

Sermon Manuscript for “The Way of Jesus: Part 1”



Fan or a Follower

Are you a fan or a follower of Jesus Christ?

A fan is an enthusiastic admirer.

Like a sports fan, some fans can be inconsistent, the minute your team fails to perform or win, they jump ship.

Jesus fans want to follow Jesus closely enough to get all the benefits, but not so close that he calls them to sacrifice or surrender things that are important.

Fans can be fickle and self serving, chasing the highs and running from the lows.

Followers are loyal and place the way of Jesus as the centre of their lives, come good or bad.

Jesus is not looking for fans.

He's looking for followers - completely committed followers.

Called to Follow

The Calling of the 12 was a calling to be Followers.

Jesus called his disciples to “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.”

2Tim. 1:9 says God has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.

What does it mean to follow Jesus?

It begins by responding to His call to follow!

The sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. (John 10: 3, 4)

Following Jesus – minus the baggage!

If we were completely honest I'd bet our lives have become cluttered with other things, added baggage, from when we first began to follow Jesus.

We have religious baggage; rules, performance issues, pride and idolatry.

We have worldly baggage; sinful attitudes, habits and passions

We have life baggage; unforgiveness, frustrations, broken promises

We all could use a chance to revisit why we're in this thing at all.

That's why it all comes down to revisiting Christ's original invitation to you and to me:

“Come, follow me.”

The Way of Jesus is a series of seven sign posts that simply define what it looks like to follow Jesus.

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1. I have **begun following** Jesus, and am **depending on the Spirit** of Jesus in my journey.
2. I am being sent by Jesus to **bless** others and **invite** them to follow Him too.
3. I am learning to be like Jesus in my **attitudes, behaviours, character**.
4. I am learning to **love God** and **love others**.
5. I am learning the **teachings** of Jesus.
6. I am **helping someone** and someone is **helping me** to be a growing follower of Jesus.
7. I am participating in a **community** of followers of Jesus **on mission** to the world.

#1a: I have begun following Jesus...

I think there are three simple invitations at the core of Christ's ministry; even a child could follow them:

1. Come to me. Come with me on a mission/come to me and leave the weight of the world behind. This includes us echoing Peter's words: Where else could we go? We recognize Jesus as the Holy One of God. There's no one/nowhere else to go for kingdom life.

2. Listen to me. We recognize Christ's authority and wisdom. His life and teachings are the moral guideposts for sowing and reaping kingdom life.

Luke 9:7 ESV "And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him."

3. Follow me. This is the walking, talking incarnation. We get up and follow. We follow his leading, we follow his example. We listen to his voice. We become a living, breathing conduit of Heaven on earth.

I have begun following Jesus.

Maybe for someone here this morning will be the first time ever saying those words.

Maybe some of you refreshed your commitment to follow him again.

1Jn 2:6 **Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.**

Those 11 words are a real mouthful!

I think Paul gives us some help to see how to follow Jesus...

Gal 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

A.W. Tozer says that people who are crucified with Christ have three distinct marks:

1. *They are facing only one direction (United and one mind with God and others),*
2. *They can never turn back (Sacrificial and mature in their service to God), and*
3. *They no longer have plans of their own (Surrendered to the will and kingdom of God).*

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I like the words of Chris Tomlin's song, "I Will Follow"

*Where you go, I'll go Where you stay, I'll stay
When you move, I'll move, I will follow you
Who you love, I'll love How you serve I'll serve
If this life I lose, I will follow you*

#1b: ... and am depending on the Spirit of Jesus in my journey.

The reality is, though, we need more than good intentions to follow Jesus through the minefields of life.

That's why every believer has the Holy Spirit.

That's why every follower NEEDS the Holy Spirit.

Jesus walked with the Holy Spirit in his ministry!

Mk 1:10 As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

The disciples waited for the power to begin their journey as followers of Jesus.

They recognized that to continue in the incarnational presence and power of Jesus, they needed the Holy Spirit.

Ac 1:4,5 ... "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Every believer has the Holy Spirit indwelling them consequent upon believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Eph 1:13,14 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, **14**who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.*

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

The mark of a follower of Jesus is your reliance on the Holy Spirit.

You cannot truly follow Jesus unless you embrace the work of the Holy Spirit in you and through you.

Here is why the Holy Spirit is so important to a follower of Jesus:

He's like water: Plentiful; refreshing, fertilizing the works of the saints; freely given to those who are thirsty, he cleanses all who take a drink.

He's like a fire: A guiding light to God's people, Searching out sin and purifying us from darkness.

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He's like a wind: Powerful, acting and affecting the purposes of God around us; revives the dying coal of our spiritual passion, He is sovereign and moves when and where he wants to.

He's like Healing Oil: Consecrating – his presence makes ordinary things holy, Comforting and soothing, Healing and delivering from bondage and suffering.

He's like rain: A blessing in our desert times, a source of cleansing righteousness when we need a new start.

He's like a Dove—His very presence is beautiful and brings peace (Mt 3:16).

He's like A Voice—Guiding, warning and nudging us along as we follow Jesus.

He's like A Seal— A proof of authenticity. He proves we are God's adopted children, he secures us in our identity as heirs of kingdom life and salvation.

That's why you don't have to go it alone; you can depend on the Spirit of Jesus for your journey.

I want every one of you to have an awesome relationship with the Holy Spirit.

You don't all have to be Pentecostals, but every believer needs a Pentecostal experience...

A constant in-filling of the Holy Spirit to empower them to be able to follow Jesus.

More than a fan, a true follower - a part of the mission and the mystery of God's mighty work in our generation.

So, as you begin to follow Jesus, rely on His Spirit in your journey.

Let's pray.