

Dare to Follow Jesus

by Neil Rhodes

The sermon challenges listeners to recognize Jesus' voice and respond to his invitation to follow him, trusting in his leadership and guidance.

Duration: 55:41

Scripture: Matthew 4:18, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 16:13-14, Mark 16:15

Topics: "Following Jesus", "Gods Calling"

Description

In this sermon, titled 'Dare to Follow Jesus,' the preacher focuses on the calling of Simon Peter and Andrew by Jesus. He emphasizes the urgency and importance of responding to God's call immediately, without hesitation. The preacher challenges the audience to examine their own response to God's call and to consider whether they are truly following Jesus in all aspects of their lives. He concludes by highlighting the power and presence of God that accompanies those who believe and follow Him.

Transcript

This message is one of the Times Square Church Pulpit series. It was recorded in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in Manhattan, New York City. Other tapes are available by writing World Challenge, PO Box 260, Lindell, Texas 75771, or calling 903-963-8626.

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And as I mentioned a little earlier, dare to follow Jesus is the title. This portion of scripture in Matthew chapter 4, excuse me, did I say chapter 4? Yes, chapter 4, verse 18 is the calling of Simon or Peter. And verse 18 says, And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers.

And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. Look at verse 20. And they hesitated, took their time, got their business in order, went to the bank, Bible says, straightway left their nets and followed him.

Lord Jesus, I ask you that you would take this word, you have so written this into the table of my heart and challenged my life so powerfully. And Lord, I want to respond just every single day, not just a one-time

response, but my heart is, I want to respond every day. And when you call, I follow.

Lord, that's my heart's desire. I pray that this will be the heart's desire of every person. Lord, hearing this word today, that we would come to the same conclusion, that when Jesus calls, we go.

Minister to our hearts, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Let me ask you a question, since we are a lot of people here tonight, we have to make it rhetorical because I don't want you to answer me.

You can if you want. You can put your hand up if you like. But let me ask you a couple of questions.

If Jesus came into this house today, if he walked in right now and he said, follow me, would you? Let me ask you again. If Jesus came into the house tonight and he said, follow me, would you? Let me ask you a second question. What do you think he would look like so that you could make the decision to follow him? We're in New York City.

If somebody walked in and started with long hair and a big beard and big old flowing garb and walked in here, he just came in here, number one, our security team would grab him. Before you can answer the question, you have to answer the second question, what does he look like? Who are you going to respond to? I said if Jesus came in here, but how do you know what he looks like? If he came in with long flowing robes and stood in the front here, this is New York City, and said, follow me, I would be surprised if many of you went. I would.

How would you know? What does he look like? Or we have the movies to give us some kind of a picture of what Jesus looks like. How do we know what he looks like? The Bible says that he has nothing about him that he should be desired. When he says this, in John chapter 1 verse 43, the day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee and he findeth Philip and saith unto him, follow me.

So here we have Jesus, there's another person, he finds Philip, and then later on we can talk about Matthew and he's sitting at the receipt of table and he's there getting all the taxes from people as they come by boat and they've got to pay taxes to the Romans. He's not a light person, he's a Jew collecting money from Jewish people and he's collecting money for Rome. He's not even light.

But Jesus comes to him and says the same thing to him. He says, Levi or Matthew, follow me. Well, what do you think Jesus looked like? You know, the movies give him this robe that is bleached white.

Everybody else's robe is dirty, but his is always sparkling white. So it must be in those days it would have been easy to recognize him because he had the cleanest robe on. Right? So if Jesus came into the house tonight and said, follow me, how would you know it was Jesus? Who would you follow? How would you know it was the Son of God? If you go back and you take a look at Samson, his parents, when the angel of the Lord came and spoke to Manoah's wife and said, you're going to have a child and you're going to call his name Samson, and she went and told her husband, and when he meets the angel, he doesn't even know, are you the man who spoke to my wife? Are you really an angel? Can I get food? Fire comes down out of heaven, consumes it, and he still is not convinced that this is an angel of God.

