

0 (0s):

Hi, I'm Matt Wolf, familiar lead pastor here at rise church. If you don't know me, I want to get to know you go to [ride.denver.com/new](https://ride.denver.com/new), and I'll reach out to you or stay after this service. We have some coffee and donuts out in the cafe area. We were going to do it outside, but we decided to move it into the cafe today. So if you're here in person, or if you're watching online, just drive on over the roads, aren't too bad. Get here after the service and we'll have some coffee together. I'd love to get to know you a little bit more. Christmas Eve was great. Wasn't it? Yeah. We saw over a thousand people join us online. So we were really excited about that. Yeah, that's pretty exciting. And then, you know, Sawyer gave a great message. We have such a great staff and volunteer team. I was completely out of pocket and they ran everything last week.

0 (40s):

Awesome. It was so good. Make sure if you miss stories, message, go back and watch that or listen to it. It was good. Cause we do need to forget what lies behind and strain towards what's ahead, right? Especially for 2021, one, one thing I wanted to do before we jump into the service or I'm sorry, the message in this series is just pray for our nation. Doesn't it? Isn't that something we're supposed to do. So let's just do that for a second. Would you bow with me as we pray, Lord God, we just pray for our nation. This has been another tough week for our nation. For, for people we're wondering what's going on. We're confused for angry there's conflict at even at the national stages or God. And we pray that you bring peace to our country. We pray that you bring peace for those people who are angry at each other, even us as we have anger, Lord God, we repent of that and ask that you'd use us to be peacemakers.

0 (1m 30s):

Lord. You tell us in your word that, that if we seek your face, if we turn from our sinful ways, and if we cry out to heaven, that you will hear us, that you will forgive us and heal our land. So we're going to claim that promise today. Lord God, as we turn to you saying that, yes, sometimes we hear that the people at the front of the line being angry and creating unnecessary conflict, and we pray that you would forgive us and that you'd figure of our nation and bring healing to our country. We pray that you bring peace ahead and use us to be those agents of peace agents of reconciliation. Because as you said, blessed are the peacemakers. I pray God that you would help people, especially as they deal with anger online or in person or rallies, or that we'd have peace in our nation.

0 (2m 11s):

Especially this year, we pray for our new leadership. That's getting put in at the national stage from congressmen to senators and especially for our president and vice-president who are coming into office this next week. I pray that you in the next week and a half, Lord God, that you would lead them and guide them, be with president Biden and vice president Harris, that you would give them wisdom, help them make wise decisions for our nation. Lead us as a people more to you that you protect our country and bring peace. We also pray for an end to this pandemic, Lord, God, we pray that you'd help the rollout of this vaccine. But more than that, we pray that there would be an end completely to this plague on this land that you would help end the pandemic very soon that people would be protected for those who are hurt and sick right now

that you provide them healing for those who are in, in loss and in grief right now that you'd provide them comfort and hope.

0 (3m 4s):

We pray that you be with us all today, whether we are here in person or online, that you'd open up our ears to hear what you have for us today, that you open up our hearts to believe it and our feet

1 (3m 16s):

To obey it. I pray this

0 (3m 17s):

In Jesus name. Amen man. Well great. So we are in our series

1 (3m 22s):

Quest today, the quest because don't, we love stories. I think we

0 (3m 27s):

Love stories. There's an old Hasidic saying that says that God made men to tell stories that we love stories. We respond to stories. There's been all sorts of studies that say, when you tell a story, people donate more money. When you tell a story, people are more likely to buy your goods. Online. People love stories. It's why presidents tell stories. There's even a saying that the best, the one who tells the best stories wins, okay. In marketing, in leadership, in politics in life, because we love stories. We respond to stories. There's something inside of us that

1 (4m 1s):

Does that. Christopher Booker.

0 (4m 4s):

It was a scholar and he studied stories for his lifetime and he wrote this tome of a book. And he basically said, if you look at all the different stories in our culture and going back millennia, that you would see seven basic plots. That's his premise that you see these stories, that recur again and again, and again, there's stories like overcoming the monster, like Beowulf out to slay the dragon there's stories that are rags to riches story, where someone on the bottom rises to the top, like all of our twist. And we see these stories that, that it just seemed to occur again. And again, there's tragedies and there's comedies, there's journeys to a far off destination and return like around the world in 80, 80 days, 80 days.

