

Jesus Said Follow Me

Matt 9:9

As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me ." So he arose and followed Him. NKJV

This seems such a simple passage with such a simple story. As Jesus passes by He says to Matthew, Follow Me. Matthew gets up and follows Jesus. But is it really that simple. I think not.

Matthew was a wealthy businessman, a tax collector, one of the most despised professions among the Jews. It found itself in the same category as prostitutes. I have often wondered what the others thought when they heard Jesus extend to this terrible sinner such an invitation.

But what about Matthew? Was he supposed to abandon his very lucrative profession to follow this itinerant street preacher?

I think there are a few things we should clear up first. One, Matthew had been to hear John the Baptist preach and had already committed his life to the coming Messiah. He has been baptized by John. (Acts 1:22)

So this was not just a brief first encounter as it might appear. Matthew would later be named by Jesus as one of His Apostles, but Matthew did not know that at this point.

But Matthew was not the only one to whom Jesus had given this call. Jesus had once told four fishermen, "Follow Me and I will make your fishers of men." Jesus often invited, even challenged people to take up their cross and to follow Jesus. Matt 16:24; Mark 8:34; Mark 10:21; Luke 9:23.

As we begin this series on discipleship, we want see that this call to follow is a call of love.

- I. We do not often relate discipleship with love.
 - A. But God's ultimate plan for us is to conform us to the image of His Son.
 - 1. Rom 8: 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. NKJV
 - 2. That is a very loving purpose for there is none so happy and fulfilled as Jesus.
 - B. We must never forget, it was not us who first loved Jesus, but He who first loved us and called, courted us, and pursued us for Himself
 - 1. 1 John 4:19 We love Him because He first loved us . NKJV
- II. But I thought of a passage over in the Song of Solomon
 - A. Song 2:10-13 "Rise up, my love, my fair one, And come away . 11 For lo, the winter is past, The rain is over and gone. 12 The flowers appear on the earth; The time of singing has come, And the voice of the turtledove Is heard in our land. 13

The fig tree puts forth her green figs, And the vines with the tender grapes Give a good smell. Rise up, my love, my fair one, And come away ! NKJV

- B. God loves us, He sent His Son to die in our place.
 - C. Greater love has no one than this to lay down his life for his friends.
- III. This week many people will spend money on candy and roses for Valentine's Day.
- A. But the greatest gift didn't come with flowers, it came with thorns, a crown of thorns.
 - B. It was His love for us that kept them there.
 - C. When He calls to us follow Me, it is a call of love.
- IV. We see that it is a call of love because of the good He would do for us.
- A. He would take us from this place of want and sorrow to His place, heaven.
 - B. He would wipe all tears from our eyes.
 - C. He would that we might behold Him in all His glory and enjoy Him forever.
- V. We see His love in that He would protect us from all harm.
- A. He delivers us from the power of sin and Satan in our lives.
 - B. He takes us from the kingdom of darkness and brings us into His glorious light.
 - 1. Col 1:13-14 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. NKJV
- VI. He gives us His wisdom so that we are not deceived by the world and the trickery of the devil.
- A. He gives us His prospective so we know that we are in the world but not of it.
 - B. So many are not interested in the things of God for the things of Satan has them mesmerized.
 - C. Like the shiny lure that the angular uses to catch his prey so Satan uses glitter to attract so many today.
 - D. But those who have answered the call of Jesus see the trickery of the devil.
 - E. They see the temporariness of this world.
 - F. Like the good wife who is faithful for she understands the misery and disappointment and destruction of pursuing pleasure.
- VII. He calls us to never leave us nor forsake us.
- A. As David said that even in the valley of the shadow of death He does not forsake

us.

- B. His rod and staff are a comfort to us.
- C. And when we see our loved ones leave this world for His, we do not sorrow as those who have no hope, knowing that once they too heard the call and followed Jesus.
- D. In the greatest trials and persecutions He gives us strength to speak boldly for Him and not keep silent.

VIII. When He calls us to follow, He never leads us where He has not already gone.

- A. Heb 4:14-16 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. NKJV

- B. Where ever you are following Jesus today, He has already been there.

Jesus loves you more than anyone else in your life. He is calling, "Follow Me."

Can you hear Him? Will you follow?

And if once already, maybe years ago you heard that call but have gotten sidetracked by the world. Won't you go over to the corner where you left it when you wanted to be comfortable.

Go to the corner where you laid down the cross, and pick it up again and continue your journey with Him.