

Following Jesus

“16 Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. 17 And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. 18 And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.” (Mark 1:16-18 KJV)

When Jesus called Simon and Andrew his brother He told them, ***“Come ye after me, and I will make you to become”*** The point here is this: **When Jesus is calling you He will make of you something good if you follow Him.** Many people they are busy in their lives to achieve certain things and reach certain goals in their education, profession, and businesses. But they forgot that themselves they cannot do anything for themselves unless Jesus do that for them. Jesus clearly said the following, ***“5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” (John 15:5 KJV)*** So apart from Jesus you can do nothing. If you refuse to follow Him and go after Him then you will end up with no achievement and no progress in life.

When Jesus called Simon and his brother Andrew they immediately left everything and followed Him. ***“18 And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.” (Mark 1:18 KJV)*** That imparts to us the following: **When Jesus is calling us we are somehow and somewhat busy in doing certain things and our hands are holding something.** But when He calls us, to respond to His call we need to leave what is in our hands so we can receive the new things that He is preparing to us to receive. Many they do not like to give up what is in their hands. But how they will receive the new blessings of God if they are unwilling to put aside what is in their hands. **Therefore for God to make out of you something good, then you need to give up what is in your hand and follow God’s call.**

I am not telling you, to follow Jesus is to leave your job as Peter and Andrew left the nets, but to leave the things that you need to leave so you can follow Christ; you need to leave the things that contradict His will and His Word so you can receive the new blessings in Christ.

When Jesus said to Peter and Andrew, ***“Come ye after me, and I will make you to become”*** His plan for Peter and Andrew was to promote them, lift them up and upgrade them. Every time God is calling us, there is promotion for us to a higher level. If we respond and follow Jesus then we can receive that.

We follow the Lord by following His Word and the leading of the Holy Spirit. If we fail to follow the command of the Lord then we are no more in the correct path and that will entail regress and no progress in our lives.

“19 And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. 20 And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.” (Mark 1:19-20 KJV) Jesus after He called Simon and Andrew He called James and John. Jesus is still calling other people to follow Him, even today, because He wants to bless them by making them something good. The purpose of this message is that God is calling you to bless you, makes you something good and a blessing to others.

“12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” (John 8:12 KJV) Jesus said that whoever follows Him will not live in darkness but in the light. *** What is darkness? Some may answer and say, life in sin is living in darkness. That is correct. So to follow Christ is to live away from sin. * Also darkness it have another meaning. To live in darkness, is to live without light, then you will not be able to find the right way and the correct direction. If you cannot see, then you cannot move and you cannot progress. And the worse if there is no light to see the direction, then you may move and go backward and regress dramatically. Those who do not follow the LORD they are in darkness. They have no clear way where to go. When you speak to them they don’t have sense of direction, they don’t have clear vision or proper plan; when you observe their lives then you will find no fruit and no progress. So here we can easily conclude that when you do not follow Jesus then you are lost, moving in wrong direction and there is no progress in your life.**

The same Peter, he lost his focus on the Lord after Christ’s crucifixion and His resurrection from the dead. He went to the nets that he left (He went back to his old life) and went away from following Christ and pulled out others with him. ***“1 After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself. 2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. 3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. 4 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. 5 Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.” (John 21:1-5 KJV)*** The first question Jesus asked them was the following: ***“Children, have ye any meat?”*** As if Jesus was telling them indirectly and especially to Peter, ‘What you had achieved being away from following me?’ ... **No achievement for us if we move away from following Christ.** Then the next thing that the Lord did, He instructed them with the following: ***“6 And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.” (John 21:6 KJV)*** Jesus with such help to His disciples was calling them once again to trust Him and follow Him. He was reminding them that they cannot manage their lives and their living without following Him. **Therefore today Jesus is speaking to you to come back to Him and to follow Him as before so He will bless you and restore His blessings back to you. “7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher’s coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. 8 And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.” (John 21:7-8 KJV)** Peter was naked without coat, but when he heard and was aware that Jesus appeared to them, he was ashamed and at once put on his coat. **What I want to say here is that when you are away from Jesus you start to do funny things, wearing non decent clothes, putting make up, painting your nails, telling lies, watching TV, busy on the Media, going to parties, smoking, drinking wine, starting to have an affair, ... Yes I am telling you, You are doing very funny things, repent and behave Jesus is calling you back to Him.**

“9 As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. 10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.” (John 21:9-11 KJV) So 153 big fish that they caught on that morning was a large amount of income to Peter and to those who were with him. **In the same way this also will be the result for you if you decide to follow Christ and walk in His ways and according to His Word. Not only spiritual blessing but material blessings you will gain if you decide to follow Christ.**

“12 Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. 13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. 14 This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.” (John 21:12-14 KJV) The Lord in His coming to His disciples and in enabling them to catch a big amount of fish, He comforted His disciples and He encouraged them to once again to follow Him and to start to serve Him.

The same thing the Lord is doing now for you. God is calling you to follow Him and walk faithfully in His ways, and then you will be able to achieve good things; for the Lord Himself will work out that to you. You will be able to see clearly with the Holy Spirit and will have a vision and a sense of direction as you follow Christ.

