

“Follow Me”

A Message Series on Being a Follower of Christ
Message Notes

By Melanie Stone

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Series: Follow Me
Part 1: Following Jesus

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INTRO

TWITTER is a social networking and micro-blogging service that allows users to post their latest updates through a text-based system. You can use this service to send messages or updates to other users who have subscribed to them, known as followers. The messages are called tweets.

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Today we are beginning a new series called “Follow Me.” This series is about following Christ. We will look at what it means to be a follower of Christ and living our lives the way He wants us to.

1. **Jesus is searching for followers**

Jesus didn't have a cell phone to text people to follow Him, but part of His mission was to find 12 followers that would join His cause and be part of His team.

Jesus calls Philip, Andrew and Nathaniel

[John 1:43-49](#)

Jesus didn't just choose losers that had nothing better to do than to leave their lives to join up with a stranger and not even ask what His purpose was. These men followed Jesus because they believed Him to be the Messiah and they wanted to partner with His cause.

Jesus calls Peter, James, John and Zebedee

[Luke 5:1-11](#)

These four men believed that Jesus had worked a miracle, believing that God was with Him. Jesus offered them an opportunity – to work with Him and catch men instead of fish. They left everything to follow Christ. They left their jobs, their homes, and their families, everything that was familiar.

Jesus calls Matthew

[Luke 5:27, 28](#)

In verses 17 through 26 we see that Jesus had worked miracles that day. Verse 27 says, “after these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, also known as Matthew. Why would a tax collector leave all to follow Jesus? Probably because he heard about the miracles and believed that Jesus was the Christ.

Definitions of “follow:”

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To follow Christ meant more than just tagging along. To become a follower of Christ means that you have become a member and joined His cause. You are entrusting your life to Him because you want to become a part of His cause. You are making Him your leader.

If you have given your life to Christ, you are one of His followers.

2. Requirements of a Christ follower

Luke 9:23 “Then He said to them all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.’”

What might a person keep from following Christ? Some people come to Christ because they want a “get out of hell free card.” But being a true follower of Christ means that Jesus is the Lord of your life, meaning that your life is lived surrendered and yielded to Him.

Jesus isn’t on the earth today. The Bible says He is at the right hand of the Father interceding for us. So what does it mean to us to follow Christ? To be a follower of Christ you yield to Him – in obedience to what He tells you to do – in all aspects of life: in sharing salvation with someone else, in the way we treat our spouse and kids, for singles – in the way that we live for Him, in the way that we spend our money, in the way that we treat other people, in the way that we serve in a local church, etc.

- They want to pursue a sinful lifestyle
- They may want to pursue a career
- They may want to pursue wealth
- They may want to pursue popularity
- They may want to please family
- They may want to pursue comfort

Luke 9:57-62

3. Characteristics of a Christ follower

- Stays close to Christ

John 12:26a 'If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also...'

Don't just serve Him, get near Him so we know His leading. To follow Him, we need to be near Him so we don't go off on our own.

People are compared to sheep. The nature of a sheep is to wander. They need a leader to follow; they need a shepherd. Jesus has been compared to a shepherd in John 10.

John 10:4 'And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow Him, for they know his voice.'

- Shares the heart of Christ

Ephesians 5:1-2 "(1) Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. (2) And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma."

- Develops the character of Christ

John 8:12 "Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

This verse follows the time Jesus forgave the woman caught in adultery and told her to go and sin no more. If you love Him and follow Him, you will keep His commandments and walk in the light.

- Does the works of Christ

John 14:12-14

- Adds more followers

I Corinthians 11:1 KJV "Follow me as I follow Christ."

CONCLUSION

Are you following Jesus?

- Do you stay near the Father?
- Do you share His heart?
- Are you developing His character?
- Are you doing His works?
- Are you getting more followers?