0 (4m 51s):

It's been a while since I've read that, there's these stories that we hear again and again and again, but what he says is one of the most beloved of these stories and the most easy for us to recognize

1 (5m 3s):

Is the quest, the quest

0 (5m 6s):

Story. As we told in our little promo, it begins with an unlikely hero

1 (5m 12s):

Who hears a call and starts a journey. And on that journey, they are led by a wise guide. They have

0 (5m 19s):

Canyons surrounding them that they face obstacles and temptations to overcome. And then they finally

1 (5m 26s):

Reach a goal. We see this quest all over the place goes way back to stories like the Odyssey or,

0 (5m 35s):

Or more modern stories like the Lord of the rings. We love the stories. We see them not only in our literature, but also in our movies, like Raiders of the lost Ark or another Indiana Jones, the last

1 (5m 48s):

Crusade, which goes all the way

0 (5m 50s):

Back to King Arthur and his Knights setting off on a quest to find the Holy grail, right? These stories just occur again and again, and again are stories like the princess bride

1 (6m 0s):

Or finding Nemo peas,

0 (6m 3s):

Same plot of the quest occurs again and again, and in though there are lots of different variations, lots of different characters and lots of different ordeals and obstacles that these characters run into that scene. Basic plot occurs again and again, and again. Now Krister for Booker as someone who is not religious at all, probably the opposite. His theory is that there's something deep inside of our human psyche that responds to these stories. That's why we tell them again and again and love them. I think he's right. Although I don't think it's the edit ego and superego and all that psychological mumbo-jumbo. I think that it's something that God put inside

1 (6m 36s):

Of us, that he created

0 (6m 39s):

Us in a way that we respond to stories.

1 (6m 42s):

That's why

0 (6m 43s):

At least 40% of the Bible is stories because we hear these stories and something happens within our heart, within our soul. We respond emotionally when we cry, even to stories we've heard again and again and again, don't we,

1 (6m 56s):

This is what we do. We love stories.

0 (6m 59s):

I believe that this particular plot is one that applies to all of us because God has called each one of us on a quest.

1 (7m 9s):

I'm not the first one to save this. Watch me

0 (7m 11s):

Ni the great CRA Chinese Christian leader of the last century said that the Christian experience from start to finish is a journey of faith. But even beyond that, back in the 16 hundreds, there was a man by the name of John Bunyan, not Paul Bunyan, the guy with the big blue ox, not that one. Okay. John Bunyan, who was an actual dude who lived in England and was arrested for his faith, wrote a book you may have read called Pilgrim's progress.

1 (7m 37s):

It is still

0 (7m 38s):

One of the best-selling books of all time. It's up there above Harry Potter and the goblet of fire, which is also a quest, okay, this is one of the best-selling books of stories of, and most read stories of all time. So I encourage you. If you haven't read that, you should read that that's a good, good book, but it tells us that we as followers of Jesus, because the main character in that story is Christian. It's an allegory, right? And

Christian sits off on a journey on a destination, a quest.

1 (8m 6s):

So the Christian life is a quest. And I believe

0 (8m 9s):

In the book of Hebrews that we're going to look at throughout this whole series. It's a very similar progression of the plot that we, as followers of Jesus, are on a quest that it's Epic. That it's an adventure that we are called to, that we are invited on. So what I hope through this series, we can begin to see our lives. That way, the way God sees us, the way Jesus had calls up has called us.

1 (8m 33s):

So today we're going to look at one passage in here,

0 (8m 36s):

Chapter 12, verses one through three, and then throughout this series, we'll keep coming back to that passage and throughout Hebrews. But since we're not going to cover the entire book of Hebrews, like in, in this series, it's just going to be a six week series. I do encourage you to read it all in one city. Okay. They say that the average reader can read the book of Hebrews in 45 minutes. So if you're slow reader, you can do it in an hour, right? If you're fast, you can get it even quicker. Right. But I encourage and challenge everyone to do that this week. Okay. So before we get together next week, read that entire

1 (9m 3s):

Book. It's just a 13

0 (9m 5s):

Chapters. It's not super long, 45 minutes set aside some time so that you can see the arc of the whole story. Sometimes we miss that when we just read a little verse or chapter, right? So I want to encourage you to do that because that's where we'll be throughout this series. As we see this journey that we're called on this

1 (9m 21s):

Epic quest that we are called to. So we're gonna,

0 (9m 26s):

Let's see that from this passage. And we're going to dive a little bit deeper into the first section of

1 (9m 31s):

The quest plot, which is the call.