How do we know? So let me ask you a question. If Jesus came into the house tonight and said to me, said to you, follow me, would you? All right. All right.

Well, we'll see who you'd follow. What about Jesus and Pastor Carter when he says to you, I'd like you to go on a short-term missions trip? Is that Jesus speaking to you through Pastor Carter? Why don't you

follow? Why don't you follow? Or should we take account of what we're doing? Should we go to our bank account? How do we deal with it? How do we deal when God speaks to us? How does he speak to us? We say, yes, we're going to follow Jesus, but we don't even know what he looks like. And yet when he speaks in the house, do we follow? No, you don't.

Let me ask you the question again. If Jesus comes into the house and says, maybe through me, maybe through an elder, maybe through the singing, maybe through, and he says, follow me, do you follow him? All right. It's getting a little bit more quieter.

I'm hoping to quieten you right down so that there's no answer coming out of you until you say, yes, because you know by the power of the Holy Ghost that he's speaking to you. So Jesus will reveal himself, but I just wanted to begin this message tonight by challenging you because we got this concept because we already love Jesus. We've already said, yes, come into my heart and life.

And so if Jesus, we got this idea, if Jesus came in, yeah, we would follow him. We wouldn't even tell the family. We'd up and go.

But you don't even know what he looks like. So anybody could come in here. Would you follow anybody? And the scripture says, don't do that.

How do you know it's Jesus that you're going to follow? And when you hear him speaking to you, do you follow? See, I'm challenged. My life is completely and utterly challenged by this word. I have been in this word.

I don't know how far I'm going to get, but I have been so challenged by this word because there are times that he speaks. I was walking down the street here one day, and here is this man who's asking for money. I don't know if he's been there once or a hundred times, but he asked me for money.

And that particular day, I know I didn't have any money in my bill. I didn't have a dollar. I didn't have a nickel.

I didn't have a dime. I didn't have any money on me. So I didn't feel like I could stop and say, yeah, okay, I don't have any money.

So I'm walking by. He asked me for some money. And then he says, if you don't have any money, would you even just go in here and buy me some lunch? I said, I can't.

And I kept walking. You see, I have a problem with my heart. I have a problem with me.

Because when I got inside, the Holy Ghost said, why didn't you give to that man? Didn't I say in my word, if any man asks you of anything, that you'll give to him. And you know when God is speaking to you. My sheep know my voice.

So we are going to get there, beloved. We might not know what he looks like, but we know his voice. It speaks to us on the inside.

So I know that this is God, but I don't do it. I don't do it. So how can I say, if Jesus came in here, he did come in here.

He did speak. He did say, feed this man. He did say, go help him.

But I did not. So how can I say, straightway, they left their nets and followed him. Alright.

Is this making sense? See, Jesus in the New Testament is the same Jesus in the Old Testament. 1 Corinthians says this, and did not all drink the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that same spiritual rock that followed. Now we're going to take a look at this word, followed, in the New Testament.

It's an interesting word. We just think they followed him. When Jesus says, follow me, what does that mean? What does that say to us? Just reading the English helps us a little bit, but not a whole lot.

But he means just to follow him. And so the Bible says that this is the rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. So we know that the Christ of the New Testament is none other than the same Jesus who followed them in the Old Testament.

He was with them. Everywhere they were, there he was, and he was leading them and guiding them. Now, the word when he says to Peter here, he says, and Jesus walking by the Sea of Galilee, he says to Simon and to his brother Andrew, follow me.

Later on, well, in John, he talks to Philip and he says, follow me. Now, these are two different words that we are dealing with. In John chapter 1, verse 43, the day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee.

He said to Philip, follow me. Now, the word followed there means to accompany another in the way. So Jesus says this.

To paraphrase it, it would be like this. Jesus comes along and he would say, Elder Jukes, or Philip, join me in the way. See, that's what the Greek is saying.

So it's not just a case of follow me. There's an invitation to join him. See, the invitation of Jesus is, would you join me in the way I'm going? Not your way, but it's an invitation.

