And if that doesn't change how we interact in the world, then something is disconnected in our understanding of Christian life. I could probably be quiet there, but I got some implications. Jeff.percival@southeastcc.org that's my email.

I have some implications for the sermon. Number one, and this is an implication from last week and we're going to pound it again. You cannot stay where you are and go with God. Not only is it going to force you into a crisis of belief, but beyond that, it's going to cause you to have to make adjustments in how you live and what you hold dear and the relationships that you have and the kind of conversations you want to engage people in and the kind of conversations

you're willing to engage with people and you cannot stay where you are and go with God. You can't.

Number two, again, same implication from last week. We'll need to make our adjustments when we follow God. We need to make adjustments when we follow God.

Number three, obeying God will be costly, but worth it. Paul talks about possessing everything and owning nothing. Like, the beauty of walking with the Lord is this freedom of letting go of everything that hinders you. And taking hold of something that is so much more profound and dear than we could ever imagine on our own. Obeying God will be costly, but it'll be worth it for.

Fourth implication is this, obedience leads to a deeper relationship with God and a fuller awareness of our created purpose. Like the only way to deepen your relationship with the Lord is to let go of those things that get in the way and start to actually walk with him and obey him in our daily routine. And when we do, our relationship with God deepens and we have a fuller awareness of our created purpose. And I think one of the things that our world could really use right now is a sense of purpose. Like why are we here? What are we about? What are we doing? Why does this matter? Why does getting out of bed in the morning matter if all it is, is this grind of breakfast, work, dinner, bed, breakfast, work, dinner, bed? Like, is that it or is there something else going on here? Obedience leads to a deeper relationship with God and a fuller awareness of our created purpose.

I would just invite us to consider, um, as we move into our communion time, what does obedience look like for you right now? Where is the space in your life where you're like, I know God has been leading me to be obedient in this area. Whatever this area is. It could be anything. There's maybe there's, maybe you have more than one thing; I have a list of places. Where is that place that you're like, man, I just haven't been obedient, is haven't been obedient. There just haven't been, it doesn't matter. Why just haven't been, and what's God asking you to do in light of what communion represents as this moment of, Jesus laying down his life as a sacrifice for you and me to say, listen, there's no place I won't go to tell you how much I love you will you follow me there? Maybe that's what communion can mean to us. Let's take a few minutes and think about that. This morning.

On the night Jesus was betrayed. He took bread and he broke it and he said, this is my body which has given for you. So whenever you eat this bread, do it in remembrance of me. Let's remember him. And then after the dinner he took a cup, and said this cup, this is the blood of the covenant which is shed for you. So, whenever you drink this cup, do it in remembrance of me. Let's pray.

God, I'm so grateful that the times where you invite us to adjust our lives and we actually do it, you just prove yourself to be more than we could ever think or imagine. You prove yourself to be more and more and more. And every time I think in my own life that I can't, there's nothing more of you to know, you reveal layers and depth of yourself that I'm like, man, I don't even know how to comprehend that. What a gift it is to have this beautiful relationship with you

where you help us become everything that we were made to be. Nothing held back. God, the cost of that, the laying down of our life is hard, but God, would you give us courage to look doubt in the eye and fear in the eye and say, you don't get to win today. We love you, Lord. In Jesus name. Amen. Let's sing one more song.

More than anything else, I think in, the legacy of my ministry, whatever that is, wherever that goes, what I hope is that people can see a message, that there is nobody who has better things for you than God and who loves you more. And there is nothing that will cost you more than following him, but it will be worth every step. So may you have the courage this week to live in the fullness of God's plan for your life. Thank you for tuning in. Have a great week.