

How Do I Follow Jesus?

Eph 5:1-2

Introduction:

1. One of the most amazing features of the Gospels, and of the ministry of the Lord Jesus, is the men He chose to be His disciples. If you and I were putting together a ministry team, these are probably not the kind of people we would choose to represent us. Consider these men for just a moment.

Several were fishermen. One was a former tax collector for Rome. A couple of them were quick tempered. One of them was a revolutionary. One was a traitor and not a true believer at all. All were very common men.

These men lacked spiritual understanding. They lacked humility. They lacked faith. They lacked power. These men often got into trouble; missing the point of Christ's teachings; lashing out at people who were different; saying the wrong thing; among other failures and problems. In spite of their weaknesses, the Lord used these men to turn the world upside down for His glory. If He can use them, surely He can use us too!

2. Last week we looked at three men who wanted to follow Jesus
 - a. The first man said that he wanted to follow Jesus - Jesus said that the birds of the air have nests and the foxes have holes....
 - b. Jesus said to the second man, "Follow me." But he said that he had to bury his father.
 - c. The 3rd man said that he would follow Jesus but he wanted to go home first and say "goodbye" to everyone.
3. We are followers of Jesus but what does it mean to follow Jesus in our daily lives?
4. We sing songs about following Jesus.

- a. Follow On - "Follow, follow, I would follow Jesus. Anywhere..."
 - b. "Where He leads me I will follow."
 - c. "All the way my Savior leads me..."
 - d. "He leadeth me O blessed thought..."
5. The Bible tells us several ways in which we should be like Jesus. Let's look at a few of them.

I. FOLLOW JESUS IN LOVE - EPH 5:1-2

1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

A. The Love of Christ - vs 2

1. A Directed Love - "us"
 - a) *Not a general feeling of well being, but a love that is directed toward real people*
 - b) *Jesus loves His sheep, the elect, His people*
2. A Giving Love – "hath given"
 - a) *In the Bible, love is generally associated with giving*
 - b) *In vs 2 Christ loved us and gave Himself for us*
Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son...
Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;
3. A Sacrificial Love – "himself...an offering"
 - a) *Christ gave Himself as an offering*
 - b) *Compare the widow who gave her two mites - Luke 21:1-4*
4. A God-Pleasing Love – "a sweet smelling savour"

B. The Love of the Christian

1. An Obedient Love - vs 2

a) *1Jo 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.*

b) *We are to love just as He loved*

c) *A young child learns to draw by tracing – the more carefully he traces the more his drawing is like the original*

d) *Christ is the pattern by which we trace our lives*

2. A Walk in Love - vs 2

a) *The present tense says that we should continually walk in love*

b) *To walk in something means that that thing is characteristic of our lives*

c) *Love should saturate our daily lives*

d) *The key to walking in love is to have an understanding of Biblical love*

Follow Jesus in Love...

II. FOLLOW JESUS IN FORGIVENESS - COL 3:12-13

12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do ye*.

A. The Forgiveness of Christ - vs 13

1. A Personal Forgiveness – "Christ forgave you"

2. A Completed Forgiveness – "forgave"; in the past tense

3. Marjorie Holmes was struggling with some past failures in her life until she got an interesting letter from a friend. The stationery recounted a recent visit this woman had with her granddaughter when they went to see a plane write messages in the sky. The young girl loved watching the words being drawn in the air, but was puzzled when the letters started disappearing. She studied the situation for a

moment then suddenly blurted out, “Maybe Jesus has an eraser!”
When we find ourselves wrestling with our own fallen humanity, we can take comfort in the fact that God is able to erase all of our failures with his remarkable eraser . . . a cross.

B. The Forgiveness of the Christian

1. A Characteristic Forgiveness - vs 12 - "put on"
 - a) *We are to wear forgiveness continually*
 - b) *Chosen by God, set apart for God, loved by God and forgiven by God - they all add up to GRACE*
 - c) *Because believers enjoy these gracious blessings, we are to forgive others*
2. An Active Forgiveness - vs 13
 - a) *Refuse to make your heart a harbor for bitterness*
Heb 12:15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;
 - b) *Abstain from seeking revenge*
 - (1) God is in charge of revenge - Rom 12:19
19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.
 - (2) Overcome evil with good - Rom 12:21
21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.
 - c) *Forbearing involves not taking offense in the first place*
 - d) *Mt 18:21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? 22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.*

3. Corrie Ten Boom told of some Christian friends who wronged her in a public and malicious way. For many days she was bitter and angry until she forgave them. But in the night she would wake up thinking about what they had done and she would get angry all over again. It seemed that the memory would not go away. Help came from her pastor to whom she described the problem. "Corrie, up in the church tower is a bell which is rung by pulling a rope. When the sexton pulls the rope the bell peals out. When he stops pulling the rope the sound fades away. Forgiveness is like that. When we forgive someone we take our hand off the rope. But if we've been tugging at the grievances for a long time, we must not be surprised if the old angry thoughts keep coming back for awhile. They are just the ding-dongs of the old bell slowing down.

Follow Jesus in Forgiveness....