Do you want to join me in the way that I'm going? And they saw it. What was going on in their hearts? The Bible doesn't tell us what is going on in Levi's heart as he's sitting in the receipt of custom. It doesn't say, maybe his marriage is messed up, maybe he hates what he's doing, and maybe he sees the poor keep coming in, and they're having to pay taxes, and he just hates his job.

Who knows what God is doing in the heart, but there comes Jesus and says to him, Levi, or Matthew, do you want to join me in the way that I'm going? What a chance, man. That guy jumps out of the thing and says, you've got to believe it. Man, I don't even like the way I'm going.

I hate what I'm doing. And so he jumps at the opportunity. And so it means to accompany.

Join me in the way. That's what it means. You see, Isaiah sees it clearly through prophecy.

In Isaiah 53, he says, we all like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way. In Isaiah, again, he says, let the wicked forsake his way.

Forsake your way. Don't go your way. Every man has turned to his own way.

What's good for me? You know, it doesn't matter. You can be homeless or you can be at the top of the echelon in business. And everybody, from the top to the bottom, you only care for number one.

Oh, I know we care for some, but no, you don't. You care for number one. And we're all like that.

Our hearts are so selfish. We only care for me. How is this going to benefit my life? How am I going to be better off by doing what I do? Oh, I'll serve other people.

But is it going to be a blessing and a benefit to me? You see, we've all gone our own way. But Isaiah says, let the wicked forsake his way. And the unrighteous man his thoughts.

And let him return unto the Lord. And he will have mercy on him and to our God. And he will abundantly pardon.

So if you turn and go God's way. He says, listen, I will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts.

You've got no way of escape out of these things that captivate your mind. You've got no way from escaping the burden of sin. But if you come to me, I can abundantly pardon.

My thoughts aren't your thoughts. Neither your ways, my ways. So even Isaiah, he begins to see that God has a way that is different to our way.

So are my ways higher than your ways? You think you've got a good... That you will ever understand in your life. He says, my ways and my thoughts are way higher, way better than anything that you could ever imagine. Eye hasn't seen, we sang that tonight.

Ear hasn't heard the things that God has stored up for them that love him. But the Bible goes on to say, but he has revealed these things unto us by the Spirit. So he says, so Isaiah sees this.

And so again he's saying to Philip, do you want to join me? So when he says to Philip, Philip, follow me. He's saying, do you want to join me where I'm going? Do you want to join me? I'm giving you an invitation to join me where I'm headed. Do you want to come with me? Now, if Jesus came in here tonight and we all recognized him.

And he said, I'd like you to join me where I'm going. What would your answer be? You want to join him on that trip? All right. Okay.

We'll have a look. Let's see where Jesus is going. Now, the Bible says in Hebrews chapter 10 verse 20, by a brand new living way.

So we know that this way, Hebrews tells us, it's life. So Hebrews comes along and he says, this is a new and living way. If you join with Jesus, you're coming into life, folks.

He says, you're going to come into life, what life is really all about. It's a new and it's a living way. Everything else is death.

Everything else you put your hand to is just going to collapse. It's going to come to nothing. But if you go my way, Hebrew writer says, you're coming into a living way.

You're coming into a way that's going to be life for you. John chapter 14 says this. Thomas said to him, Lord, you know, you're telling us that you're going somewhere, but we don't know where you're going.

And you know, it's an amazing thing. He never tells us. In fact, if you go back to Matthew, I mean, back to Numbers chapter 33, don't turn there.

But let me just tell you about Numbers chapter 33. Numbers 33 is about 47 or 41 times. It talks about where God led the children of Israel from one place to another place to another place to another place.

In fact, if you go to Deuteronomy and some of the other Old Testament books, you find out that in 40 years, all these people with God had to move house like something like 63 times in 40 years. Let me ask you a question. Are you prepared to move house 63 times in the next 40 years? And some places are not that nice to camp at.

You see, the thing with Jesus, with God, when he says, follow me, he didn't want their ideas. He didn't want their plans. Moses doesn't go up to the mountain and say, now listen, God, we went to Marah last time.