0 (9m 33s):

So I hope you guys are excited about this series. I have been too excited about it. This is going to be a lot of fun. So if you have a Bible go with, go ahead and open it with me to Hebrews chapter 12, verses

1 (9m 43s):

One through three. If you are using the YouVersion Bible,

0 (9m 47s):

You can use that as well. Look for our event and we have the passage and a couple of the verses we'll reference as well. There, you can take notes and save them. It's pretty cool that you can do that at the app. If you're in person, get there as well as we look at Hebrews chapter

1 (9m 58s):

12 verses one through three. So there we read therefore,

0 (10m 6s):

Or since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and let us run with perseverance.

1 (10m 20s):

It's the race marked out for us,

0 (10m 24s):

Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith for the joy set before him, he endured the cross scorning its shame and sat down at the right

1 (10m 35s):

And of the throne of God for street.

0 (10m 39s):

Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners so that you will not grow weary and

1 (10m 44s):

Lose heart.

0 (10m 47s):

This well-known passage is his beloved. I memorized it when I was in middle school. I've gone back to it again and again, because it tells about this journey that we are called to. And I believe in just these first three verses of this chapter, we see kind of the entire quest in just a few verses. And I want to show you this. So,

so let's look back at verse one together. It says, therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, and then jump down to the next sentence where it says, and let us run with

1 (11m 17s):

Perseverance. So here's a

0 (11m 19s):

Call we're on a journey. Let's run this language that the author of Hebrews is using is probably the language of competition of the games, the Greek and Roman games, which we know of as the Olympics today, right? Or in the Coliseum, which was active in the first century AD where people would compete, whether in races

1 (11m 38s):

Or on

0 (11m 39s):

Foot or in on chariot. And they would run fast. Okay. This is the time when like the marathon was invented, right? These long races were run. And this language is it's talking about running, cause you're on this long journey,

1 (11m 55s):

Three different times

0 (11m 56s):

In this passage, it talks about persevering pushing forward in during that the word perseverance in Greek, actually Chris three times and just these three verses because it's a journey that you have to keep pushing forward. So we see at the beginning that there's this call, let us run. There's an invitation. Come on, let's do this guys. The call is present in his passage. The second aspect of the quest is the guide. Now I'm stretching a little bit for this, this point, but we'll focus on this one actually next week. So you'll see, make it a little bit clear, but it says, therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses,

1 (12m 29s):

If you read

0 (12m 30s):

Hebrews chapter 11, which are going to this week, when you read through the book, you're going to see that this therefore is referring back to all the heroes of the faith in Hebrews chapter 11, people like Abraham, Isaac,

1 (12m 41s):

Ray Hab, and these heroes,

0 (12m 43s):

Those that have gone before they've gone on the journey, they've gone on the quest. So we can look to them as our guide. And even now

1 (12m 50s):

Watching us cheering us on from the stadium seats. So there's a died

0 (12m 57s):

That, that leads us. We can look to and say, okay, I know where to go next because somebody has gone there before me. Then the third aspect of the quest is the companions three different times. And just this first verse, it says us, let us throw off, let us run with perseverance. The race marked out for us.

1 (13m 15s):

The journey

0 (13m 16s):

Of the Christian faith. This quest is not one you're supposed to do one

1 (13m 19s):

Your own. We are meant to do it together. We're meant to do it.

