

“Follow Me”
Mark 2:16-20
(Preached at Trinity, June 24, 2009)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Last time we saw the beginning of Christ's Galilean ministry. It began with the preaching of the Gospel. This was to be God's method of saving His people. John the Baptist came preaching, Jesus came preaching, the apostles came preaching.
 - A. Paul's unchanging advice to his young protégé, Timothy
2 Timothy 4:2 – “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”
 - B. To the church of Corinth Paul wrote:
1 Corinthians 1:21 – “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”
2. Mark's Gospel moves quickly and now we find Jesus calling His disciples. In this passage we find Jesus calling Peter, Andrew, James, and John. Peter and Andrew were brothers and James and John were brothers. All four were fishermen.
 - A. His call was an order to follow Him
The word for “come” in the KJV is δεῦτε – mans “come now!” “follow Me”
It is the ultimate charge of the Gospel – Follow Christ!
 - B. The point of importance is how they responded to the call of Christ.
Peter and Andrew:
Mark 1:17-18 – “And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. ¹⁸ And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.”
James and John:
Mark 1:20 – “And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.”
3. In **Chapter 2** we find Jesus calling Matthew
Mark 2:14 – “And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.”
4. Each of these men made following Christ the greatest interest of their lives. This is Christ's demand for every man.
Mark 8:34-36 – “Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. ³⁵ For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. ³⁶ For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”
5. Throughout the three year ministry of our Lord multitudes followed Him and then abandoned Him. Following Jesus is not just a religious experience but a life-changing relationship.

6. Many today profess to follow Christ – few actually follow Him. Tonight I want to examine the nature of following Christ. This is an important subject. Many are deceived thinking they are following Jesus but are only continuing to serve themselves. May God grant us to examine if we have followed Jesus properly. What does it mean to follow Christ?

I. What it is not

- A. It is not coming to Christ for personal gain
1. There are many who see Jesus as simply a way to satisfy their carnal lusts
 - a. This was the case of Simon who sought to purchase the Holy Spirit
 - b. Religious shysters who make merchandise of men's souls
 - c. Those who want some personal gain – so called faith healing ministries that attract thousands
 - d. People often flock to these ministries. They fill stadiums. They build huge ministries.
 2. Many profess to follow Christ because they want something from Him.
 - a. This was often the case while Jesus walked the earth
 - b. Many were enamored by the miracles
John 6:2 – “And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.”
 - c. Many today profess to follow Jesus because they simply desire a ticket out of hell – If they are called to experience any difficulty because of their profession they will quickly flee
Matthew 13:21 – “Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.”
- B. There are some who follow Jesus out of blind ignorance
1. They profess to follow Jesus but they don't even know Him
 2. Listen to the multitudes hail Jesus as their King
Matthew 21:8-9 – “And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed *them* in the way. ⁹ And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.”
 3. In reality they are not following Jesus, the second person of the Trinity but another Jesus – one created in their imagination – a tragic misperception
 - a. The Mormons pervert the gospel of Christ with their polytheistic view of God – They deny the blood atonement of Christ and salvation by grace alone. They are zealous but it is a blind zeal.
 - b. The Jehovah Witnesses deny the Trinity claiming that Jesus is just one of many Gods and that He was created by Jehovah God
 - c. Many Catholics place Jesus on an equal plane with Mary, the mother of God – they deny the sufficiency of His death as a once-for-all atonement

- d. Walter Martin in his book, *The Kingdom of the Cults* – “The Jesus of the cult is a poor substitute for the incarnate God of the New Testament.”
- 4. Paul accused the Corinthians of receiving another Jesus
2 Corinthians 11:2-4 – “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you* as a chaste virgin to Christ. ³ But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. ⁴ For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or *if* ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*.”
- 5. Many teach in our day that knowledge isn’t important – faith
 Faith without knowledge is religious emptiness – can we have faith in an unknown object?
 - a. Hosea proclaimed 2700 years ago
Hosea 4:6 – “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.”
 - b. Matthew Henry – “Those that rebel against the light can expect no other than to perish in the dark. Ignorance is the mother of destruction.”
 - c. John Calvin – “Zeal without doctrine is like a sword in the hand of a mad man.”
- C. There are many today who pretend to follow Jesus while maintaining their current worldly position and worldly wealth.
 - 1. Jesus warned of the danger of wealth with the rich young ruler
Matthew 19:21-24 – “Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me. ²² But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. ²³ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴ And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”
 - 2. This describes many in the United States
 - a. Many believe the teachings about Christ, yet it has not transformed their life. They have no relationship with Him
 - b. They know nothing of Christian conversion yet they consider themselves Christians
 - c. Their wealth has intoxicated them – Their comfort has blinded them