“15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.” (John 21:15-17 KJV)

To follow Jesus is to obey His Word and His commands to you. To each and every one of us Jesus is giving certain instructions so that our life will be fruitful and our ministry will be effective and productive. The Lord already gave Peter a responsibility to be a fisher of men to win souls for God. “Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.” (Mark 1:17 KJV) But Peter went back to his old life and style of living forgetting what the Lord had instructed him to do. Therefore once again the Lord went back to Peter and challenged him if he truly love Him, and Peter confirmed to the Lord that he truly love Him, and Jesus answered to him that if he truly love Him he needed to show that by his care to His sheep as the Lord told him, **“Feed my lambs, Feed my sheep.”**

The meaning of the Lord’s Word to Peter is that he needed to be a mature person by being responsible and having a caring attitude toward others. **The same is for you, if you really love the Lord then you show that by your willingness to do the works and the task that He is asking you to do.** The Bible tells us the following: **“18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.” (1 John 3:18 KJV)** **Our love toward the Lord should be manifested in form of actions and deeds in accordance to what God had ordained to us to do, “10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10 KJV)**

The Lord also told Peter the following: **“18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. 19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.” (John 21:18-19 KJV)** Here Jesus explained to Peter that when he was young and not yet mature he was preparing himself, dressed, and went where he wanted to go, **as many times you are doing your own will and going and moving to the places that you wish and like.** But then the Lord told Peter that when he will be old that he will stretch his hands and another person shall dress him and carry him to the place that he would not like to go. Now we need to explain what Jesus meant. He told Peter that he will stretch his hands and not one hand so he needed to open them very wide and as much as he can. For someone to take him somewhere he will take one of his hands and pull him and not the two hands, but if the two hands are stretched then they will be in opposite direction and so the person who will take him by his two stretched hands will not be able to move him in any direction but only to stretch the hands more, and this is possible and suitable when the two hands are stretched to be nailed on the cross, the place that Peter would not like to go when he was young and run away when Jesus arrested to be crucified, and this explanation is confirmed by what is written after about the kind of death that Peter would glorify God as we are aware from the history that Peter was crucified, **“This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God.” (John 21:19 KJV)** For Peter to be able to take care and feed the lamps and the sheep of Jesus he ought to be willing to crucify his own will, ambitions and plans and be willing to go even to the places that He was not willing to go. Otherwise he cannot do the task that the Lord had entrusted to Him. And then the Lord said to him **“Follow me!”** It means to be willing to suffer for Christ and offer his life willingly as a living sacrifice to Him. **In the same way for you to serve God you need to be willing to crucify your sinful nature, your ambitions and your own will and be willing to suffer for God and ready to go where God had called you to go. Not according to your will and not according to your plan, desires and wishes.**

To follow Christ it means to be willing to put aside the old plans and dreams, “1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” (Romans 12:1 KJV) **Now throw away the worldly style of living and take hold of what God had planned for you then you will truly enjoy life in Christ and His will for you: “2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” (Romans 12:2 KJV)**

Let us continue: **“20 Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? 21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? 22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.” (John 21:20-22 KJV)** Peter’s mind and thoughts here were not focus on Jesus only but was divided toward others as well and what God would do to them. The Lord noticed that and discerned that such attitude was hindering Peter from going forward to serve Him, that such attitude made Peter not able to follow Jesus. Therefore Jesus worked it out to correct it, and so the Lord rebuked Peter when He asked Him, **“what is that to thee?”** And then he told Peter, **“follow thou me.”** **Focusing on other people will not only make you turned away from the Lord and lost your focus, but you will lose your affectivity and productivity. God had given**

you a task and a responsibility to do, this you need to do faithfully and wholeheartedly. Don't compare yourself with others and don't mind other people's work and business. Don't compare your ministry with others. You follow Jesus by doing perfectly what Jesus had asked you to achieve of ministry; ***"follow thou me"***, is the admonishment of Jesus today for you, in order to correct you and to bring you back to the way that Jesus had outlined for you to go through.

Peter was really benefited from that rebuke of Jesus, and that was an effective way in calling Peter back and fully to get involve in serving God. In the same way God might rebuke you through this message because you had turned away from Him and had put your eyes on people. You will be more effective in service if you compare yourself with God's Word and follow the good example, ***"17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample."*** (Philippians 3:17 KJV)

Peter did very well after that meeting with the Lord and did what was required of him. And the Lord was so faithful to help Peter and to save him from various troubles. ***"1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. 2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. 3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) 4 And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people. 5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him."*** (Acts 12:1-5 KJV) The Lord worked out to deliver Peter from the above trouble in this way, ***"6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. 7 And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. 8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me."*** (Acts 12:6-8 KJV) Peter truly followed him; ***"9 And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. 10 When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him."*** (Acts 12:9-10 KJV) As Peter followed the Lord he was delivered from the big problem that he was in and himself realized that, ***"11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the LORD hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews."*** (Acts 12:11 KJV) To follow Jesus will secure to you the future and give you deliverance from troubles and you will be able to escape from the hands of wicked people. ***"10 The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe."*** (Proverbs 18:10 KJV) As you obey the Lord and respond to His call, He is able to save you and deliver you from all kinds of trouble as you agree to obey Jesus.

