

Title: Apprenticeship
Series: 2026 Fall Vision Series
Speaker: Kevin Sneed
Date: September 6, 2026



Key Texts: Matthew 7:13-14, Matthew 7:24-27, John 17:3

Introduction

Every day we are being molded, shaped, and formed by something. The question is not, “Are we being formed?” but rather, “What is forming us?” Formation is the quiet, slow, subtle cumulative effects of a thousand decisions every day. Apprenticeship to Jesus requires honestly addressing a few fundamental questions: Who am I becoming? Is the path I am on forming me into who I want to become? Who is my Rabbi - who am I following and learning from, and are they shaping me into the person I truly want to be?

Icebreaker:

What is one thing you have told yourself you would do, or be more intentional about, if you “just had the time for it?”

Discussion Questions

1. Read **Matthew 7:13-14** and **Matthew 7:24-27** aloud. What do you learn about discipleship? How does the word “apprentice” stretch or reinforce your understanding of what it means to follow Jesus?
2. What do you find most compelling about Jesus and the life He offers? On the other hand, what do you find to be most challenging?
3. Read **John 17:3**. What does this passage reveal about eternal life? Kevin described how salvation and eternal life are experienced in three tenses: in the past, on the cross; in the present, by entering into life with God; and in the future, in the new creation. Salvation and discipleship go hand in hand; the invitation has always been to follow Jesus and find our life in Him. How does this deepen your understanding of eternal life?

4. Kevin emphasized the difference between trying and training. Dallas Willard reminded us that “grace is not opposed to effort; it is opposed to earning.” Where have you been trying in your own effort to conform to the way of Jesus? How does the metaphor of training encourage you to look to Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit?
5. What do you think it might look like for you to invite Jesus into all that you do - into your everyday, ordinary life? Is there an area of your life right now where you find it most challenging to invite Jesus into?
6. Read **Romans 8:22-30** and **2 Corinthians 4:16-18**. The process of transformation is slow, but the promise of the Holy Spirit renewing and conforming us to the image of Christ is sure. We may be tempted to look back on the past or to focus on our failures and weaknesses, but Christ invites us to trust Him and keep looking forward. How do these verses personally encourage you? What have you noticed the Holy Spirit doing and forming within you lately? Take some time to celebrate that with the group and thank God together.

Key Takeaways

- The way of Jesus + the truth of Jesus = the life of Jesus. It is important that we do not skip the way of Jesus in our hurry to get to the truth of Jesus.
- Presence to Jesus is the first fundamental task of discipleship. Being present to Jesus does not mean that we spend all of our day in silence - it means that we invite Jesus into all that we do, acknowledging that God is always present to us.
- We will never lose or exhaust the love that God has for us. The beauty and grace of Jesus compels us to mature and grow in the way of Jesus.
- Willpower is a fleeting resource; the only way we can become the kind of people who live and love like Jesus is through the power of the Holy Spirit inside of us - Christ in us, and Christ through us.

Practice: Audit

Spend some time prayerfully thinking through these questions: What am I currently apprenticed to? Consider the voices, rhythms, screens, and relationships that have the most repeated access to your attention. What are they teaching you to want, fear, and value? Who is my Rabbi? Whose life and words am I actually following closely enough to imitate — not just admire? Is it Jesus, or is it someone (or something) else wearing his name? Where am I trying instead of training? Recall the difference Kevin drew out: trying relies on gritting your teeth in the moment; training builds practices into your life ahead of time so that the right response is already being formed in you. Name one area where you've been white-knuckling it in your own strength rather than building a rhythm that invites the Holy Spirit's power.