

Introduction

- Glenn Timmermann - 157 tatoos of autographs of Chicago Bears on his body. That's a committed fan! All start with an original autograph drawn directly on his skin then permanently tattooed on his body.
- People will do crazy things to show their commitment to their favorite football team.
- How do you demonstrate your commitment to Jesus? As a follower of Jesus, my ultimate loyalty is to Jesus. I am a part of His family, a servant in His Kingdom.
- Many of you would say that your loyalty belongs to Jesus, but does the way you live your life demonstrate that He has your full commitment?
- Sometimes our commitment to Jesus is half-hearted. We're committed as long as it's convenient. Or, we hide our commitment. We don't want others to know about our faith because we fear what others may think of us. Or, we're committed only when it benefits us.
- If your ultimate loyalty is to Jesus, then you commit to Him by intentionally bringing every area of your life under His authority.
- In [Nehemiah 10](#), after the people confess their sins, they renew their commitment to their covenant relationship with God. This passage helps us to think about how to people that are fully committed to Jesus. From this text, I want to give you two characteristics of people who are fully committed to Jesus.

Followers of Jesus commit to Him publicly.

- In [Nehemiah 9](#), the people confess their sins. In [Nehemiah 10](#), they make a renewed commitment to walk faithfully before God.
- 9:38 - The commitment is a public commitment, a binding agreement. This public agreement was in response to God's grace. God had graciously delivered His people from Babylon and brought them back into the land. The right response was to live holy lives in response to His grace.
- This is a formal agreement where 84 names are sealed in a document by Nehemiah, chief priests and leaders obligating themselves under oath to abide by God's covenant law. 84 sealed names- 22 priests, 17 Levites, and 44 lay leaders. This was not individual people making private decisions about their faith. This was a formal, public agreement.
- These names would remain on record for future generations. Something significant about a signature that binds an agreement. We still use signatures to bind agreements - your marriage license, or when you take ownership of something. we sign a covenant in our church as a reminder of our commitment to God and each other.
- For a covenant, signing and sealing transformed a verbal promise into something that was legally and socially binding. Those who signed their names placed their identity and reputation behind the agreement.
- It was a public commitment to abide by God's Law, and the rest of the people joined in that agreement (vs. 28-29). The entirety of the people committed publicly to separate themselves from the surrounding peoples and obey God's Law.
- We live in a culture that tells us to keep faith private - to not talk about it or to keep our beliefs to ourself, but that's not Christianity. Followers of Jesus live out their commitment to the Lord for others to see - we live out our commitment to Christ before other brothers and sisters in Christ,

and we live out our commitment to Christ before a lost world. We want people to know who we belong to and who we live for so that through our faith, others might desire to experience the grace of God.

- **Why does public faith matter?**

- Jesus publicly died for you. He went to the cross and died for all to see. How could you not want to publicly confess Him as Lord?
- We are not ashamed for people to know who we belong to. ([Matthew 10:32](#), [Romans 1:16](#)) The world needs to see unashamed Christians who live separated from the world.
- Public faith strengthens our commitment. When we say we live for Jesus, we need to back that up with our lives. You don't have to back up a faith you don't talk about.
- Public faith encourages other believers. Your church family is encouraged when we see you boldly living for Jesus.
- Public faith makes Christian witness possible. When you live out your faith publicly, it gives you reason to talk about your hope in Christ.

- **What are the public expressions of our faith?**

- Baptism. In baptism, you are saying that you belong to God and His people. We baptize in the church as a public declaration of faith. If you have not been baptized, don't treat baptism as optional.
- The Lord's Supper. At the table, we publicly declare that we need Jesus. Come to the table confessing your need for Jesus.
- Church membership. By belonging to a local body, you say that you are committed to using your gifts and abilities to further God's Kingdom through His church. Some of you need to take the next step toward membership.
- Visible fruit. Your daily obedience to God and your Christian character demonstrate your commitment to Christ.

- Simple question: do the people you most often associate with know that you belong to Jesus?

Followers of Jesus commit to Him completely.

- The people commit publicly and completely. A complete commitment is placing every area of your life under the control of Jesus Christ. It's comprehensive. Jesus has control over your home and relationships, your work, your money, your ambitions, your future, your conduct, etc.
- In [Nehemiah 10](#), people are making a complete commitment to God, but in their renewed commitment to obeying the Law of God, there are four specific vows. These four specific vows are given because these are the areas where the Israelites are most tempted to compromise their faith: intermarrying with the surrounding nations, violating the sabbath, not living lives of generosity, and neglecting worship at the temple.
- Followers of Jesus commit to Him completely, but let's think through these four commitments because these four commitments represent areas where it is easy to compromise.
- **I will build a home where devotion to the Lord is modeled and taught.** Important for Israel to live separated from the world so that they would not be influenced by the world. In [Ezra 9-10](#), Ezra dealt with returning exiles who had intermarried with people from the surrounding nations. It was not an issue of racial mixing, but an issue of mixing the worship of Yahweh with the worship of foreign gods that would inevitably happen if Israelites intermarried.
- In your home, is your family committed to knowing God? Obviously, the principle applies to choosing a spouse, but it applies far more broadly. Is your home clearly under God's authority? Husbands, are you leading your families well? The enemy wants to attack your home. Simple ways to build devotion in your home: pray together. Read a scripture and talk about it at the dinner table. Make being in church together a priority. Let

your children see you with an open Bible in the mornings. Are you protecting your family from the influence of evil?

