

Let's Do Difficult Effort Required

World Outreach Church
Sermon Discussion Guide
Sunday January 21, 2024



Scripture's "Let Us" statements have shaped our congregation for decades, and this one is a special invitation: *Let's Do Difficult*. If we are going to flourish through what is ahead, we are going to have to learn to "do difficult"—and obviously, effort is required. We have the notion that "work" is a dirty word. It is not! It is a privilege. So, let's decide we're done with our addiction to "easy." Let's decide we're willing to do what's difficult, in the context of our faith. It's not going to be easy, and it will require changes in our patterns and behaviors. The truth is we're not going to see the wickedness, ungodliness, and immorality around us change unless we're willing to adjust our response to it. To flourish in the days ahead, we're going to have to decide to do difficult things. It will take sacrifice, but it's the only way to chart our course toward a better future.

1. **Pastor Allen said, "Other than God—no one is coming to help us!" How does that statement make you feel? How would you encourage someone to rely on the Lord who is expecting some thing or someone, other than God, to come to our rescue?**

I. REALIGNING EXPECTATIONS

Luke 9:20–27 ²⁰ *"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "The Christ of God."* ²¹ *Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone.* ²² *And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."* ²³ *Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.* ²⁴ *For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.* ²⁵ *What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?"* ²⁶ *If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.* ²⁷ *I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God."*

2. **Our peace and prosperity come from the sacrifices of others. Many believe they deserve good things, regardless of their efforts. How has our society lost touch with reality? Where do we need situational awareness?**

II. MARK'S GOSPEL

Mark 2:15–17 ¹⁵ *While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.* ¹⁶ *When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the "sinners" and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"* ¹⁷ *On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."*

Mark 2:18 *Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, "How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?"*

Mark 2:23–24 ²³ *One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain.* ²⁴ *The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?"*

Mark 3:1–6 ¹ *Another time he went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there.* ² *Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath.* ³ *Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Stand up in front of everyone."* ⁴ *Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained silent.* ⁵ *He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored.* ⁶ *Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.*

3. **Share a time when the Lord directed you to do something difficult that seemed impossible.**

III. NOT A NEW MESSAGE — IT HAS NEVER BEEN EASY

- A. "Let's Do Our Part"
Let's Pray — Let's Read — Let's Do Difficult

- **Let's Draw Near to God**
Hebrews 10:22 **Let us draw near to God** with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.
- 4. **What are some practical ways you can draw near to God?**
- **Let's Hold on to Hope**
Hebrews 10:23 **Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.**
- **Let's Lead with Faith**
Hebrews 10:24 **And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.**
- **Let's Gather with Believers/Go to Church**
Hebrews 10:25 **Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.**
- **Let's Tolerate No Self-Imposed Hindrances**
Hebrews 12:1–3 ¹ **Therefore, 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 the race marked out for us.**
- **Let's Focus on Jesus**
² **Let us fix our eyes on Jesus**, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ **Consider him** who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.
- **Let's Embrace Disgrace**
Hebrews 13:13–14 ¹³ **Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore.** ¹⁴ **For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.**
- 5. **How do the “Let’s” or “let us” statements inspire and/or challenge you to live a more obedient life?**

B. Our Predecessors

Hebrews 11:32–38 ³² *And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets,* ³³ *who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions,* ³⁴ *quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.* ³⁵ *Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection.* ³⁶ *Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison.* ³⁷ *They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated—* ³⁸ *the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.*

- 6. **Can you think of anyone living today who displays faith like our heroes in the Bible? Who are they, and what are they doing that’s remarkable? What godly legacy do you hope to leave the next generations?**

PROCLAMATION

**I am not weary in doing good.
I am not afraid.
I am not discouraged.
I know the Holy Spirit is my Helper.
I was created to honor the Living God.
I dwell in the shelter of the Most High.
I rest in the shadow of the Almighty.
I say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress;
He is my God, in whom I trust! Amen.**