Pretty bad place. Now, the elders and I have got together and we've mapped out the land. And we suggest that you go straight over there to this place over here.

God says, no, I don't need your plans. You see, God already knows where he was taking them. And you read that chapter.

He knows the next lesson that they need to learn. He knows the next place that they need to trust God in. So for 63 times in 40 years, God was actually leading.

They were following God. There goes the cloud. There goes the fire.

And God, they're following God at every place that he takes them. They don't know where they're going. Well, they know they're in the wilderness, but they don't know where is the next place God is going to take them.

So let me ask you a question. We don't know exactly where the next place is that God is going to take us. It could be here.

It could be there. You could be sitting in a service. The next thing the Holy Ghost says, I want you to go to China.

Are you prepared to leave your house and go to China? Let me ask you the question. If Jesus came in here tonight and said to you, follow me, what is your answer going to be to him? All right. So you're prepared to move 63 times in the next 40 years.

It doesn't matter where you live. God, whatever you do, I'll pack up my house and I'll go. So we have the pattern that God knows where he is going and he knows where the next place is.

He knows where the next attack is going to come from. He knows what is going to be needed ahead of us. He knows exactly what we have need of.

All he wants to know is, are you going to join him in the trip? Jesus says to Philip, will you join me? Now, it gets a little interesting as we go along. By the way, there's several scriptures on the way, but let me move on here. In Matthew 4, verse 18, this is where we started our scripture reading tonight.

The word changes in the Greek. There's an absolute Greek change here when Jesus comes to Peter, or to Simon, called Peter, and Andrew, his brother, cast the nets, for they were fishers, and he said unto them, follow me. Now, the Greek makes a sudden change.

It doesn't mean, join me in the way where I'm going. Suddenly, there is an imperative that is placed upon Peter at this point. Jesus isn't saying, oh Peter, hello, hello, you're casting your net into the ocean.

He says, hello out there, fishers. Would you like to join me in the way? He said that to Philip. He said that to Matthew.

Would you like to join me where I'm going? But he doesn't give that to Peter. The Greek changes. That word, follow, there, come and follow me.

Actually, there's an imperative. And he's saying to Simon, you come, and you come now, otherwise I'm not coming back again. That's the imperative.

Now, why? Why did Matthew join me, Philip join me, and Peter, you come, and you come now? You see, Andrew and John were already disciples of John the Baptist. These two kids were already coming back. And this is just my summation of what is taking place here, but it makes sense to me.

So you've got Andrew and John, the son of Zebedee, who have already become disciples of John. They've seen Jesus already. And you read the Gospel of John, the beginning, and you understand that John the disciple, who doesn't mention his name, but Andrew, they're already by John the Baptist, seen the baptism taking place in the wilderness.

And when Jesus comes, these are the two disciples that go with him. And so we understand that they're going home, and I can just see that these two kids are going home and saying, Simon, well, Andrew's coming back and saying, Simon, I'm telling you, this is the answer. And he's probably thinking, yeah, but I've got a business to run.

I've got this fishing industry. We're working with Zebedee here, and we've got a family affair here. You just don't walk away.

You just don't leave your nets. But you see, I think that God was already speaking, speaking, speaking, speaking, speaking through these kids. I think God was already speaking to Simon Peter in his heart.

I believe that with all of my heart. Because the change in the Greek says, hey, you come and you come now. No more dillydallying.

You've been meditating on, should I go with Jesus or not? You've been sitting on the fence. I'm giving you a chance. Do you want to go? If you want to go, you go now.

You see the difference? So he speaks. And so there comes times where God speaks to your heart. When he says to you, let go of that sin.

There are times that he says, come follow me. I'll lead you away from this. There's times that his mercy and his grace and his love, he walks with you through issues and problems.

And he says, come join me. And he woos you. He draws you to himself.

And he leads you away from those things that are destructive. But there comes times when a word is preached from the pulpit and God says, that's it. That's enough.

