

Follow Me

In the Springtime, many people hear the "call of the wild" and head for the outdoors. After the restrictions of winter, lakes and mountains have a strong attraction. Other people "follow their dream." Peer pressure is the cause for many to follow the wrong crowd and do things they later regret. Ad agencies spend millions to design ways to entice the population to follow entertainers, sports teams, or follow the masses to buy something that no one needs. Today, ad agencies and media use their influence to convince people that there is no God and no need to live a moral life. But in the Old Testament, we read where God said, *"obey My voice and keep My covenant"* (Exodus 19:5). In the New Testament, 22 times Jesus said, "Follow Me." The Good Shepherd leads, but the words are not a suggestion, it is the same command that God used in Exodus.

Soon after being baptized by John, Jesus began to call his first disciples. *"As Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him"* (Matthew 4:18-22).

Jesus gave this same command to others. To Matthew (Matthew 9:9). To Philip (John 1:43). As He called each one, they responded and followed Him, eager to be with the one John pointed out to them as, *"The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"* (John 1:29). Four of them gave up established businesses as fishermen, and Matthew left a lucrative occupation as a tax collector. None of them were rich, but it appeared they had a secure future in this world. However, they, like Abraham, were looking for something better (Hebrews 11:8-10).

Jesus also gave this command to a rich young ruler (Matthew 19:21). He was a man of importance, and his great wealth held first place in his heart and life. He said no to the Lord's invitation and departed, remaining in a lost condition. He had financial security, but unless he reconsidered, turned, and followed Jesus, he had no hope of an eternity in Heaven.

During many conversations, Jesus asked Peter to do various things. Just before Jesus departed, He told Peter to *"shepherd My sheep"* and *"tend My sheep"* (John 21:16-17). The main point is in (John 21:20-22). In essence, do not worry about what others do to serve me, *"you follow me."* As brethren, we help and serve each other, but we must keep our eyes on Christ to follow Him.

To follow Christ today, we are led by The Spirit since we cannot see Him with our physical eyes. But the eye of faith reveals the example of obedience and service which He lived. We know the attitude He had regarding the duties laid on Him by the Father. *"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me"* (John 6:38). He surrendered Himself to the will of The Father and to save the children that are called to God by Him. That is the attitude that caused Him to serve the disciples in the upper room (John 13:3-15).

To follow Christ today, we must identify what He wants to accomplish. He came to Earth as Immanuel, God on Earth. But He humbled Himself to obey The Father and suffer as a man (Hebrews 5:8). He

came to serve the needs of others. *"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many"* (Mark 10:45). He came to bring the gospel, the good news, also called The Living Water (John 4:14; 6:63, 68). He challenged His disciples to continue preaching that gospel to the whole world (Matthew 28:18-20).

To follow Christ today, we must love as He loved. Jesus expressed the determining fact of love this way, *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments"* (John 14:15). By this same reasoning, we understand Christ's love for The Father. Jesus obeyed completely and without hesitation. All who keep His commandments have that love for God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the brethren, and mankind.

To follow Christ today, we must do the same as He did. We must imitate his actions. We cannot perform the miracles He performed. We can, however, take our direction from a statement made by Peter to Cornelius, *"He went about doing good"* (Acts 10:38). Paul gives further instruction in the Roman letter. *"Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor ... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good"* (Romans 12:9-21).

Therefore, let us do good and follow Him to "the city which is to come" (Hebrews 13:13-14).