

Homily – June 21, 2026

I've got to tell you; I wrestled with this text. And very honestly, this is confession time. I tried to see if I could preach the second lesson or the first lesson. But nothing came to me. And so, I stayed with the gospel. And the gospel is supposed to be good news. And when you listen to it, it doesn't really feel like a lot of good news. You know, it's going to cost you a lot. You're going to lose friends. You know, you might be physically persecuted. Anybody want to take this job? I wondered if we actually took out the scripture, and I invite you to, you get to look at your bulletin today during the sermon. You don't have to look at me. but I want to actually break this text down so that we see what the job description really is, what the cost is, and then a former business person, what the benefit analysis is. So you got your bulletins open to the text?

So, first thing in this job description, you have to be like Jesus. How many of us do a really good job of that? I try, but I can tell you I fail 99% of the time, and maybe 1% of the time. Thank you for nodding. But our goal is to be Christ-like, to be filled with God's love and God's mercy and God's grace. And some days, that's a cakewalk. And other days, that is so hard. For some people, it's a cakewalk. And other people, it's like, oh, dear God, help me. So that's the first part of the job description. We need to be like Jesus.

Then the next one is, get ready for opposition, verses 25 to 31. Jesus certainly was criticized. He was certainly rejected. If we're supposed to be Christ-like and Jesus was rejected and criticized, guess what? We're going to be rejected and criticized. Don't let that stop you. Let that build your faith in Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Next one, verses 26 and 27, speak the truth openly. You haven't heard me say this yet, but I am sure in my tenure here, I will tell you this. No wire in the Bible have I found that Jesus was nice. A lot of times we say, oh, we have to be nice. No, Jesus told truth in love, truth in kindness, truth in compassion. So, we are called to speak the truth. And sometimes it's really hard truth that we are called to speak. But actually, that's us showing our love and respect for that person, that we're willing to speak that hard truth to them.

Verse 28, fear God more than people. Boy, we really want to impress our neighbor, but yet we're told to fear God more than people. We're supposed to tell people that we are Christians. And a lot of times that's spoken in our actions, not in our words. Just because I have a cross on doesn't mean I'm a Christian. It might mean I just like jewelry. We need our actions. and our words to speak to the fact that we are indeed Christians. Old song that I grew up with in youth, they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love. Yes, they will know we are Christians by our love.

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Verses 34 to 7, “put your allegiance to Jesus ahead of anything else”. And I know that kind of makes me nervous because, God, I want a family. You've called me to be a part of a family. And yet sometimes you have to pick priorities. I remember when I was preparing to go to seminary. I worked in the newspaper industry, and I had this board of directors that worked with me. And we were family. We were Hanai Ohana. And when they found out I was going to seminary, they told me they were coming to take me to lunch. And actually, what they were doing was coming to take me to the mental institution in Florida, in Chattahoochee. They had called ahead to get me a reservation because they thought that the pressure of the job that I was doing had made me go over the edge, that I would leave the secular world to go to seminary and become a pastor.

And I remember my first semester, I was in an airport and had lots of layover time, and I called one of the board members, and he basically said, don't call me ever again. You have chosen the way you want to live, and I don't understand it. I don't agree with you, don't call me. That's the cost of discipleship. Now, I wouldn't trade what I do and where God has called me for all of the money, for all of the Reese's peanut butter cups in the world, but it costs. And then take up our cross. Take up our cross. And the cross in the first century was about suffering. It was about shame, and it was even about death. Jesus is calling us to be willing to sacrifice and to lose our life, ourself, to find it.

Okay, how many applications do we have? But here's the benefits. Here's the compensation. Fellowship with Christ. A deep and meaningful relationship with your Savior and my Savior. That's priceless. True life through surrender. We give our life to God. And God loves us so much that he even knows the hairs on our head. And the last one, of course, is eternal life. The job is not easy. The job is demanding. The job requires prayer. It requires ohana connecting and calling you to accountability. It requires certainly the power of the Holy Spirit. But the promise is that you are God's child, named and claimed, strengthened through the power of the Holy Spirit, and given life eternal. May the Holy Spirit give us the power to say yes, to be a follower of Jesus. Amen.