Today you step out of your seats and you come and you make a commitment to me. Tonight is the night. No more sitting on the fence.

You see, he knows what tomorrow is. And tomorrow can be changed by his power. Your life can be changed.

Tomorrow can be absolutely changed by saying yes to Jesus. And see, this is what I think is taking place in Peter's heart. He knows that unless Peter responds now, he's going to be stuck in that old fishing boat for the rest of his life.

But God gives him a challenge. And the Bible says, and straightway, I love it. Straightway, left their nets and the Bible says, joined him in the way.

Come, come now. Peter says, you got it. Jesus throws the nets down, joins him in the way.

If Jesus came into the house tonight and asked you a question, will you follow me? Would you go to China? To Africa? To India? Can we get all those people saying yes, get their names. Get all the yeses down. Everybody is saying yes.

We want your names to the missions department. We have an all night prayer meeting tonight. And Jesus is saying, would you come spend the night with me? How many would say yes tonight to go be with Jesus in the prayer meeting? Where's the yeses? Why are you so quiet? I thought you're going to listen to Jesus, anything that he says.

If the word is preached, aren't you going to respond? Oh, that's going into my comfort zone now. You don't know, pastor, I need to get seven hours of sleep a night. Otherwise, I don't function in the morning.

Tomorrow is Saturday. Okay, so we see there's an imperative. Now, let's follow Peter.

Go with me to Matthew chapter 16. Let's take another look at what's going on with Peter's life. There's a second confrontation.

You see, God will give us the calling. And sometimes the calling that he puts on our heart is a calling that says, you come and you come now. I remember Pastor Carter getting up one time, and he just felt the unction of the Holy Ghost to speak to young people.

And the YPC choir had about eight or so young people with it. And I remember the night we were sitting here. I believe it was a Tuesday night.

And Pastor Carter lent over, and he was speaking to Pastor David. And I didn't know what was going on, but there was an unction of the Holy Ghost in Pastor Carter's heart. And he got up, and he said, I just feel like I got a word from heaven tonight.

And he spoke to young people and said, young people, this is your last chance. God is speaking. You come and you come now.

You come and be committed to what God has for your life. And from that, we got 120-plus people in the choir because these kids responded. Now, were they responding to Pastor Carter, or were they responding to Jesus? They were responding to Jesus, who was speaking through Pastor Carter.

See, that's how the Holy Ghost works. When the word of God is spoken, and it resonates in our heart, it's Jesus speaking. We don't proclaim to be any closer to Jesus than you, because Jesus can't get any closer to me than he is to you.

He lives in me, and he lives in you. Amen? How much closer can Jesus get? He's as close to you as he's ever going to get. So you hear his voice, and when he calls, we answer it.

All right, we take a look here, and we see in chapter 16, Jesus is going along, and he says, who, verse 15, he says to them, who do, or verse 14, actually verse 13 says, whom do men say that I am? And so they say, well, John the Baptist, and Jeremiah, Elijah, one of the prophets. And he says, but who do you say? You see, he's leading them to this point, the same point of the question I'm asking you, are you going to respond to the voice of Jesus? If he comes in here and he says, will you join me in the way, what is your answer going to be to him? All right, we're going to make it rhetorical. No more answers, because we've already spoken about a prayer meeting tonight, and we didn't get any yeses on that.

So we know we're not going to exactly follow him, but hopefully by the end of the meeting we will respond, amen? All right, so he says, who do you say that I am? You see, he's leading them, he's taking them to this place where if you know who I am, you see, you can't follow the guy who walks in here with a beard and a big old flowing robe, and he's got this stick and he's got eyes that sparkle, and he comes and he stands in here, you've got to believe I'm calling security. Hey, hey, hey, hey, hey, this is New York City, out you go. You see, so we've got this, you won't follow a person like that, I hope.

Right? Right? This is not rhetorical, this is a real question I'm asking you. Would you follow a guy who walked in here tonight with a big old robe and a big beard and a stick and dazzled you with his eyes and said, come follow me? You're going to go with him? Thank you. See, we cannot follow Jesus unless we know who he is.

