

Follow Me

Part 1: "Following Him Into Service!"

By Cere Muscarella

Jesus first words... "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" Matthew 4.17

"The long anticipated kingdom you have been waiting for is here..." "It's time to stop what you're doing and turn around..." "You've been killing time with distractions but now is the time to inherit the promises made to your forefathers!"

"Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men..." Matthew 4.18

Jesus, speaks what He hears the Father say... and does what He has seen the Father do... He calls to men and women who will follow Him into the fullness of His enterprise with mankind! God called to Adam and Eve, Noah's sons and their wives, to Abram and Sara... and TO US – Follow Me...

Follow Me... We always apply this to religion... Which we usually make one aspect of our lives... God, spouse, family, career, education, social life, hobby life! But Jesus was calling His people to the broadest application... LIFE/LIFESTYLES! God's reign applies to all our "zones" and almost always inverts our beliefs! Everything about His kingdom is a "step up" from ours!

Isaiah 55.8 "For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. "For *as* the heavens (heavenly kingdom) are higher than the earth (earthly kingdom), so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." **"Time to stop what you have been doing and step up to what God is..." –Jesus**

Follow Me... The definition is not tricky... "To proceed behind, to pursue after, to move along the same course, to accept the guidance of someone..." "And they straightway left their nets and followed Him... and two others, James and John, were called and they immediately left the ship and their father and followed!" **Matthew 4.20-22** "He said to Matthew, 'Follow Me. And he got up and followed Him.'" **Matt 9.9** "And He said to Philip, follow Me... and he did." **John 1.43**

But there is a 'step up' to the simpler 'decision and direction' definition... "Do you follow me?" To follow: to 'get' something or someone, to understand, to accept, to be informed, to grasp the meaning of something or someone... "Do you 'get Me' enough to follow, move along the same course, accept the guidance to come after Me?" **Luke 14.26ff**

What 'following' looks like! If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life (kingdom/ways) will lose it: and whosoever will lose his life (kingdom/ ways) for My sake will find it. *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?* **Matthew 16.24-26 Denying ourselves what others allow, carrying a cross, wanting the "true" best!**

When it doesn't work... "To the rich young ruler Jesus said, If you will be perfect, go and sell what you have, and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." **Matthew 19.21** And he went away sorrow-full, sad and grieved for he had much, he was very rich! **Mt 19.22, Mark 10.22, Luke 18.23** **We can become so "attached" to earthly kingdoms that we can't, have no will to, follow our heavenly King!** And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, allow me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but you go and preach the kingdom of God. And another said, Lord, I will follow You; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said to him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking

back, is outfitted for the kingdom of God. **Luke 9.59-62** *'A little more time Lord; my values, my pursuits, my way...'* **"So sorry, not fit!"**

When it's working... "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give them eternal life; and they will never perish (be destroyed), *neither will anyone snatch them out of My hand.* My Father, which gave them to Me, is greater than all; *and none is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.*" **John 10.27-29** *Lifetime intimacy and completely secure to the end. Signed: Father, Son and Spirit!* "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also: if any man serve Me, him will [my] Father honor." **John 12.26** "You got it, job well done faithful servant, enter into the joy of Your Lord!" **Matthew 25.21** "Happy is the faithful and wise servant whom the Lord finds alert and serving and ruling well when He comes... He will serve them at a celebration dinner and make them ruler over all His goods." **Matt 24.46ff Luke 12.37ff**

The Pathway... "Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me your Master and so I am, if I then have washed your feet so you should wash others, for I have given you an example that you should so as I have done. Truly, truly, I say to you that the servant is not greater than His Lord, and the sent ones are not greater than the Sender. If you know these things happy are you if you do them!" **John 13.12-17** *The pathway of following is service!*

Where it leads... "Don't say you have a little more time before the harvest (the work begins). Take a good look, I say to you lift up your eyes and look on the fields for they are ripe for harvest. And he that reaps receives wages and gathers fruit for eternity that both the sower and the reaper may rejoice together. I send you to reap where you bestowed no labor, others did the planting and you are entered into their labors! **John 4.35-38** *Notice the 'stall,' the re-focusing, the rewards, the eternal lives, the necessary collaboration (service to the 'harvest')!*

Jesus is all about service to the world around Him!

And any 'follower' is going to have to be as well!

Followers... *Will you look where I am looking?* At the fields, not the world! *Will you see what I am seeing?* The people longing for, begging for, help! *Will you work where I am sending?* Menial is meaningful if He is directing! *Will you collaborate with others?* Not a one man show/sharing the load!

The Big Question... "He said to Peter, 'Follow Me.' Then Peter, looking around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following; and seeing him, Peter asked, 'Lord, and what about him (comparative if not competitive)? What are you asking him to do? Jesus said, 'what is that to you?' You just follow me." **John 21.19-22**

Today's Question... **What does He have for you to do? Generically, where are you serving as one of the many members of His body, here, one part supporting the other?** Are you willing to be co-laborers and collaborators for next steps of Life? Singles, mother's, grands for Nursery! Compassionate 'moms/dads' for kids! Caring, outgoing, smiling 'receptionists' in the parking lots, at the doors and in the sanctuary to touch heavy hearts! Just basic, generic, loving service to members, visitors and converts! **"Specifically, for you" to adorn His kingdom?** Told you about Tommy! **Are you willing to put the 'hang-ups' on the Cross and begin ministering/testimony?** Where are the women who have successfully overcome abuse? Singles who have overcome their lusts, loneliness? Single parents making it on faith? Married couples w/long term success? Those who have overcome/Oppressor? Men who can help single parents?

Will you 'follow' Him and serve the world around you?