My dear and beloved: Ponder on the following statement and respond appropriately to them.

- Jesus is calling you, and will make out of you something good if you follow Him.
- Apart from Jesus you can do nothing. If you refuse to follow Him and go after Him then you will end up with no achievement and no progress in life.

- For God to make you something, then you need to give up what is in your hand and follow God's call.
- I am not telling you, to follow Jesus is to leave your job as Peter and Andrew left the nets, but to leave the things that you need to leave so you can follow Christ; you need to leave the things that contradict His will and His Word so you can receive the new blessings in Christ.
- Every time God is calling you, there is a promotion for you to a higher level. If you respond and follow Jesus then you can receive that.
- You follow the Lord by following His Word and the leading of the Holy Spirit. If you fail to follow the command of the Lord then you are no more in the correct path and that will entail regress and no progress in your life.
- The purpose of this message that God is calling you to bless you, makes you something good and a blessing to others.
- To follow Christ is to live away from sin.
- When you do not follow Jesus then you are lost, moving in wrong direction and there is no progress in your life.
- No achievement for you if you move away from following Christ.
- Today Jesus is speaking to you to come back to Him and to follow Him as before so He will bless you and restore His blessings back to you.
- Get rid of all the funny things that you are doing, wearing non decent clothes, putting make up, painting your nails, telling lies, watching TV, busy on the Media, going to parties, drinking wine, smoking, starting to have an affair, ... Yes I am telling you, You are doing very funny things, repent and behave Jesus is calling you back to Him.
- Obey the instructions that He is giving you so that your life will be fruitful and your ministry will be effective and productive.
- Show your real love to the Lord by your willingness to do the works and the task that He is asking you to do. Your love toward the Lord should be manifested in form of actions and deeds in accordance to what God had ordained for you to do.
- For you to serve God you need to be willing to crucify your sinful nature, your ambitions and your own will and be willing to suffer for God and ready to go where God had called you to go. Not according to your will and not according to your plan, desires and wishes. To follow Christ it means to be willing to put aside the old plans and dreams.
- Throw away the worldly style of living and take hold of what God had planned for you then you will truly enjoy life in Christ and His will for you:
- Focusing on other people will not only make you turned away from the Lord and lost your focus, but you will lose your affectivity and productivity. God had given you a task and a responsibility to do, this you need to do faithfully and wholeheartedly. Don't compare yourself with others and don't mind other people's work and business. Don't compare your ministry with others. You follow Jesus by doing perfectly what Jesus had asked you to achieve of ministry
- ***"follow thou me"***, is what Jesus is telling you now in order to correct you and to bring you back to the way that He had outlined for you to go through. Repent and follow Him and He will secure to you the future and give you deliverance from troubles and from the hands of wicked people.

Let us pray ...

My prayer: Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins and rose again from the dead to give me eternal life. Lord thank you for your call to me to come to you and serve you. Lord thank you for your Word that describes to me the way that you want me to follow you. Lord thank you for all the corrections, the rebukes and the admonishments we received in this message.

Repent and renounce all your sins. Renounce your pride, anger, fights, unforgiveness, speaking bad words, telling lies, and your lack of faith and love. Repent of your grumbling, complaining, laziness, your carelessness about the things of God and your non willingness to serve Him. Repent of your stubbornness and delay obedience. Repent of your worldliness, your greed and your love for material things. Renounce your selfishness and your bad example to others around you. Repent of your lack of prayer and reading God's Word. Repent of doing your own will and plan and not the will nor the plan of God. Repent of your lack of the fruit of the Spirit. Lord I repent, forgive me, I renounce the following sins _____.

Lord I will leave what you asked me to leave_____, Lord I will leave the sin that I entangle with _____, Lord I will follow you to live in the light, to see clearly the way and to enjoy your good plan for me. Lord I commit myself to focus my eyes on you and not on others and to serve you wholeheartedly. Lord I entrust to you all my enemies and those who are persecuting me. Lord you are able to deal with them and deliver me out from their hands. This is my prayer in Jesus name, Amen.

Lord thank you for my Brothers and Sisters who repented of their sins and committed their lives to you to follow your Word and your call for them. Lord help them to persevere, protect them and provide for them to continue to serve you.

Lord bless us as a church and help us to implement fully your Word that we learned in this message in the life of your church. Lord we commit ourselves to follow you and to do the ministry that you entrusted to us. Lord we commit ourselves not to turn from you and look on others, but we will follow you to the end and to go where you want us to go until we finish your works. Lord refill us once again with your Holy Spirit, and with your love so that we can go forward and do the mission's work that you entrusted us to do. Lord lead us to evangelize and reach new people and serve them, and make new disciples and train new workers, planting new Bible studies and congregations for the church. Lord prepare us for your coming that when you come we are ready to go with you. Lord fulfill the vision of the church, 'Multiplication in peace with implementing the whole will of God'. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us and free us from harm so we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

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