0 (13m 23s):

It's us. It's us. We're in this together. Let's run together. We need companions around us to encourage us and challenge us. So the third week in a series, we'll talk about the companions we need. And then the fourth aspect or the obstacles that we run into, let us throw off everything that hinders success, because there are lots of things that hinder. There's the imagery here of you being weighted down and having to throw off the weights that are slowing you down. As we're running this way, throw off everything that hinders so you can make better speed. All these obstacles that you're going to run to, and you will run into

1 (13m 55s):

Obstacles telling you

0 (13m 58s):

This right now, it's an Epic journey. And we know that from our favorite quest stories, there's conflict, there's monsters, there's all sorts of stuff that we run into on the journey. And these obstacles we have to overcome. We have to persevere through them. So the obstacles is the fourth week. And then after that are the temptations and the sin that so easily entangles because we are tempted to sin. And sometimes it's our own



bad decisions that lead us into distraction, into destruction and wasting time. Sometimes the temptation we've faced is just to not do anything. We're busy with life. We're distracted and we stopped running on this journey. We stop going after the quest.

0 (14m 39s):

So we need to learn to overcome temptations that's week five. And then the final week, week six is the goal. Verse two. We see fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith for the joy set before

1 (14m 53s):

There is joy, there is true happiness.

0 (14m 55s):

Yes, there is eternity ahead. If we follow Jesus, there's guides ahead, that will help us. But ultimately

1 (15m 2s):

We fix our eyes on Jesus because he has gone on this quest before us. He has finished the journey we follow after him and we reach the ultimate goal. Even Jesus, when he

0 (15m 15s):

Was beaten, when he was facing the shame of the cross to be executed, like the poorest worst of the criminals, it says that he had did it,

1 (15m 23s):

It for the joy set before him. So

0 (15m 27s):

Even the worst, hardest things that we will face on this Epic journey are worth it

1 (15m 32s):

Because the cross makes it worth it. What Jesus did for the joy set before him and the joy set before us in turn is the goal.

0 (15m 40s):

So in just these three verses, it's really like a microcosm of his

1 (15m 43s):

Quest that we're going to be talking about throughout this whole series.

0 (15m 47s):

And I hope that you guys are excited about this because so many times in our lives, if we really look around, we're like, man,

1 (15m 55s):

Things don't feel meaningful. Why am I doing this? What's the point.

0 (15m 60s):

Or sometimes we've been on a quest for a long time. And the thing we're chasing after we get it, you know, you get married, you get the job, you get the career that you always wanted, the big house, and then you get it. And you're like, that's it? See, all those little quests are nothing compared to the group.

1 (16m 14s):

The request that Jesus calls us on. And

0 (16m 17s):

I hope that as we start this series that you guys will say, Hey, I want to be on this quest, the most important one. I want the joy. I want to reach that goal.

1 (16m 26s):

Want to finish the journey it's worth it.

0 (16m 31s):

So I hope that you will either start your journey with us or, or continue your journey or, or some of you have just been not doing anything with your faith for awhile. It's beginning of the year. I'm going to, I'm going to try this again. Or, Hey, I haven't really grown at all in a long time. Maybe it's time for you to start this journey

1 (16m 46s):

Again and take a step.

0 (16m 49s):

What we're going to do now is really dive into the first

1 (16m 52s):

Aspect of this quest, which is the call, the call because that's where it all starts. And today we're going to go to the beginning, right? The call. What is the call of this quest? So let me ask you guys, what's the call of the quest for Jesus followers, follow Jesus, follow Jesus. It's pretty simple.

0 (17m 14s):

A mission statement, right? Helping people follow Jesus. It's one of the most simple things, but this is the call

of our journeys. Our quests, in fact, Jesus makes it abundantly clear. I want to show you just three times. And he said it a whole bunch more than this, that Jesus shows us the call looking Matthew four, 19 and 20, where Jesus says, come follow me. Jesus said, and I will send you out to fish for people there's purpose to this. At once they left their nets and followed him. He's blue collar workers. These guys who are busy at their jobs, providing

1 (17m 44s):

For their families. She says, come follow me. And they leave everything to follow Jesus

0 (17m 50s):

Or look in Luke chapter five. After this Jesus went out and saw a tax collector. This guy is a white collar dude. Okay. He's wealthy, maybe skirt, and a few rules to make his money by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. Follow me. Jesus said Saint call, right? Follow me and leave. I got up left everything and followed him. We see the same thing in the gospel of John as well. The next day, Jesus decided to leave for Galilee finding Philip. He said to him, follow me pretty simple. Follow me. And this is the same call, same invitation. Jesus is extending to each one of us. Follow me, follow me, take your next step.

