

THE CALL TO FOLLOW JESUS - 2

(Various Scriptures) 7/29/18

Grace Bible Church, Gillette, Wyoming

Pastor Daryl Hilbert

I. MEANING OF THE WORD FOLLOW

- A. The Greek word that Jesus almost exclusively used for individuals to follow Him is the *akoloutheō*. The exception is found in Mat 4:19, where two words infer the phrase, “follow Me.” They are *deute opisō*. Literally Jesus said, “Come after Me.” “Come” is the adverb *deute* and “after” is the verb *opsisō* - which describes motion as in one that is behind and following. Another suggestion is, “your place is following after Me!”
- B. The Greek word *akoloutheō* contains the word *keleuthos* and depicts a road or way, such as following a road or following someone walking on a road. Nevertheless, *akoloutheō* has several nuances.
 1. Direction - *akoloutheō* can simply mean, “to move behind someone in the same direction” (BDAG). It does not necessarily have any meaning of relationship (cf. Mar 14:13).
 2. Location - *akoloutheō* can mean, “to accompany someone in the same location.” It may contain the idea of relationship but not necessarily the concept of devotion (Mar 5:24).
 3. Devotion - However, *akoloutheō* can also mean, “to follow someone in devotion, such as a *disciple*.” This would include relationship, learning, as well as devotion (Mat 9:9).
 4. When it comes to Jesus calling His disciples to follow Him, He is referring to a personal relationship, to attentive learning, and devotion to Him for lifetime.

II. FOLLOW JESUS IN SALVATION (Joh 1:35-43 cf. Joh 10:27-29)

- A. We have already discussed Jesus’ first call to His disciples to follow Him in Joh 1:35-43. It was a call to follow Jesus in salvation.
 1. When John the Baptist cried out that Jesus was the “Lamb of God,” Andrew and another disciple immediately followed Him as the Messiah (Joh 1:36). The previous day John had stated that Jesus was the Lamb of God, “*who takes away the sin of the world*” (Joh 1:29).
 2. Andrew found his brother Peter and said, “*We have found the Messiah (which translated means Christ)*” (Joh 1:41).
 3. After Philip was called, he told Nathaniel that, “*We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote-- Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph*” (Joh 1:45).
- B. Though the disciples had much to learn, they at least placed their faith in Jesus as the Messiah. For believers today, that equates to placing their faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord.
- C. Jesus taught that His sheep hear His voice, they come to Him, and they subsequently follow Him (Joh 10:27). This is evidence of true salvation. Jesus described those who are truly saved as being eternally secure. The believer’s salvation is as secure as Jesus’ and the Father’s promise and power to hold onto the believer. No one or nothing can snatch them out of their hands (Joh 10:28-29).

III. FOLLOW JESUS IN EVANGELISM (Mat 4:19; Mar 1:16-20)

- A. We also have already discussed that Jesus called His disciple to follow Him as “fishers of men” (Mat 4:19). They were to tell the world that they had found the Messiah.
- B. Eventually, this would progress into the disciples becoming apostles and preaching that faith in the death and resurrection of Christ resulted in the forgiveness of sins (Act 10:43; 13:38).
- C. Today, the church, the body of believers, is to carry out the Great Commission and evangelize the world (Mat 28:18-20; Act 1:8).

IV. FOLLOW JESUS IN DEDICATION (Luk 5:1-11)

- A. After hearing His preaching (Luk 5:1-3) and His miracle of fish in their nets (Luk 5:4-7), Peter especially realized that Jesus was Lord and that he was a sinful man (Luk 5:8-9).
- B. Jesus then called a third time to his disciples to “follow Him” with a much stronger appeal. The result was that this time, “*they left everything and followed Him*” (Luk 5:11). They became full time disciples who permanently followed Him.
- C. Nevertheless, in John 6 all disciples were tested to see if they would continue to follow Him (Joh 6:66-70).
 1. They dedicated themselves to follow Jesus with a lifetime commitment (66-67).
 2. They dedicated themselves to follow Jesus because He alone gave eternal life (68).
 3. They dedicated themselves to follow Jesus because He was Messiah and Lord (69).
 4. They dedicated themselves to follow Jesus because the Lord Himself had called them (70).
 5. They dedicated themselves to follow Jesus because He would empower them (Luk 5:5-6).

