

Harmony of the Gospels

Part 18

“Follow Me...”

You know...You have to be careful who you listen to, who you talk to...

Not too long ago, while going through an airport during one of his many trips, President Bush encountered a man with long hair, wearing a white robe and sandals, holding a staff.

President Bush went up to the man and said, "**Aren't you Moses?** "

The man did not answer but just kept staring straight ahead.

Again the President said, "**Moses!** " in a loud voice.

The man just kept staring ahead, never answering the president.

Soon a secret service agent came along and President Bush grabbed him and said, "**Doesn't this man look like Moses to you?** "

The secret service agent agreed with the President.

Well," said the President, "**Every time I say his name, he just keeps staring ahead and refuses to speak. Watch!**" Again, the President yelled, "**Moses!** " and again the man stared ahead.

The secret service man went up to the man in the white robe and whispered, "**You look just like Moses. Are you Moses?**"

The man leaned over and whispered, "**Yes, I am Moses. But the last time I talked to a bush, I spent 40 years wandering in the desert!**"

You have to be careful who you listen to, or you might end up following something that will lead you into error.

Today, people will follow just about anyone:

Jesus didn't say "**Follow Calvary Chapel**", He didn't say follow **any church or Religion**, He didn't say that we should follow any person at all...Jesus said "**Follow Me**"

Today there are some of the most weird and bizarre religions imaginable that you can follow if you so desire:

There is the “Partridge Family Temple, in Los Angeles that teaches that there are secret spiritual messages hidden in the songs that the Partridge Family sang back in the 60’s.

- ☞ The Partridge Family Temple is a religious organization that bases its belief system on the teachings of the Partridges.
- ☞ *We believe that each of the members of the Partridge Family is a god or goddess.*
- ☞ *We also believe the each element of the show has archetypal symbolic significance.*

Then there is the “**Church of Least Resistance**”

- ☞ Their main doctrine is to stop doing anything and just sit around doing nothing.
- ☞ That all effort is a colossal waste of time that could be spent doing nothing.

“Once you stop trying, you switch from conscious to subconscious, muscles to senses.

STOP MAKING AN EFFORT.

Let yourself flow like a river. Let yourself be taken where life wants to take you, not money. Stop walking upstream; find peace by going with the current. That is the way. That is the truth. That is the life...”

Or there is “**The First Church of Jesus Christ, Elvis**”

- ☞ “For unto you is born this day in the city of Memphis a Presley, which is Elvis the King.”
- ☞ *And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden records; and in the midst of the seven golden records one like unto the Son of Zeke, clothed with a jumpsuit down to the foot, and girthed...er...**girt** about the paunch with rhinestones. His hairs were black like vinyl, as black as Brilcream; and his eyes, how they twinkled, his dimples, how merry...*
- ☞ *Who is this King of Rock-n-Roll? The Lord of Hostess, he is the King of Rock-n-Roll. Shaboom.”*

I am not kidding folks, these are actual churches that exist today, and are just a few of the new whacko religions that exist in the world today, that millions of people follow and devote their lives to.

So it is extremely important that you have an intellectual, moral and reasonable basis for why you follow Jesus.

- ☞ **Jesus is not a religion**, He is not a church, He didn’t claim to be “A way to Heaven”, Jesus claimed to be “The only way to heaven...”
- ☞ **Now either He is telling the truth**, He is a Liar, or He is Crazy and just believes these things about Himself.

- ☞ **If you examine Jesus life** as it is told here in the Scriptures, you will come to just one conclusion, Jesus is the Lord of the Universe, and everything He claimed and said, is the truth.

Last Sunday morning, we were in Cana, where Jesus healed a Roman official's son.

- ☞ **This morning**, we travel to Capernaum where Jesus makes his home base is at Peter's house.

Matthew 4:13-17

13 And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in **Capernaum**, which is **by the sea**, in the regions of **Zebulun and Naphtali**,

Now if you have been paying attention so far, you have noticed that **Jesus is on a very carefully pre planned journey** that He, the Holy Spirit and the Father planned, even before the word was created.

- ☞ **In the Old Testament**, the Lord was very careful to write and predict things that would happen when the promised Savior of the world would come.
- ☞ **He would do certain specific things** and say specific things, and go to specific places, all to fulfill what was written in the Old Testament.

Luke 24:44

Then Jesus said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."

The Father did this on purpose, so that when you read the New Testament and the eye witness accounts of Jesus Life, you would say "**Hey Jesus is doing exactly what the Old Testament said that the Savior of the world would do...** He must be the One that these prophecies are talking about..."