0 (18m 31s):

Come after me fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, right? Come follow me. It's a very simple call. And yet it is the most important call you will ever receive. And I hope that you will answer the call to take a step, take a step forward. Now the call often comes to people in the form, like in the stories we love in the form of a problem, Oh, there's something bad happening in the world or, or sometimes it's opportunity. Oh, there's this great thing that you can have if you go after this quest. And I think it's both things in the call of Jesus, just to make sure you guys all understand this aspect of the quest.

0 (19m 11s):

I have a little clip from a movie we're gonna watch. So we, we all make sure we're on the same page with the call,

2 (19m 19s):

Benjamin Franklin Gates, your undertaking, the duty of the family Gates to find most spectacular treasure history. It grew throughout the ages and moved across continents until it was hidden by America's founding fathers who left clues to the treasure's location right before the unfinished pyramid, the whole scene telling us something, keeping this treasure safe. Pensioner is your destiny

0 (19m 51s):

National treasure, right? Remember that movie? Nicholas cage, right? National treasure. It's it's this treasure. That's the quest, right? You've got to seek after this treasure and find this ancient treasure hidden by the Illuminati or whoever it is in that story. Right? And often in these quest stories, it is a treasure treasure

Island. Okay. And when people are called on these journeys, what's really interesting is that often they have never left home. They have no idea what's ahead. They just there's. There's the sense that there's something out there, something better or something that they've got to fix. So they've got to go, you know, in, in treasure Island, Jim Hawkins had never left his hometown, let alone been on a ship, let alone, gone to a deserted Island to find treasure.

0 (20m 36s):

Okay. He has no idea what's ahead. And there's one point in the story where he starts to cry as he thinks about all the dangers ahead, because we don't know what's ahead. It's why Bilbo Baggins, even though he set on off as a burglar to find this treasure in the lonely mountain has never left the Shire before he doesn't know what's ahead or what's to be expected. So sometimes it is like a treasure like that. Sometimes people are leaving home for something better. They're trying to find a new home like land before time. You remember that story. Okay. Or they're trying to find a person like finding Nemo or fish, I guess, or taken, you know, he's, he's trying to find his daughter he's on that quest. So these quests, sometimes it's whatever is that people are going after they're trying to get something.

0 (21m 21s):

But when they leave home, when they received the call at first, they have no idea,

1 (21m 25s):

DIA what's ahead. That's the adventure of the whole thing. Right? And

0 (21m 31s):

Scary thing. Because I think some of us, when we have this idea of the Epic quest, that Jesus calls us to follow him, we're thinking, well, what is he going to ask me to do? What am I going to have to go through in my life? Is it going to be hard? Am I going to be persecuted? Is, is it going to be challenging? And here's the thing. Yes. You're wondering, is it safe? Can I leave home right now? I don't know about this. Any journey that we go on, we think, what do I need to pack? What do I need to, where do I have the right clothes? Do I have the right masks? I don't know what you guys are thinking about what we're looking in the future and thinking, I don't know what's coming ahead. Is it going to be safe? And the answer is, it's not going to,

1 (22m 7s):

To be safe. It's not going to be comfortable for this journey.

0 (22m 13s):

It's going to be hard. It's going to be the hardest thing you will ever do,

1 (22m 17s):

But it's worth it. It's worth it. In the beginning of the Lord of the rings,

0 (22m 24s):

JRR Tolkien writes a line about Samwise Gamgee of course, one of the companions we'll talk about him in a couple of weeks, but there's this line about Sam and Tolkien, right? Sam was the only member of the party who had not been over the river before. He had a strange feeling as the slow gurgling stream, slipped by his old life, lay behind in the miss dark

1 (22m 48s):

Adventure lay in front. I like that. Right? Dark

0 (22m 51s):

Adventure. He had no idea what he'd be going through. It's dark. It's scary,

1 (22m 57s):

But it's adventure.