III. FOLLOW JESUS IN HUMILITY - PHIL 2:5-8

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

A. The Humility of Christ

1. A Satisfied Humility - vs 6
 - a) *Jesus was God - He could have been proud of that*
 - b) *Jesus was Preexistent*

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
2. A Willing Humility - vs 7

a) *No person ever stooped down as far as Jesus did because no person has ever been elevated as high as Jesus was*

b) *This humility is seen in Jesus' self-emptying*

c) *Made himself of no reputation = he emptied himself*

(1) He did not empty himself of his deity, since he continued to be God even while here on the earth

(2) He emptied Himself of His heavenly glory

(3) Jesus emptied himself of his independent authority

(4) Jesus emptied Himself of His divine riches

2Co 8:9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

3. A Submissive Humility - vs 8

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross

a) *Jesus came to die*

b) *Jesus came so that He could go to the cross*

B. The Humility of the Christian - vs 5

1. A Mental Humility – "Let this mind be in you"

a) *Mind = a way of thinking, an approach to life, an attitude, a disposition*

(1) We are to have the same attitude that Christ had

(2) If your attitude is right then right actions will follow

(3) Attitude precedes actions and actions won't be right until attitude is right

b) *Christ's attitude was self-denial*

c) *Christ's attitude was servanthood*

2. An Inward Humility – "in you"

In all my studies I've found only one place where Jesus Christ---in His own words---describes his own "inner man." In doing so, He uses only two words. He doesn't say: "I am wise and powerful," or "I am holy and eternal," or "I am all-knowing and absolute deity." Do you know what He said? Hold on, it may surprise you.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

(Matt 11:28-29)

I am meek. I am lowly in heart. These are servant terms. Meek means strength under control. Lowly in heart means humble ---the word picture of a helper or servant. Frankly, I find it extremely significant that when Jesus lifts the veil of silence and once for all gives us a glimpse of Himself, the real stuff of His inner person, He uses meek and lowly.

When we remember that God wants us to conform to His son's image, we realize he wants us to have qualities like Jesus had. We must let gentleness and humility emerge. We are never more like Christ than when we fit into His description of Himself. - Chuck Swindoll

Follow Jesus in Humility....

IV. FOLLOW JESUS IN SUFFERING - 1PET 2:19-23

19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. 21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found

in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

A. The Suffering of Christ

1. A Sinless Suffering - vs 22
 - a) *Jesus did no sin - no guile in his mouth*
 - b) *He did not let His trials rob Him of His spirituality as we often do*
2. A Quiet Suffering - vs 23
 - a) *When others reviled Jesus, He did not revile them back*
 - b) *He didn't try to get even with people*
 - c) *He did not brag about how much He was suffering*
 - d) *Jesus did not double up His fist and say, "I'm going to get even with you. You're going to wish you hadn't done that." Instead He prayed for them.*

B. The Suffering of the Christian

1. A Blameless Suffering - vs 19 - "suffering wrongfully"
 - a) *Have you ever been mistreated? What was your response?*
 - b) *It is human nature to retaliate when we are mistreated.*
 - c) *Mt 5:38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: 39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.*
2. A Patient Suffering - vs 20

20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

 - a) *When someone insults or abuses us God wants us to take it committing ourselves to Him who judges righteously*
 - b) *We are to take suffering patiently*

3. An Obedient Suffering - vs 21

21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

- a) *Christ is our example in suffering wrongfully*
- b) *The suffering inflicted on Christ was certainly wrong*
- c) *Keep your eyes on Christ and try to imitate His response to injustice and your lives will be what God wants them to be.*

CONCLUSION:

1. We are to follow Jesus in the way that He lived.
2. We are to be more like Him who died for us.
3. Are you following Jesus in love? In forgiveness? In humility? In honor? In suffering?
4. Would you make a commitment to be more like Jesus?
 - a. It cost Abraham the willingness to yield his only son.
 - b. It cost Esther the risk of her life.
 - c. It cost Daniel being cast into the den of lions.
 - d. It cost Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego being put in a fiery furnace.
 - e. It cost Stephen death by stoning.
 - f. It cost Peter a martyr's death.
 - g. It cost Jesus His life.
 - h. Does it cost you anything?
5. A university professor told of being invited to speak at a military base in December and there meeting an unforgettable soldier named Ralph. Ralph had been sent to meet him at the airport, and after they had introduced themselves, they headed toward the baggage claim. As they walked down the concourse, Ralph kept disappearing. Once to help an older woman whose suitcase had fallen open. Once to lift two toddlers up to where they could see Santa Claus. And again to give directions to

someone who was lost. Each time he came back with a big smile on his face.

“Where did you learn to do that?” The professor asked.

“Do what?” Ralph said.

“To be so helpful and considerate to others.”

“Oh,” Ralph said, “during the war, I guess.”

Then he told the professor about his tour of duty in Vietnam, about how it was his job to clear minefields, and how he watched his friends blow up before his eyes, one after another. “I learned to live between steps,” he said. “I never knew whether the next one would be my last, so I learned to get everything I could out of the moment between when I picked up my foot and when I put it down again. Every step I took was a whole new world, and I guess I’ve just been that way ever since.”

A grace-filled life is living between the steps. In our unpredictable today’s we must find all the life we can and live it to the fullest. It is the responsibility of every Christ-follower to carve out a satisfying life under the loving rule of God that is full and complete. Abundant life is not determined by how long we live, but how well we live.