Isaiah 9:1-2

1 Nevertheless the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed, As when at first He lightly esteemed The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, And afterward more heavily oppressed her, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, In Galilee of the Gentiles.

2 The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined.

- ☞ **Zebulun and Naphtali** were 2 of the original 12 tribes of Israel.
- ☞ **Matthew makes a point** of telling us that Jesus came to Capernaum which is in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali because Isaiah the prophet had spoken a prophecy about this Matthew wants us to know that Jesus was fulfilling prophecy by coming to



Capernaum.

- ☞ **The sea** that Matthew is referring to here is “*The Sea of Galilee*”, you will also here it referred to as “*The sea of Tiberius or lake Gennesaret*”.

Matthew 4

14 **that it might be fulfilled** which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

15 "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles:

16 **The people who sat in darkness** have seen **a great light**, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned."

Matthew's point here in showing us that Jesus has come to Zebulun and Naphtali was to show us that He was fulfilling prophecy.

- ☞ **Jesus life** was detailed and planned by the father before time began.
- ☞ **It is important to remember** though that your life also has been carefully planned out for you, bless you and to cause you to grow.

Deuteronomy 30:20

...that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days

Isaiah 43:4

Since you were precious in My sight, You have been honored, And I have loved you; Therefore I will give men for you, And people for your life.

This area of Zebulun and Naphtali, is in the Northern part of Israel.

- ☞ **When the Assyrians** (Babylonians) came to conquer Israel, and carry them back to their land, they repopulated this area with their own people.
- ☞ **Notice that Isaiah calls this area** “*Galilee of the Gentiles*”, because the Assyrians have come to live in this land that once was only populated by the Jews.

Matthew 4

15 "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, **Galilee of the Gentiles:**

When the Jews were released from Babylon after the 70 years that the Lord had said they would be in Babylon, they came back into this land again...but...

“...The people sat in darkness...”

- ☞ **The new residents** of Zebulun and Naphtali, are Pagans, and they are now living with Gods people.
- ☞ **As a result**, whenever we live and hang out with non believers, their darkness becomes darkness to us also.

☞ **These people** here are sitting in darkness, until Jesus come now to this area and brings light with Him.

John 1:4-5

4 In Jesus was life, and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shines in the darkness

Matthew 4

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**"

Jesus begins his ministry to the world the same way that John the Baptist began his, "**Repent Heaven is now within reach.**"

An elderly woman had just returned to her home from an evening Bible study when she was startled to find an intruder in her house.

Catching the man in the act of burglarizing her home, she yelled, "**STOP! Acts 2:38!**" (*"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven."*)

The burglar stopped dead in his tracks, and didn't move... the woman calmly called the police and explained what she had done. Not long after this, several officers arrived and took the man into custody.

As the police officer was placing the handcuffs on the burglar, one of the officers asked him, "*Why did you just stand there? All the lady did was mention a scripture verse.*"

"Scripture?" replied the burglar.

"I thought She said she had an axe and two 38's!"

☞ **The word repent** simply means to change your mind.

☞ **To turn** from going one way, our own selfish self centered way, to the Lords way.

☞ **From self control** to spirit controlled.

There are one of two things that are true for all of us here this morning:

1. **You have not** surrendered your life to Jesus Christ and made that U turn yet.
2. **You have** surrendered your life to Jesus Christ, but you are not allowing Him to truly be "The Lord of your life".

"If Jesus is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all..."

☞ **Whatever the condition** of your walk with Jesus, He is calling us to surrender those places in our life that we have not yet given Him control over.

- ☞ **If you have never invited Jesus** to come into your heart and ask Him to forgive all of your sins, this is your morning to do so.

Matthew 4:18-22

18 And Jesus, walking by **the Sea of Galilee**, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.

Now, I have just a little bit of a problem with the kind of men that Jesus chose to follow Him and tell the good news of what He did for us at the Cross...

- ☞ **I mean, Peter!**, C'mon Jesus is that the best you could do, was Peter?
- ☞ **He's a Big old** dumb fisherman!
- ☞ **He speaks** before he thinks.
- ☞ **He says the dumbest** most impulsive things I have ever heard.
- ☞ **He boasts about being ready to die** for you Jesus, but when that is tested, He Cusses and swears that he has never even met you.

And John, there is a reason they call John "A son of Thunder..." (No it is not for the reason you are thinking!)

Luke 9:52-54

52 and Jesus messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him.

