

Follow Me **Part 4: "This is the End!"**

By Cere Muscarella

Jesus first words... "Turn around, for the kingdom of heaven that you've been waiting for is here... Matthew 4.17 All encompassing "step up" lifestyle changes for a new kingdom model! **Is 55.8 "Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men..." Matthew 4.18** We *follow* where He leads us... And we "*follow*" in service because we "get Him!" **"Go and tell the great things God has done for you, and the love He showed you!" Mk 5.1-20** "I'll need you to speak up..."

Then came the "Big Reveal..." Orientation Day arrives! The exclamations of joy ring in the new kingdom! "*O the bliss of those who...*" The inversions of the new kingdom! Blessings for 'sorrows...' Had them before, now blessed, because we would be comforted by God! If the "students" are hungry and thirsty for "the whole thing!" No Hebrew/Greek concept of just having some, part, or (ever) enough!

Never Enough... For a man named Paul! "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." **Philippians 3.13,14**

And he leaves us a list of things, good and bad, that he has left behind! ***This is a serious follower of Jesus on a serious quest...***

Never Enough... For a man named Paul! "Be followers of me even as I also am of Christ!" **1Corinthians 11.1 (10.34)**

Context: "care about others – be concerned for others – try not to offend others; even as I live to please others [in contrast to living to please myself], not seeking my own benefits but theirs that they might be saved... (so) be followers of me, even as I also am of Christ!" **1Corinthians 10.24-33**

Asides... Paul ties "pleasing others" directly to Jesus... "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself... Now, the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded toward one another... that you might with one mind and mouth glorify God! Receive one another as Christ received you... **Romans 15:1-3** Which will require love and strength, patience, and the consoling of God!

Never Enough... For a man named Paul! "As Jesus lived to seek 'others' welfare and pleasure over His own, I exhort you to mimic Christ's love, strength, and mimic me as I let go of all else to take aim at the mark (effort) for the prize of the high calling in God (reward)! –compendium

Paul is aiming at God's goal... Paul is ridding himself of all distractions to get to God's goal... Paul is stretching himself "out beyond" his natural reach... And he calls us to mimic him!

Follow me as I make my run at the prize of looking like the One I am following!

Caveat 1... Make sure you understand he is not asking us to follow him any further than he is following after Jesus! We are not called to follow anyone other than Jesus!

“Don’t let there be divisions among you... some of Paul, of Apollos, of Peter, of Christ. Was Christ divided? Who was crucified for you? Who’s name were you baptized in? We are only ministers by whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to you. You are Christ’s and He is of God!” **1Corinthians 1.10-13 3.5-23**

It is a mistake to ‘follow’ any human being and try to be like them! All of us are in this “rush” together for one cause... **To fulfill God’s will that we become transformed into the image of His dear Son!**

Caveat 2... We are directly told to stop following along with anyone who is going a different direction than Jesus!

“I beg you brothers, mark those who cause divisions (dicostasia) and offences (skandalon) contrary to the doctrine you have learned and avoid them because they are not servants of our Lord Jesus but their own belly, who by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple!” **Romans 16.17,18 Refers directly to compromises of the word for the sake of gain!**

“We command you brothers to withdraw yourselves from every brother that walks disorderly and not after the traditions you received from us. You know how you should follow us for we never behaved disorderly, nor sought anything for nothing...” **2Thess 3.6-8 This refers directly to hypocritical and deceptive brothers seeking the benefits of the brotherhood w/o integrity!**

“A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition, reject, knowing that such people are subverted and sinning...” **Titus 3.10,11 This refers directly to heretics who will not “turnaround” after being confronted and who then promote a “schism...” This must always be done with grace and sensitivity and without aggression!**

Following Jesus is not always simple or easy... and... We must be willing to pay the cost... But will we follow Jesus, and people who followed Him well, to the end?

The End... My Friends! Will we follow Jesus who followed God, for our lifetime? Will we follow Paul as he, and others, followed Jesus, for their lifetimes?

“Brothers, be followers together of me and mark those who walk the same way as our example...” **Phil 3.17**

But... will we follow Jesus and Paul and people like him to be able to say... “follow me as I follow Christ?”

The End... My Friends! That is the end of all of this! To be able to say... “You know what manner of man I have been among you... serving the Lord with humility, with tears, with temptations... and how I kept back nothing that was profitable for you... and have taught you about turning around to God and having faith in Jesus...” **Acts 20.18-21** “And you know what kind of lifestyle we lived and you became followers of us and the Lord, receiving the word in much affliction and joy in the Holy Spirit, so that you became models to follow too!” **1Thessalonians 1.5-7**

That is the end of all of this! “For you know, my friends, what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us that we should be called the sons and daughters of God... and we already are His sons and daughters but we don’t see it all yet... but we know that when He does appear, we will be like Him... and every man that has that hope in Him, is already at work to clean himself up to be as clean as He is...”

1John 3.1-3 “I’m not there yet, I’m not perfect, but I am following after Him to know what I was apprehended for!” **Phil 3.12**

Will you follow Me... to the end? –Jesus