Series: Follow Me
Part 2: Follow Me to the Poor

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INTRO

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To follow Christ meant more than just tagging along. To become a follower of Christ means that you have become a member and joined His cause. You are entrusting your life to Him because you want to become a part of His cause. You are making Him your leader.

1. Part of Jesus' mission was to reach the poor

Luke 4:18, 19 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; 19) to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

Luke 7:23 "Jesus answered and said to them, 'Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them.'"

Greek definition of *poor*: “one who crouches and cowers.”

Poor (*ptochos*, Strongs #4434): When used as an adjective “one who crouches and cowers”. When used as a noun, a beggar, someone who cowers down or hides oneself of fear. Describes someone who is powerless to enrich, stricken with poverty.

Description of the poor: deficient, inadequate, lacking, insufficient, unfortunate, inferior, unproductive, powerless, dependent on others, wanting, needy, distressed, destitute.

The poverty mentality is when a person (1) believes that they are inadequate to be of worth, (2) thinks they are incapable of rising out of their deficiency, and (3) feels they will always need to rely on others to care for them.

If a child is raised to have a poverty mentality, that person could continue the cycle of poverty from generation to generation.

This is why the Greek word for poor describes someone who is cowered over, crouching down. These words do not describe someone who knows they have significance or can do significant things.

Poverty mentality

When someone is poor, they can still know their value as a human being and believe that they have inherit attributes that are of worth to God and to others. However, poverty can do more harm to a person’s soul than it can do to their bank account. When poverty attacks the mind, people can choose to see themselves as a failure. Instead of not having enough, they feel that they are not enough. In addition to feeling that they have lack, they themselves feel that they are lacking. If a person becomes destitute in their soul, poverty has a grip that goes beyond the insufficiency of not having enough to where a person is deficient inside himself or herself.

Sometimes people blame their condition on their environment, the government and poor education or housing, racism against an ethnic group, etc.

Sometimes we see people who are born into poverty become frustrated and angry because they feel they are not being treated fairly. They turn to violence and crime because they feel they have to fight to survive. They do not know their value to God.

When people cannot be productive, they feel that they are stripped of power to overcome the world around them. They feel powerless, useless, etc. They feel that they have no rights, because they haven’t earned them.

Have you ever gone to give food to the needy or serve a meal to the poor? They aren’t just hungry – they usually are affected by the poverty mentality. Some come in cowered - they are people that come in quietly, move slowly, heads are down. Sometimes you see someone with a harden attitude that this is owed to them – somebody needs to take care of them.

Jesus came to raise the poor from their lowly condition AND from their cowered self-image.

The woman that was bent over for 18 years -She probably had a back condition where she could not lift herself up. Jesus healed her so that she could stand up straight. Jesus did something similar to the poor. He showed them their worth so they could stand up with confidence and dignity.

Jesus came to empower the believer. He came to bring them from “I can’t” to “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Jesus didn’t just come to fill stomachs and cloth bodies. Jesus came to bring people back to a place of productivity, not just in the natural, but to bring life back into their soul.

[John 10:10 “...I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly.”](#)

[Abundance means that you have more than enough.](#)

He came to bring the poor to a place where they were not only able to sustain their necessities but also to a place where they could become givers. This is the prosperity message – God doesn’t want you to be poor no more. He wants you to have your needs met and He wants you to have enough to share with others. This is the blessing of God.

2. Followers are free to follow

[Matthew 19:16-22](#)

- His money and his possessions kept him from following Jesus

God wants us to daily rely on Him, to trust Him. No matter what our salary is, no matter what we own, no matter what we are capable of earning.... Our trust has to be in God. Material things do not last. We are not to put our trust in a job or in our earning potential or in what we own.

