

## RUN THE RACE | HOPE CHAPEL

Discipleship and the New Covenant  
Evan Johnson | Sunday 19 April 2026 | 10AM Gawler

**Big Idea:** *Discipleship is not a program to complete or a list of behaviours to achieve — it is the natural, lifelong outworking of the New Covenant. It is who we are as followers of our teacher, Jesus.*

## Introduction — How Discipleship and the New Covenant Connect

After a series on covenants and Easter, Evan opens with a question: how do discipleship and the New Covenant connect? His answer: discipleship is the outworking of the New Covenant. One leads directly to the other.

A covenant is always between two parties. God did the work — Jesus came, died, and rose again to establish the New Covenant. But we are expected — not just loosely invited — to enter into it. There is an imperative. It doesn't work if only one side engages.

*Think about a marriage. The ceremony can be perfect — the weather, the food, the speeches. But if the marriage that follows is miserable, then the covenant didn't carry through. The life lived in the covenant has to match up to the covenant promises. The point of any covenant is the life which follows it, not just the event itself.*

The New Covenant is the door — the threshold we cross when faith rests in our heart and we say, 'I'm in.' From that moment, we become a party to the covenant with God. And we now need to start living a new way. That new way is discipleship.

### POINT 1 | You Are a New Creation

The New Testament moves covenant living from a system of external sacrifice to an internal change of heart. In the Old Testament, the Israelites had to turn up on certain days, do certain things, perform certain sacrifices. It was external. In the New Covenant, God moves all of that inward.

**2 Corinthians 5:17** *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here.*

As soon as faith rests in your heart, something changes fundamentally in who you are spiritually. You are a new creation. And what God is now doing is writing his law on your

heart and in your mind — not giving you something out there that you have to rise up and understand, but working from the inside out.

**Hebrews 8:10–12** *This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people... I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.*

## The Conflict Within

If we are new creations spiritually but are not living as disciples, we set up a conflict — between our self-centred desires (what the Bible calls the flesh) and the activity of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. The Holy Spirit is writing God's law in us. We can choose to enter in and follow Jesus, or we can hold on to our own desires. That conflict is real.

There is no one more miserable than a Christian who knows what they should do and doesn't do it. Living in the New Covenant means listening to what the Holy Spirit is writing on our hearts. That is our job. That is covenant living.

**Galatians 2:19–20** *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

The old us is dead. We are new creations. Discipleship is not about optional add-ons or ticking boxes. It is who we are. It becomes who we are. Hence, discipleship is the natural outworking of the New Covenant.

**Reflect:** *Are there areas of your life right now where you sense a conflict between what you want and what the Holy Spirit is prompting? What would it look like to yield to what he's writing on your heart?*

## POINT 2 | Discipleship Is a Slow Burn

To understand discipleship, it helps to understand what it looked like in Jesus' day. Following a rabbi was not an original Christian idea — Jewish students had been living with their teachers for centuries before Jesus called his disciples. Students would live with their rabbi 24-7, completely immersed in his life. Not just in lessons, but in everything.

*Disciples were described as being 'covered in dust' — the dust that their teacher kicked up as he walked along the road. They followed so closely behind him that his dust covered them. That's how intimate and how constant this relationship was.*

For Jesus and his disciples, there were at least three solid years of complete immersion — 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Not a course. Not a few hours per week. Everything. They wanted to assimilate everything about their teacher and live like him. They wanted to see not just the headline moments, but all the small, ordinary details of his life.

## Jesus Is the Living Word

The reason disciples followed their rabbis so closely was that they believed the rabbis were the living embodiment of the Old Testament law. The closest way to understand what God wanted was to follow the person who lived it out.

When John begins his gospel — ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God’ — he is saying that Jesus is the living embodiment of the Word. He is our Rabbi. He is the Word made flesh. And we can follow him as closely as those students followed their rabbis.

## God Is Not in a Hurry

The New Covenant takes root in your heart straight away, but it is not complete in terms of how it outworks in your life instantly. We all know that. We struggle with the good and the bad and the in-between. That is normal. That is the process.

**Psalm 1:2–3** *Blessed is the one... whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither — whatever they do prospers.*

A tree planted by a river doesn't grow overnight. Deep roots take time. Fruit that doesn't fail takes time. Spiritual growth is the same. We want results quickly — but God is not in a hurry. He knows what he is doing with you.

The discipleship course is a tool to equip you to live like this. It doesn't tick the box and finish discipleship — it prepares you to do more of the living. Discipleship is who we are. It is a lifelong thing.