53 But **they did not receive Jesus**,

54 And when His disciples James and **John** saw this, they said, "**Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them**, just as Elijah did?"

Did you hear what John said, when they went to witness in Samaria, to tell them about Jesus, and they did not want to hear?

- ☞ **John says** "Hey Lord I've got an Idea, why don't we just call fire down from heaven a burn them all up, that will teach them to reject you..."
- ☞ **John was called** a "Son of Thunder", because He was always loud and ready to wipe you out if you disagreed with him.

Jesus why did you choose men like this? If you had just waited 2,000 years Lord, you could have had men like us!

Oh wait a minute...Lord... you chose them because they are just like me? , I am impulsive, I talk way to much, and I get mad way to easy..."

- ☞ **You see**, the real reason that Jesus chose such rough and stupid men to follow Him, was that **He wanted us to know that He can change anyone**.
- ☞ **He wanted you to know** that **He can use anyone**.
- ☞ **Your past mistakes** or your present troubles are never obstacles that prevent Jesus from using you.

- ☞ **“Come and Follow Jesus,”** He will do the rest...

Matthew 4

19 Then Jesus said to them, "**Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.**"

20 They **immediately** left their nets and followed Him.

- ☞ **“Follow me”:** Jesus uses 2 Greek words for follow **“Deute”** (dyoo'-teh) which is *“An urgent imperative”* such as **“Come, come now!”**
- ☞ **And “Opiso”** (op-is'-o) *“To get behind or come after.”*

Literally in the Greek language Jesus is saying: “Peter and Andrew come, **come now!** And follow, after Me.”

Don't wait, don't give me excuses, don't try to get your act together first, don't go home and take care of business first...Just come and follow me NOW!

- ☞ **In other words,** If Jesus is truly your Lord, your Boss, your master, the one in control of your life, **then you should leave everything else to follow Him.**
- ☞ **Simply put,** nothing else should hinder you from following Jesus with all of your heart.

But most of the time, there are lots of things that we make a higher priority than following Jesus with all of our heart.

- ☞ **There is another meaning** behind what Jesus is saying here: “Follow Me.”
- ☞ **It means** that we should become Imitators of everything Jesus says and does.

Ephesians 5:1

Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.

- ☞ **The way He treats people,** is the way I should treat people.
- ☞ **The way Jesus talks,** I should be talking.
- ☞ **The priorities that Jesus has,** should be my priorities.

There is even a deeper, more fearful outcome of all of our **“Fishing for Human Souls...”**

Jeremiah 16:16

16 "Now I am sending for many fishermen to fish you **from the deeps where you are hiding from my wrath.** I am sending for hunters to chase you down like deer in the forests or mountain goats on inaccessible crags. Wherever you run to escape my judgment, I will find you and punish you.

Last Sunday, Jesus went to the Synagogue in Nazareth and was handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He picked it up and began to read chapter 61:

Isaiah 61:1-2

1 “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;

2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, (**Jesus stopped here**) And the day of vengeance of our God;
He stopped before He read: To proclaim the day of vengeance of our God...Why didn't He read this?

It was because after Jesus came the first time, He came to Proclaim: “**The Acceptable year of the Lord...**”

- ⊕ **That today, right now**, Jesus is ready to cleanse you of all of your sins and give to you eternal life.
- ⊕ **But when Jesus returns** the second time, at the Rapture, it will be to “**Proclaim the day of Gods Wrath...**”

There is a day that Jesus has already determined, when all the Grace and Mercy and the patience He has poured out on mankind for thousands of years, will finally run out, and then the time will come for Judgment.

When Paul went to Athens, he began to tell the people there:

Acts 17:30-31

30 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,

31 because **He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world** in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.

- ⊕ **Jeremiah says** that Jesus will send out fishermen for that harvest too... to find those during the Great Tribulation that are hiding from His wrath.
- ⊕ **He tells them that** “Wherever they run to escape, He will find them and punish them...”

So, there is even a greater reason that we should all be “**Fishers of Men**” right now today, while it is still called today.

- ⊕ **There is a day coming** when no one will fish for the souls of men and women to save them, but instead it will be to bring them to Judgment.
- ⊕ **Now the Bible is very clear** that at the moment you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, all judgment for your life has ended.
- ⊕ **The person who belongs to Jesus** all of their sins were already paid for at Jesus Cross, so that they will never stand before God in Judgment for those sins again.