Matthew 6:19-21

[Matthew 19:23-26](#)

- The word needle here is a sewing needle. This is a Hebrew hyperbole (exaggeration). It is impossible to do.
- Why is it so difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God? Typically a person who is rich has no need of anything or anyone, so they do as they please. They are not dependant; they are self-sufficient. However, to give it all away meant give up your self-sufficiency, and depend on God. The rich young ruler did not want to yield his life to Jesus Christ. It’s a control thing. He didn’t want Jesus Christ to be the Lord of His life; He wanted to be the lord of his life. He liked the freedom to do what he wanted. Unfortunately, riches may seem to be a liberality, but they also can be a deceitful bondage.

- It is not impossible for God to reach the heart of a rich man and see that rich man lay it down.

I Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil... Why? Because money is a tool used to control – to be self-sufficient rather than being dependant on God - to feel in control of others and the world around us.

Matthew 19:27-30

- Peter speaks up and says, “Well we’ve left it all for You – what is in it for us?”
- Jesus answered that the twelve would be ruling with him in the millennium, and then included us all when He said, “that anyone that left all for Him would receive many times more, or one hundred times more, in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life.” When you join the kingdom, you are part of something much bigger than yourself.

Do not love anything or anyone more than Me. There might be times when a family member disagrees with you, but you have to obey God rather than please that family member. There might be times when friends turn on you if you don’t agree with them and give them what they want. God may ask you to separate from them until they repent. It can be painful, but God wants us to love Him more than what we possess – including our relationships. He’s a jealous God.

3. Followers must be givers

Jesus gave to the poor (John 13:29). He fed the hungry. To b a follower of Christ, we must imitate Him and do the same.

This is something we do in addition to our tithes. The tithe is ten percent of our income that God has told us to give to the local church so that the church can operate. God will supply our seed to sow.

I John 3:17-18

Proverbs 19:17 “He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, and He will pay back what he has given.

Conclusion

1. Maybe you are here today and you are in need. God wants you to look to HIM to provide for you, to lift you up, to show you your value and worth.
2. Do you consider yourself a follower of Christ?
 - Are you free from dependency on yourself, your abilities, and your resources?
 - Are you a giver? Do you spend everything that comes in on yourself? Do you tithe to help your church give to missions and outreach and benevolence? Do you set money aside in the budget to help someone else?

We're not preaching on helping the poor to get into your wallet. We're talking about following Christ. We're talking about reaching out to help someone else – not just to fill their stomach, but to guide them to see their worth to God and to the world around them. When we do, we are pleasing God and He will give us favor.

Whatever you have in your hand, do something to help someone else.

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Part 3: Follow Me to the Lost

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To follow Christ meant more than just tagging along. To become a follower of Christ means that you have become a member and joined His cause. You are entrusting your life to Him because you want to become a part of His cause. You are making Him your leader.

1. **The main purpose for Jesus coming was to save the lost**

[Luke 19:10](#) “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

[Luke 14:21-23](#)

Go into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in. The lost are not usually knocking down the doors to a church to get in. They usually feel that they are not good enough, righteousness enough, for God or Christians. They feel that they will be judged, not accepted, by God or the church, so they stay outside. Jesus said go out to where they are. He came to seek the lost.

[Luke 15:1-7](#) the lost sheep – searched for it.

Verse 1: “The tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him.”

Verse 2: “And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, ‘This man receives sinners and eats with them.’”

Verse 3: “So He spoke this parable to them.....

Luke 15:8-10 the lost coin – searched for it.

Luke 15:11-32 the lost son – also includes a brother, Jesus trying to get a message across to the Pharisees.

2. To follow Christ, the lost turned from their sin

Mark 2:15 “Now as it happened, as He was dining in Levi’s house (Matthew), that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him.”

The lost wanted to follow Him. He showed them their value and worth. They turned from their ways and followed Christ.

There are lost people that didn’t follow Christ too. The difference? Repentance. As much as we want to, we cannot jump into someone else’s skin and make choices for them. There has to be a turning.

3. Lost people are hurting people

Luke 4:18, 19 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; 19) to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

Jesus said to the crowd, don’t make me known. This fulfilled the scripture Isaiah 42:2-4.