**Reflect:** *Where are you putting pressure on yourself to hit spiritual marks or grow at a pace God hasn't asked you to? What would it look like to slow down, plant deeper roots, and trust the process?*

## POINT 3 | The Discipleship of Small Things

We'd die for Jesus. Most of us would do something heroic for someone we loved without a second thought. A blaze-of-glory moment. But Jesus doesn't ask us to die for him. He asks us to live for him.

Are we ready to make a cup of tea and have a quiet conversation? Are we ready to compromise in the little thing, help with the dishes, show up for someone on an ordinary Tuesday? That is the discipleship of small things.

Our lives are not highlight reels. The disciples living with Jesus 24-7 would have gone to the market, cooked dinner hundreds of times, and had ordinary, mundane days. We only see the headline moments in scripture. But they saw everything. And all of it was discipleship.

## How Jesus Lived After the Resurrection

Consider this: Jesus has just been beaten, mocked, crucified, gone to hell, and won. He has conquered death. He can do anything. He can be anything. And what does he do?

He goes to the beach and cooks breakfast for his friends. He waits for them. No aura, no spectacle — just a man on the beach making food for the people he loves. And then he quietly restores Peter, one of his closest friends, spending unhurried time with him to mend the relationship. Then he goes to Thomas, who is struggling to believe, and gently spends time with him until trust is restored.

**John 21** *(Read the full chapter this week — Jesus on the beach, breakfast with the disciples, the restoration of Peter)*

That is how Jesus lived. Even after the resurrection. That is the model of discipleship — restoring friendships, doing the simple things profoundly well, letting the Holy Spirit inhabit the ordinary moments.

*Jesus wants to make the small things in your life sacred. He inhabits the daily routines just as much as he inhabits a time of worship. Let God dwell in the small things and be seen in them. That is being a disciple.*

## A Two-Way Relationship

The disciples were getting to know their teacher through years of closeness. But when you live with someone for three-plus years, the teacher also comes to know their students intimately. That is part of discipleship too.

Jesus knows you. He has spent time with you. He knows what you need and what you like. All of it. Discipleship is not just about us trying to become like Jesus — it is also allowing him to lead us, empower us, work in us, and speak to us. Covenant is two-way. Let the teacher be intimate with your heart and your thinking. He will, because he knows you.

## Conclusion

***Lord, let us be covered in the dust of our teacher.***

*Walking so close with you that the dust from your feet covers us — and your presence is seen in us and on us.*

Discipleship is not about ticking boxes or learning a list. It's not about being up the front or running a program. It is about living like our teacher. It is slow. It is ordinary. It is found in the small things done faithfully over a long time.

Jesus Christ is the risen Lord of all, and he lives in your heart by the power of the Spirit. So stop striving. Stop rushing. Allow him to teach you and lead you. You are a new creation. That is already who you are. Now live it out.

- Do the discipleship course — not to tick a box, but to be better equipped to live more closely with Jesus.
- Slow down. Eat meals with people. Put Jesus in the middle of ordinary moments.
- Do the small things profoundly well — restore friendships, show up for people, be present.
- Let God make the ordinary sacred. He inhabits those moments just as much as the big ones.

## Reflection & Discussion Questions

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Use these on your own during the week, or with your LifeGroup.

**1.** Evan said discipleship is the natural outworking of the New Covenant — the life that follows the threshold moment. How well does the life you're currently living match up to the covenant promises you've received?

**2.** If the Holy Spirit is writing God's law on your heart (Hebrews 8:10), are there areas where you sense that happening? And are there areas where you're resisting it or choosing flesh over Spirit?

**3.** The disciples were 'covered in dust' — so close to their rabbi that his dust landed on them. What does following Jesus that closely look like practically in your everyday life right now?

**4.** God is not in a hurry. Where in your spiritual life are you rushing, striving, or putting pressure on yourself to be further along than you are? What would it mean to slow down and trust the process?

**5.** Jesus cooked breakfast on a beach after conquering death. What does the 'discipleship of small things' look like for you this week — what ordinary moment could you do profoundly well?

**6.** Discipleship is two-way — not just us learning from Jesus, but allowing him to know us. What would it look like to be more open and intimate with Jesus in your thoughts, your heart, and your daily walk?

## Key Scriptures This Week

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- 2 Corinthians 5:17 — You are a new creation; the old has gone
- Hebrews 8:8–12 — The New Covenant: God's law written on hearts and minds
- Galatians 2:19–20 — I have been crucified with Christ; Christ lives in me
- Romans 12:1 — Offer yourselves as living sacrifices pleasing to God
- Psalm 1:2–3 — Like a tree planted by streams of water; fruit in season
- 2 Peter 3:9 — God is not slow in keeping his promises
- John 21 — Jesus on the beach; restoration of Peter