But what about all of those who have never heard the simple message that “**Jesus died for you so that you could have all of your sins cleansed and so that you could be forgiven and have eternal live...but you must accept Him yourself as your own Lord and Savior...**”

- ☞ **You and I** don't have that much time to fish for souls for salvation.
- ☞ **Their lives** are literally in our hands.
- ☞ **We have been given the power** of Life and Death over every person on the earth.
- ☞ **We are the messengers** of the greatest gift the universe has ever known.
- ☞ **We must deliver that message** to everyone we meet...
- ☞ **It is time to get out your fishing gear and start reeling them in.**

Now one of the mistakes we make is that Jesus said that we are to be “Fishers of Men”, but Jesus didn't say that we are to be “Cleaners of Men.”

Jesus said, “**You catch em, I'll clean them...**”

- ☞ **In other words**, Our part is to tell people about what Jesus has done for us.
- ☞ **His part** is to take their lives and clean them and change them.
- ☞ **So many times we act like our job** is to clean up peoples lives, but that is not for us to do.
- ☞ **We just bring them to Jesus** and love them, and He will do the rest.

And remember, it is not the number of souls that you catch, it is the individual soul that you take the time and the Love to nurture them and grow them in their faith that matters the most.

- ☞ **It is not the number of people** we bring to Jesus that we are to be concerned about it is the size of the faith in one person that we help created that matters the most...

A fisherman returned to shore with a giant marlin that was bigger and heavier than he was.

On the way to the cleaning shed, he ran into a second fisherman who had a stringer with a dozen baby minnows.

The fisherman with the small fish looked at the man with the great big marlin, and said to him “**Only caught one, eh?**”

Matthew 4

19 Then Jesus said to them, “**Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.**”

20 They **immediately** left their nets and followed Him.

Notice that Jesus said “**Follow Me and I will make you...fishers of men...**”

- ☞ **Who gives you the ability** to tell other people about Jesus, **He does.**
- ☞ **He will make you** a fisher of men.

- ☞ **It is not by your trying** to be a fisherman of souls.
- ☞ **It is not by your power or abilities**, it will be **by His Holy Spirit** dwelling in you, that you will become a fisher of souls.

Now from the Jewish perspective, this was a very strange concept that Jesus is teaching these men who have come to follow Him.

- ☞ **Usually when a Rabbi took a student** under his teaching, he would allow them to follow him around and memorize every little thing about their teacher.
- ☞ **Here Jesus is doing something completely different**, He is Empowering those who follow Him **to do the work themselves** of bringing people into eternal life.

Think about this for a moment,: The Creator of everything that exists, has placed into your hands, the awesome privilege **of being able to effect someone else's life, FOR ETERNITY.**

- ☞ **When you bring a person** and introduce them to Jesus and they surrender their lives to Him, **you have helped someone forever and ever.**
- ☞ **We all know how great it feels** to help someone or encourage someone, imagine what it will feel like to help someone, not for just today or a few day, **BUT FOREVER!**

The person that you lead to Jesus will live forever and ever, and ever!

- ☞ **A hundred trillion years from now**, they will still be thankful that you took the time to tell them how wonderful Jesus is.

When Jesus calls Peter and Andrew in verses 19 and 20, *“They immediately left their nets and followed Him.”*

Today Jesus is calling you to not only follow Him, but allow Him to begin to use you to bring others into Heaven also, He has given to you the incredible opportunity.

- ☞ **Peter and John** immediately responded to Jesus *“Yes Lord”*
- ☞ **What is your response** to Jesus this morning?
- ☞ **Now remember**, Jesus doesn't expect you to do this in your own strength and abilities, He said He will give you the ability to do it.
- ☞ **But you have to take that first step** and say to Him this morning, ***“Yes Lord, I want to be used to bring people to you...”***
- ☞ **Then just begin to tell people** what Jesus has done for you personally, He will take care of the rest.
- ☞ **You don't have to have all kinds of scriptures memorized**, you just have to tell others what the Lord has done for you.

And don't be afraid to ask questions and seek to learn how to better lead people to Jesus, there is no such thing as **“A Dumb Question...”**

A father and son went fishing one day. While they were out in the boat, the boy suddenly became curious about the world around him. He asked his father, "**How does this boat float?**"

The father replied, "*Don't rightly know son.*" A little later, the boy looked at his father and asked, "**How do fish breath underwater?**"

Once again the father replied, "*Don't rightly know son.*" A little later the boy asked his father, "**Why is the sky blue?**"

Again, the father replied. "*I Don't rightly know son.*" Finally, the boy asked his father, "**Dad, do you mind my asking you all of these questions?**"

The father replied, "*Of course not son, if you don't ask questions, you'll never learn nothin'.*"