- No greater responsibility than leading your family well. Is your family distinctively different from your neighbor's family that doesn't know Jesus?
- **I will demonstrate trust in God by recognizing my life does not depend on my productivity.** In the Hebrew faith, God commanded that His people rest on the seventh day. It was a reminder that ultimately God wants us to focus on Him - and in their weekly rhythm, a day to begin to worship and remember God's work. Also an opportunity to trust God as they ceased from work. In an ancient culture, tempting for Jews to violate the Sabbath - to not harvest from the field, or participate in trade with foreigners. It was an inconvenience yet a reminder that God is our provider. A reminder that time belongs to God and not to us. Time to be used in accordance with God's will.
- We're think everything depends on us, but the Sabbath is a reminder that ultimately everything depends on us. Jesus is our Sabbath, we find our rest ultimately in Him, and we trust Him to provide for us.
- Beware of making productivity and busyness your idols. We love to say, "Look what I've done." Or, we find value in having our schedules full of work and activity, so much so that we don't even know how to be still before God.
- Where are you setting aside time to Sabbath? Where have you made time for extended Scripture reading and prayer, or time just to enjoy God's creation? Where to you make time to put your advices away and let your mind think on the things of God?
- Can you make worship, rest, prayer, and relationships a priority without feeling like everything will collapse around you?

- **I will trust God enough to practice sacrificial generosity.** When we trust our productivity more than we trust God, greed develops. When we trust God more than our productivity, it becomes easier to let go of earthly possessions. vs. 31 - leave the land uncultivated so the poor eat from the land ([Exodus 23:10-11](#)). And, in the seventh year, they committed to canceling debts ([Deuteronomy 15:1-2](#)). This was a way of showing love for their fellow Jews and practicing radical generosity.
- What if you trusted God enough to practice costly generosity? What if you lived NOT with the attitude of how can I get ahead? But, how can I give? We live generously because our heavenly Father has been generous to us.
- Do you budget for giving? Are you faithful to give to your local church? I give faithfully to my church because I know God advances His mission through the church. Do you look for ways to bless other people with your finances or time? What about help someone who can't repay you? Does the way you use money demonstrate that you trust God, or that you believe that your security depends on what you can keep for yourself?
- **I will not neglect my commitment to my church.** The longest section deals with the Jews commitment to the work done at the temple. They committed to bring their offerings to the temple, to bring an offering of wood for the burnt offering, to bring their best sacrificial offerings - firstfruits and the first of their livestock, a tenth of the proceeds of their land to support the levites, and other contributions. Their commitment was to not neglect the house of their God. The temple was central to Jewish worship. It was the place where God met with His people and sacrifices were made for the atonement of sin. Necessary to support the work of the temple.
- While the church is not the temple in the Old Testament sense, we have an obligation to our church. And, you have gifts and abilities God has given you to use within the church. If you are completely committed to Jesus, you will not neglect the body of Christ. You'll make gathering a

priority when it's easier to prioritize other things over Sunday morning gathering. You'll become an active, serving member instead of staying uninvolved on the sidelines. You'll build accountable relationships for the purpose of discipleship. You'll pray for your church and its leaders.

- If everyone in our church had the same commitment level to our church as you do, what kind of church would we become?
- In [Nehemiah 10](#), the people were saying essentially what we need to say: God has authority over our families, how we work, what we do with our money, and how we participate in worship. Complete commitment does not mean that you never fail. It means that there is no area of your life that you intentionally reserve from Christ's authority. Jesus does not merely claim your Sunday morning. He claims your home, your schedule, your bank account, and your participation in His church.
- Sad reality, the Jewish people failed to keep their commitments. In [Nehemiah 13](#), they intermarried, broke the Sabbath law, and broke their support of the temple.
- And, we fail to keep our commitments too. Our standing before God is not determined by our ability to follow through with our commitments. Our standing before God is based on God's covenant love for us demonstrated through His Son, Jesus.
- Our hope is not in our ability to keep our commitments. Our hope is in God's commitment to us demonstrated at the cross of Christ.
- While God desires for us to be fully committed to Him, the reality is that we fall short. However, God is fully committed to us so much so that He was willing to pay the price for our sin and rebellion against Him by sending Jesus to die on the cross in our place only to rise from the dead to secure for us eternal life.
- When you understand God's commitment to you, it will change you. It will give you a desire to live your life publicly and fully committed to Him.

And, by the power of His Spirit, who indwells in you, you can daily grow in your commitment to Him.

- Follower of Jesus, growing in your commitment to Him may start with a recommitment to Jesus this morning by acknowledging where you have fallen short and determining by His Spirit to walk in full commitment to Him.