0 (22m 59s):

It's the greatest adventure you will ever go on. The most Epic thing you could ever do

1 (23m 4s):

Do with your life. It's the quest. So that's why I'm saying, when you hear the call and hopefully you hear it today, follow me, take a step. Start that journey

0 (23m 16s):

Ford. You don't know what's ahead. You don't know what dragons you're going to have to slay or what fire swamps you might have to go through.

1 (23m 24s):

We don't know. Just answer the call, follow Jesus and take a step. Take a step. Now

0 (23m 34s):

I got really criticized by someone last year because I, I tell people what to do too much.

1 (23m 42s):

Yeah. It's a little funny right there. Like, you know, Matt, you, you just tell people do

0 (23m 46s):

This, do that follow, take it step and do all this stuff. And I'm like, okay. Yeah. Yeah. So I just want to be very clear. Like I was this person I will never say. And no one should ever say you have to do something to be

saved. Right? When Jesus invites us to this journey, he saves us. He forgives us based completely on him and what he's done when we do stuff, it's not an order to be saved or an order to be forgiven or an order to earn this reward of salvation.

1 (24m 15s):

It's not

0 (24m 17s):

As we get to go on this journey, did you notice that in Hebrews 12 two, it says, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer meaning he went first and Perfector of faith. What's great is that Jesus took this journey ahead of us going through the harshest things that scoring the shame of the Christ, the cross facing opposition. He did all of those things and he perfected faith, meaning he did every single thing. Right. And that's great because none of us ever will. And because Jesus went ahead of us as the pioneer to pave the way, but also as the Perfector to finish it for us, all's we have to do is go after him and we get to go after him. So it's not out of obligation.

0 (24m 58s):

It's out of opportunity. It's not because we have to, but because we get to take another step and that's why I want to challenge you guys. And that's why I tell you to do stuff.

1 (25m 6s):

Okay? Because

0 (25m 9s):

It is absurd. Let me say this. It is absurd to think when someone says, I believe in Jesus, but I don't want to belong to him.

1 (25m 16s):

What?

0 (25m 18s):

Or I trust Jesus, but I don't want to take his advice. No, no, no. See faith. Isn't complete till it gets to your feet. Okay? Faith, isn't complete till it gets to your feet. You are saved the moment you believe in your heart. I believe in Jesus. I'm saved, but then it's made complete. As we take those steps of faith forward, whatever they are

1 (25m 41s):

Through obstacles, throwing off sin, getting up again. When we've been knocked down,

0 (25m 46s):

Penting when we fall into sin again, we get up and take the next step. So that's why I tell people to do stuff. I'm challenging you to take the steps. Not because you have to, because you get to, this is an Epic journey. This is the quest that you've been invited on. So respond to the call,

1 (26m 2s):

Take a step. It's worth it. And that's what I want.

0 (26m 6s):

And encourage you and challenge you to take a step wherever you are in your journey to take a step. Maybe you're brand new to faith. Maybe you came on Christmas, even you're, you're curious. And you just need to take a step and say, I'm going to believe today. Some of you have believed already, but you haven't been baptized. You. Haven't publicly told people that of your faith. You need to take that step. Others of you. You just need to take forward and say, take your step forward and say, Hey, I'm going to start reading my scriptures. I really want to get to know the Bible or others. You need to choose community. You're going to sign up for a community group today because you're like, I don't have any companions. I've been doing this on my own. And it's hard. I feel lost and alone right now. Okay. Some of you have been doing nothing for years and you're, I have gotten nowhere in my faith. I look back five years from now.

0 (26m 47s):

I'm the exact same today as I was five years ago. Maybe it's time for you to just get up and move ahead again. Or some of you have fallen into sin and you're like, man, I am so far off the trail. You're watching this right now with a hangover.

1 (27m 1s):

And, and

0 (27m 2s):

I'm telling you it's time to get up repent and take another step forward. Because our master who calls us to follow him is the greatest master there ever was. And he will forgive you again and again, and again, he doesn't care how far you fallen or no matter what you've done. He says, come follow me. There's always forgiveness. And Jesus Christ. So keep moving forward, wherever you are, take a

1 (27m 23s):

Step, take a step.

0 (27m 27s):

And that's my challenge to you today. Yes, it is a challenge to do something,

1 (27m 32s):

To take a step. Okay.

