

“Follow Me”

by Wayne Goff

“For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps” (1 Pet. 2:21).

Jesus Calls

Throughout the four Gospel accounts (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John), Jesus repeatedly calls various individuals to “*follow Me*.” But to what does He call them? It is interesting to see the context in which these invitations were made, and even more important that we make a personal application where we can.

“Fishers Of Men”

Jesus called the twelve apostles and promised to make them “*fishers of men*” (Matt. 4:19; Mk. 1:17). Indeed these actual fishermen, without formal education or training, became great ambassadors for Jesus Christ and the Gospel after Jesus’ ascension. They spread the Gospel throughout the entire world in their generation (Col. 1:23). The apostle Paul affirmed that they were “*...ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God*” (2 Cor. 5:20).

It isn’t difficult to see an **application** for ourselves today. Whatever career we may choose, in addition to that, we are to be “*fishers of men*” as well. I’ve been fishing enough times to know that you have good days and bad ones. But on both days you offer the “bait” (Gospel) to men. It is up to them to **choose** to accept or reject the Gospel. When do they choose, we must remember that we are the “fishermen,” but “*God gave the increase*” (1 Cor. 3:6). Just keep on fishing for men!

Burying The Dead

In Matthew 8:22, Jesus said, “*Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead.*” To whomever Jesus said this, we know that while it sounds harsh to us, it was meant for the well-being of the world! It is more important to put our discipleship first in life, even above our own family responsibilities. The *spiritually* dead can bury our *physically* dead relatives, but we need to preach the Gospel first!

How many of us put family above the Lord and His calling? We should never be guilty of doing so, and Jesus expects better of us! In fact, He said “*Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’*” (Matt. 10:34-35). How wonderful to have a relationship with a mother-in-law like Ruth had with Naomi! But far more often do we see family members turn against the Lord and His church and try to encourage us to do the same! In these cases, we must put God before family, thus creating the animosity of which Jesus warned.

Above Our Jobs

“As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ So he arose and followed Him” (Matt. 9:9).

It is not always imperative that we leave our jobs to follow Jesus as Matthew was commanded. But we should always be sure that we put the Lord and His commands **above** our jobs! We may not be called from the tax tables to become an apostle, but we are called to come out of a world of sin and into a great relationship with God. It should be first (Matt. 6:33).

“Deny Himself”

“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” (Matt. 16:24; Mk. 8:34; Lk. 9:23).

Self-denial is most difficult, but absolutely essential to be a true disciple of Jesus. But we must put God’s will and wishes above our own. In the case of the rich, young ruler (Matt. 19:21), this meant to sell his possessions, give them to the poor, and follow Jesus. He failed in this test because he loved things more than he loved God.

See also John 1:43; 10:27; 12:26; 13:36; and 21:19, 22 on the phrase “**Follow Me!**” Are YOU a disciple of the Lord? Then you will go where He goes and be where He would be!

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