II. How then does a person follow a person properly

A. Following Jesus means to seek Him above all else

Mark 8:34 – “And when he had called the people *unto him* with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”

1. Peter, Andrew, James, and John left all and followed.
2. The disciple has purposed in his heart to follow Jesus
Everything else takes second place.
3. Following Christ demands a desire to have Him above all else
Luke 9:59-62 – “And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. ⁶⁰ Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. ⁶¹ And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. ⁶² And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”
4. Those who follow Jesus see Him as most precious – having infinite value
The problem with most who call themselves Christians is that they haven’t fallen in love with Jesus
5. Those who fall in love with Christ will gladly give up their former lovers
 - a. The rich young ruler could not forsake his riches
Matt. 19:21 – “Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and follow me.*”
 - b. Simon the sorcerer could not forsake his love for personal power
 - c. Demas could not forsake his love for this present world
 - d. The religious rulers could not forsake their love for the praise of men
John 12:42-43 – “Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: ⁴³ For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”

B. Following Jesus means to be willing to follow the life of a disciple

1. Jesus taught that the life of a disciple would not be an easy life
Matthew 8:19-20 – “And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. ²⁰ And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.”
Matthew 10:24 – “The disciple is not above *his* master, nor the servant above his lord.”
2. Just as Christ suffered His disciples must be willing to suffer
2 Timothy 3:12 – “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

- C. Following Jesus demands that we follow Him in truth – the true Jesus
1. Jesus told the woman at the well,
John 4:24 – “God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.”
 2. Jesus did not commit Himself to those who had a false understanding of who He is.
John 2:23 – “Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast *day*, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all *men*, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.”
- D. Following Jesus demands seeking to be like Him
1. To be like Him in obedience
 - a. Jesus was perfect in every way
Philippians 2:8 – “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”
 - b. His one pursuit was to live in obedience to the Father
John 4:34 – “Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.”
John 6:38 – “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.”
 2. To be like Him in love
 - a. Love is the great characteristic of those who follow Jesus
-- to love one another
-- to forgive our enemies
 - b. Love is the great act of self-giving – demonstrated by our Lord
John 15:13 – “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”
- E. Following Jesus means to follow Him in His work
Luke 19:10 – “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
Mark 1:17 – “And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.”
1. His work has become the work of those who follow Him.
Matthew 28:18 – “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”
NAS **Matthew 28:18-19** – ““All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples. . .”
 2. Are you willing to take up the charge of Christ
John 6:38-39 – “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.”

3. Our life should be filled with seeking to bring others to Christ. This is of the essence of following Jesus.
Matthew 4:19 – “And he saith unto them, **Follow me**, and I will make you fishers of men.”
4. Following Christ is a life of service - To follow Him is to serve Him
John 12:26 – “If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will *my* Father honour.”

Conclusion:

1. Have you followed Jesus in a Biblical sense?
It begins with faith and repentance. It demands a transformed life.
2. Most people don't pretend to follow Him at all
 - A. They don't have time for Christ
 1. He doesn't interest them
They are more concerned about satisfying their own lusts
John 3:19 – “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”
 2. They don't see any need for Christ. They seen no danger
 - B. Many of these people manifest great hostility to Jesus and everything He represents
 1. They fight hard to cast His yoke from their necks
 2. Their memory will haunt them for all eternity
3. Have you followed Him? Do you find Him irresistible? Are you one of His sheep?
John 10:27 – “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:”