0 (27m 33s):

But I really want you to stop right now to process. Think what is my next step? Because whatever it is, that's what you're supposed to do. Like Martin Luther King Jr. Says faith is taking the next step. Even when you don't see the whole staircase, we are called to take

1 (27m 49s):

A step. The call,

0 (27m 52s):

The invitation. Some of you are brand new at the beginning of this journey. You're like, I don't have any clue

1 (27m 56s):

The head that's okay. Just take one step.

0 (28m 0s):

What they say w with marathons, you know, the hardest, hardest thing about a marathon is getting out the door and your shoes on taking that first. I still haven't run a marathon, but I've heard right. I ran a couple halves. Does that count, but it is. It's hard just to get, going to take a step. I hope that you will, at some point, get to the point where you're running, like it says in this passage, but let's just take a step forward. Kay. Moving just tiny steps forward.

1 (28m 22s):

Okay. You're going to be like the, the hair,

0 (28m 25s):

Right? Just keep moving forward and just keep progressing. Whatever it is. Take a step, get up again, move forward. Take a step. So, so I have five different steps that maybe you could take

1 (28m 34s):

Today. Five different steps.

0 (28m 37s):

The first one is for those of you who are brand new to faith and unsure about this think, Oh my gosh, Matt, I don't know. You're kind of weird. Just come get to know me a little bit more. I'm weirder than you think. Okay. Yeah. Just, but just take a step. Your step. If you're brand new to this whole thing is to commit to this series, commit to this series. If you're new, you're watching us online for the first time you're here in person. First



time commit to this series. It's gonna be six weeks. We're taking that one week break, but what we've already gone through one week, you already went through one week. So there's just six weeks ahead. Right?

1 (29m 9s):

Just commit to that saying, I'm

0 (29m 11s):

Going to be here in person. I'm going to be here online. I'm going to set my reminders. I'm gonna set my alarm weekly to, to, to make sure I'm there. If I'm traveling out of town, I'm going to go online and I'm going to watch the service or watch the message afterwards on YouTube or on my phone app that I have podcasts that you can get all that man. We've got great technology. Don't we? But your commitment is to this series. I'm going to finish the quest at least find out the whole picture of the quest before you reject it. Let me just give you that right. Find out the whole quest before you say I'm not going on that quest. Okay. So that's the first step is to commit to this

1 (29m 42s):

Series. The second step,

0 (29m 45s):

The second step for you, maybe to put your faith in Jesus Christ and decide I will follow him as my Lord and savior. Okay. I'm going to give an opportunity for you to pray at the end of this message in just a few minutes so that you can pray and accept Jesus as your Lord and savior. Maybe that's your step. And you say, Hey, I'm going to pray so that I can be saved so that I can be made perfect by the Perfector as I follow him, maybe that's your step that you need to take today. The third step for some of you is to choose community. Okay? You've been doing it on your own too long. Choose community. Get into community group. Okay? You can go to [rise.denver.com/community-groups](http://rise.denver.com/community-groups). Pick one of those. Find ones. That's that, that fits your time. You can go back in the back. We have a kiosk now that you can plug it in on the iPad. Talk with Sawyer.

0 (30m 25s):

He's our concierge. He'll tell you the perfect community group for you. And if you're like, I don't find one in my schedule while you are leading the new one that fits into your schedule. Okay? That's what we're going to tell you. Sorry. So here that you can figure that out, right? So, but the point is to choose community. You're saying, I need companions. I'm going to do this together. That's your step of faith? Step three, step four is to just take that step of obedience

1 (30m 49s):

Saying that because I don't know what your step of obedience is, but if you feel God pulling you, if you feel the Holy spirit whispering you to do something, stop ignoring it and do it. Okay? I don't know what that is for

you. Maybe it's to serve somewhere, maybe

0 (31m 10s):

To give somewhere, maybe it's say this is the year I'm going to be a tie. They're fine.

1 (31m 14s):

I think God is putting that on your heart right now. I'm kidding. But only kind of. Yeah,

0 (31m 19s):

But, but yeah, you're, you're going to start giving generously whatever your step of faith has, maybe it's to move. Maybe it's to quit a job or start a relationship or end a relationship. But there's something that God is telling you to do. Just do it.

