

FAITH AND GRATITUDE IN FOLLOWING JESUS

LUKE 17:1-37 | REV. LITO VILLORIA

Jesus warned His disciples against causing others to stumble and commanded them to confront sin and forgive those who repent. When the apostles recognized the difficulty of repeated forgiveness, Jesus taught that even faith like a mustard seed could accomplish what seemed impossible because its effectiveness rests in our all-powerful God. Faithful servants obey without thinking their service gives them the right to demand anything from God. (Luke 17:1-10)

As Jesus continued toward Jerusalem, ten lepers cried out for mercy. Jesus commanded them to show themselves to the priests, and “as they went they were cleansed.” All ten obeyed, but only one returned, praised God, fell at Jesus’ feet, and gave thanks. This Samaritan recognized Jesus as the source of mercy and did not allow Christ’s gift to take Christ’s place in his life. (Luke 17:11-19)

When the Pharisees asked when God's kingdom would come, they failed to recognize Jesus as King standing among them. God's kingdom was already present through Christ, although its fullness was still to come. Jesus must first suffer rejection, die, rise again, and ascend to heaven before returning unmistakably as the Son of Man. His disciples must trust His promise without becoming distracted by speculation. (Luke 17:20–25)

Jesus compared His return to the days of Noah and Lot. People continued their ordinary activities while ignoring God's warnings until judgment came suddenly. Christ's return will expose every heart and bring final separation. Faithful readiness means fulfilling our daily responsibilities under Christ's lordship, holding earthly possessions and plans without allowing them to rule our hearts, and responding to Christ without postponing repentance or obedience. (Luke 17:26-37)

We are saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ, not by anything we do. Yet genuine faith does not remain invisible; it produces evidence of the life Christ gives. This sermon examines the vital signs of genuine faith and calls us to consider whether our professed faith is genuinely alive. ✱

FOLLOWING JESUS ACROSS GENERATIONS

REV. LITO VILLORIA

Last Saturday, July 18, we witnessed another encouraging evidence of God's grace through the NextGen Conference 2026, "The Uncommon Life: Living Out the Kingdom in Every Space."

We praise God for bringing together more than 250 attendees representing over 12 churches. It was a joy to see young people gather to worship the Lord, listen to His Word, learn from one another, and consider how they can live out their faith in their homes, schools, friendships, workplaces, online spaces, and communities.

I am especially grateful to the Lord for the leadership of Teacher Mir Monroy, our NextGen Director, together with our NextGen Leadership Team and co-ministers. It was encouraging to see them embody the IDMC culture of our church by working together, investing in the next generation, and helping other churches strengthen their discipling ministry. They served with the desire to help young people become faithful disciples of Jesus who will influence others for Christ.

I also want to thank everyone who supported the conference generously through your prayers, encouragement, service, and financial support. Some helped young people attend. Others served behind the scenes. Many prayed that God would use His Word to bring genuine transformation. Every contribution became part of what the Lord accomplished.

Please continue praying for the young people who attended. Pray that what they heard will take root and produce lasting fruit. Pray also

that we will continue the connections established with the pastors and leaders of the different churches represented. May these relationships lead to greater cooperation in discipling the next generation and strengthening Christ's Church.

The conference may have concluded, but discipling must continue. Our prayer is that this will not be remembered merely as a successful gathering but as part of a continuing journey of helping young people follow Jesus and live out His kingdom in every space.

This is also part of our preparation for Vision 2037. We desire to become a greater blessing to our community, throughout the Philippines, and across other nations by becoming a global discipling and leadership center. God is already allowing us to serve beyond our congregation by investing in young people and partnering with other churches. Vision 2037 is not only about expanding facilities. It is about expanding our capacity to form disciples, prepare leaders, strengthen families, serve churches, and reach every generation for Christ.

As we celebrate what God has done among the next generation, we are also looking forward to another discipling opportunity through the upcoming Men's Crossroad Weekend 2026. This year's theme is "Follow in Jesus' Steps," based on 1 Peter 2:21:

"For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps."
The Christian life is not merely about believing the right truths. It is about

following the right Person. Jesus calls us to walk where He walked, obey as He obeyed, love as He loved, serve as He served, and endure as He endured.

The world does not merely need successful men. It needs godly men who follow Jesus wholeheartedly and lead others to do the same. God has entrusted men with significant responsibilities in their homes, churches, workplaces, and communities. Our greatest influence will come from lives increasingly shaped by Christ.

Therefore, I warmly invite the men of our church to join the Men's Crossroad Weekend. Make time to step away from your regular responsibilities, listen to God's Word, examine your walk with Christ, and grow with other men.

To our wives, I also encourage you to support and send your husbands. Pray for them and help them make this weekend a priority. Your encouragement may become one of the ways God strengthens their walk with Christ and their spiritual leadership in your family.

Let us praise God for what He has done through the NextGen Conference and pray expectantly for what He will accomplish through the Men's Crossroad Weekend. May He continue forming faithful disciples across generations who will follow Jesus and help others follow Him.

As we prepare for Vision 2037, may God build us before He builds through us. May every gathering, ministry, partnership, and transformed life help prepare GCF South Metro to be Built for His Glory. ✱

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