Matthew 12:19-21 “He will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench, till He sends forth justice to victory; and in His name Gentiles will trust.”

A reed is a material that was known for its weakness. A bruised or broken reed would be useless. A smoking flax is a wick that is dimly burning, not of much value because it isn’t giving off much light.

To compare these elements with people that Jesus was ministering to, we see that He went to weak and hurting people, people that didn’t seem to be worth saving, people that weren’t of much value.

Jesus was gentle and meek in His ministry. Part of His ministry was to reach the broken, the abused, and the bound.

Matthew 11:29 “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.’

His kindness leads us to repentance. Romans 2:2

4. Follow Christ by reaching the lost and hurting

a. Take your authority

Bind the enemy from blinding their minds.

[1 Corinthians 4:3-4](#)

You have authority over the enemy. Bind him.

[Matthew 18:18](#) “Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Bind on the earth will be bound in the spirit realm. What you loose on earth will be loosed in the spirit realm.

b. Go to God in prayer

- [Pray for revelation of salvation](#)

[Eph. 1:18](#)

You have to know that you have a need. A lot of people think that they are okay. They know that they aren't perfect, but they see themselves as good people, working their jobs, being faithful to their spouse, taking care of their children, etc.

They also have to see that the only way to God is through Jesus Christ.

- [Pray for laborers](#)

[Matthew 9:36-38](#)

We're not saying that we shouldn't do something about

c. Show them the way

- Use methods that are natural

[I Corinthians 9:19-23](#)

Proverbs 11:30b "...He who wins souls is wise."

Locate where they are, what they can relate to, and adapt your methods of reaching them.

[I John 3:16-18](#)

Also, if they are in need, show them their value and your love by meeting that need.

- Use methods that are supernatural

[Acts 28:1-9 Paul won a city because of the miracles he performed.](#)

[I Corinthians 2:4-5](#)

Conclusion

- Are you saved? Have you stopped at believing, or are you relying - have you surrendered your life to Christ?
- Who do you know that is lost? Write their name on a piece of paper and place it in the bucket as you walk out. Have a table with a container to receive the names. Light a candle and place a vase of reeds on the table with the scripture Matthew 12:20

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1. Part of Jesus’ mission was to heal the sick

Healing was part of fulfilling His ministry.

[Matthew 8:16-17](#)

Luke 4:18

He is revealing what God wants for us.

2. **Jesus was moved by love to heal**

Matthew 14:14 “And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.”

Because of the love in His heart, Jesus healed the sick. What father or mother seeing a child suffering in pain, would not want to relieve their suffering? How much more is the heavenly’s father toward us.

He used different methods – some were healed because Jesus took authority over sickness – using His words to command healing. Other times there was a healing anointing present. Other times He touched them. Others times He said their faith made a way for healing.

3. **The believing followed Him for physical healing**

Mark 10:46-52 Blind Bartimaeus. He heard about Jesus. People were talking. He healed people.

John 6:2

4. **Jesus wants us to follow Him in ministering healing**

Mark 16:17-18

You follow Christ and signs will follow you.

John 14:12

- It is our heart.
- It is our message.
- It is our action.

How we can reach out to the sick:

1. Minister to their spiritual need

Give them the message that God loves them
Give them the message that God wants to save and heal them

2. Minister to their Soul need

Emotionally
Financially
Mentally

3. Minister to their physical need

Supernaturally

If we love people, we will minister healing. Sometimes we see people healed instantly, and others we don't. We don't always understand why, but we are committed to standing with you.

If we love people, we will stand with them for their healing.

We don't just blow in and blow out of their lives. We're a church.

BRING THEM TO CHRIST. Not, hey, look at me and what I did for you, but look to Him, the author and the finisher of your faith.

Naturally

If you love people, you will show kindness to the sick

If we love people, we will comfort the sick.

If we love people, we will do what we can to help financially – meals, etc.