1 (31m 30s):

Okay. Obey what God is telling you to do. Take that step if it, so that's four things. And the fifth thing for those of you who have been journeying for awhile is to help somebody else take a step of faith. Okay? Maybe that's the step you need to take today. And you're saying, Hey, I am running. I'm doing great right now. I feel like I'm ready.

0 (31m 46s):

Really get my resolutions down. Okay. I'm doing well. Okay. I'm moving ahead in my faith. I'm growing,

1 (31m 53s):

But helping people

0 (31m 54s):

Follow Jesus. Our mission is not just about you. It's about the person you're going to help and helping someone follow Jesus means help them.

1 (32m 1s):

Them take a step. So you think

0 (32m 4s):

Those five steps and you're thinking, okay, I see this person. Maybe I need to send them this series and say, just watch the series. You

1 (32m 10s):

Want to do it? Just, just check it out. Okay?

0 (32m 13s):

That that's, you're helping someone take it. Maybe it's invite them into your community group saying, Hey, I know I've been seeing you around in church for awhile. Come, come, come hang out with us

1 (32m 20s):

Group. You got to come on Tuesday nights,

0 (32m 24s):

Whatever it is. I just want you to think, okay, if this is your fifth step for you, is who

1 (32m 28s):

Can I help to take a step? Cause that's all it is. Just help them to take one step forward. You don't need to take

0 (32m 34s):

Democrats across the finish line. Right? That's what Jesus does. Our job has just encouraged them to take

1 (32m 37s):

A step and follow Jesus. So what

0 (32m 40s):

Is the step that God is putting on your heart today? There's the call. Follow me. What's the step that you're going to take. How has God leading you right now? And will you obey? I want to do one thing. Can I have everybody stand up right now? Everybody stand up. If you're watching online, stand up, parents make your kids stand up. Kids make your parents stand up. Okay? Cause we need some practice. I know this. I want everyone right now to take a step. Can I now take a step with the other foot? Okay. Now slide to the right. I'm kidding. Okay. I'm kidding. Okay. You can sit down again. Okay. The point is we just got to take a step.

0 (33m 21s):

Sometimes you just got to get up and do it. And we are here as a community. That's saying, we're going to do this together. We're going to take that step of faith. We're going to encourage each other and challenge each other, whatever it is, take your steps. So what is your step? It's time to take it. It's time to take it. Faith. Isn't complete till it gets to your feet. So answer the call. Take step. Let's pray, Lord God. You have called us on a journey in adventure. And sometimes it feels like it's dark adventure out in front. We don't know what we're going to run into the Lord. God, I pray that you'd continue to pull us forward. To help us have the endurance, the perseverance to keep moving forward. Wherever we are.

0 (34m 2s):

I pray that you'd give us just a little oomph. We need to get moving that push. Maybe to pull us up. Cause we

have been sitting on our butt for too long or God, whatever it is, help us to make that step today and follow after you on this great Epic journey. This quest that you have called us on now with everybody's eyes closed heads bowed. I want to give an opportunity for people to make Jesus, their Lord and savior for follow him today for the first time. So if you are a follower of Jesus already, please say this prayer to give somebody around you some courage to say this prayer for the first time. Can you do that? And repeat this prayer after me. Okay, dear God. Thank you for loving me. I'm a sinner.

0 (34m 43s):

I need a savior. Forgive me. Save me. I declare that Jesus is Lord. Fill me with your Holy spirit. Help me to follow you and serve you till I reach the goal. Amen. Now with heads bowed, eyes closed still. If you said that prayer for the first time, accepted Jesus as your Lord and savior, just slip your hand into the air. When I encourage you and pray for you. If you're online watching, go to [rice, denver.com/follow](https://rice.com/follow) fill out that form. I'm going to send you a gift. I got a good one in mind right now. So just go to [rice and butter com slash follow](https://rice.com/follow), fill that out. And I want to encourage you on this new quest that you're on now.

0 (35m 25s):

Let's let's pray for all of us, Lord God, we just pray. And we worship you. We are thankful that you sent your son Jesus Christ to die on the cross for us to forgive us of our sins and to invite us on the greatest quest we could ever imagine. I pray that you would just continue to help us move forward and follow you anywhere. Amen.