- V. FOLLOW JESUS IN PRIORITIES (Mat 8:18-22 cf. Luk 9:59; Mat 19:21 cf. Mar 10:21; Luk 18:22)
- A. As Jesus was about to depart to the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, a scribe came to Him and said that he would follow Jesus wherever He went (Mat 8:19).
 - B. Jesus responded with a curious comment, “*The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head*” (Mat 8:20). Though Jesus’ response may have appeared to be rude. There are two factors to consider.
 1. Jesus may have been instructing His disciples in the degree of commitment they needed to follow Him. Sometimes followers have to sacrifice their time, their plans, and even their sleep when ministering to others.
 2. Jesus most likely knew that this scribe’s commitment level was merely in regard to direction or location, but not devotion for a lifetime.
 - C. Another disciple (general term) said that he wanted to follow Jesus, but he first wanted to bury his father (Mat 8:21).
 - D. In what appeared as another rude remark, Jesus said, “Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead” (Mat 8:22). What did He mean? There are several possibilities.
 1. One explanation is that the phrase of the disciple referred to the day when his father would pass away. He wanted to wait until that day in the future before following Jesus.
 2. Another explanation is that according to the custom of the day, there were two phases in the burial process. The first phase was burial of the deceased with spices in a tomb. The second phase was that after a year, the body was reinterred to gather the bones and place in an ossuary. It may have been this second phase to which the disciple was referring.
 3. Jesus also may have been drawing attention to the heavenly priority of making sinners alive through the gospel. Those without Christ are spiritually dead and attend to earthly priorities. Therefore, follow Christ’s heavenly priorities and let the spiritually dead take care of the mundane priorities.
 4. In either explanation, Jesus was rebuking those who would put off an immediate commitment to follow Him for frivolous earthly priorities.
 5. He was not saying that true disciples do not bury family and friends. Rather He was saying that in whatever we do, His heavenly priorities must be our focus, even in earthly things.
- VI. FOLLOW JESUS IN SUFFERING (Mat 16:21-24; Mar 8:34; Luk 9:23)
- A. Jesus had just revealed that He was going to suffer many things, be killed, and be raised on the third day (Mat 16:21).
 - B. However, Peter rebuked the Lord for saying such a thing (Mat 16:22). Jesus’ response was twofold. One, He in turn rebuked Peter for aligning himself with Satan and man’s interest rather than God’s (Mat 16:23). Two, Jesus explained that anyone who follows Him must be willing to suffer and carry their cross like He would do (Joh 19:17 cf. Roman tradition demanded criminals to carry their cross).
 - C. In order to truly follow Christ, a believer must deny himself and take up his own cross (Mat 16:24).
 1. Those who follow Christ must deny themselves and confess Christ (Mat 10:32-33).
 2. Those who follow Christ must be willing to suffer persecution (Mat 10:34-36).
 3. Those who follow Christ must love Him more than any other relationship (Mat 10:37).
 4. Those who follow Christ must be willing to give their lives for Christ (Mat 10:38-39).
 - a. Figuratively, it refers to giving up sin and the old self to follow Christ in new life.
 - b. Literally, it refers to being willing to die a martyr’s death.
- VII. FOLLOW JESUS IN GOD’S WILL (Joh 21:18-22)
- A. On one of Jesus’ resurrection appearances, He challenged Peter three times concerning his love and devotion for Christ (Joh 21:14-17).
 - B. Immediately afterward, Jesus revealed to Peter that he would suffer a martyr’s death (Joh 21:18-19a).
 - C. To conclude, Jesus exhorted Peter to “follow [Him]” (Joh 21:19b). This was the only time that Jesus used this exhortation (“follow Me”) after His resurrection.
 - D. Peter then asked Jesus about the apostle John and his death (Joh 21:20-21). Jesus essentially said, don’t worry about John, worry about following Christ (Joh 21:23).
 1. Follow Christ in God’s will wherever He leads.
 2. Follow Christ in God’s will in good events as well as bad (humanly speaking) (Rom 8:28).
 3. Follow Christ in God’s will regardless of what happens to others.
 4. Follow Christ in God’s will to glorify Him in living (2Co 5:9).
 5. Follow Christ in God’s will to glorify Him faithfully till death (2Ti 4:6-8).
 6. Follow Christ in God’s will to glorify Him in even martyrdom (Php 1:20).