And Simon Peter answered and said, thou art the Christ, so he's got a revelation here. He says, oh, no, no, no, no, wait a minute, you're the Christ, you're the Son of God. And so Jesus says, blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah.

He says, you'll be blessed if you lay hold of what I'm saying to you. For flesh and blood hath not revealed the Son to thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And so he goes on and he says, well, you're going to be Peter, and upon this rock of revelation, actually that's what it's meaning, I will build my church.

So he says, number one, on the revelation of who I am, I'm going to build my church. Number two, the gates of hell will never, never prevail against my body. So when you understand who I am, you know that the church will get built by Christ himself.

And number two, there's no attack that can overcome the church of Jesus Christ. Those who stand in the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ, they resist the devil at every single turn. Jesus says, those who know me, I want to know two things.

The church is going to be built and the devil will not overpower my church. The gates of hell will not overcome the body of Christ. Hallelujah.

And he says, I'm going to give you the keys to the kingdom. In other words, when you pray, you will see answers to your prayers. Three things that's going to happen on the revelation of who I am.

So when he says, will you follow me, will you join me in the way? He's saying to you, there's three things that are going to happen if you join me in the way. Three things are going to happen. One, I'm going to build my church.

You're going to be a part of a body of believers called the church of Jesus Christ. He says, I'm going to build you. I'm going to build into your life.

I'm going to give you vision. I'm going to give you a purpose to living. He says, I'm going to build my church.

Number two, no attack can overcome you. Not in my name. The blood of Jesus comes against every attack of the devil.

And then number three, when you pray, I will open up heaven and let the blessings of God fall down. Hallelujah. So, do you want to join him in the way? When he says, follow me, join me in the journey I'm going.

Do you want to join me? Does this sound good, Peter? Does this sound wonderful that I'm going to build you and I'm going to build the church and no hell can prevail against you? And when you pray, answers come out of heaven. It's all in the revelation of who he is. And then he goes on and he says, and then from that verse 21, now it gets a little more difficult.

From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer. Now, hold on. You said, build the church.

The gates of hell will not prevail against us and when we pray, we get answers. You didn't say anything about suffering. Do you want to join me? For the first three, not the fourth part.

Suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and raised again the third day. You see, then Peter, listen, Peter took him and began to rebuke him saying, be far from thee, Lord. This shall not be unto thee.

You see, Peter has a problem. It's the problem that you and I face. It's the same problem.

We are no different to Peter. We rebuke the Lord when we go into a place of difficulty. And we rebuke the Lord.

We say, this shouldn't be so. He doesn't want to go. You see, it's okay as long as if I'm going with Jesus and he's building his church and the gates of hell are not prevailing and when we pray, we see answers.

Anybody serves in that church, that's awesome. But what happens when trials come and difficulties come? No, no, no, no. We don't want to go on that part of the journey.

And so he rebukes. But Jesus turns around and says, see, you're thinking of your own way still. You're not thinking of my way.

Because if I don't go this way, then you don't get the church built. You don't have power over the devil. And you definitely don't have prayers answered.

I've got to go the way of the cross. Otherwise, the first three don't work. And so that's why he rebukes Peter and says, get behind me, Satan.

And so then he says, now look what he says in verse 23. He said, Peter, get thee behind me, Satan. Thou art an offense unto me, for thou savest not the things that are of God.

You see, you want to follow, but you don't want to follow God. You still want to follow those ideals that are in your own heart and not the heart of God. So when he says, join me in my way, he means my way.

He doesn't mean my way and your way. He says, no, you join me in my way. Philip says, we don't know the way.

He says, have I been such a long time with you that you don't know the way? I am the way. I am the way. I'm the truth and the life that he says, which says to Thomas.

And so we take a look at this and we see that he says to them, you say those things that are not of God, but those that be of men. Now, look at verse 24. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me.

Now, after and follow seem to be the same thing, but it's not so. To come after means this. If any man will come after me, if any man chooses in his heart to want the things in the direction that I'm going in.

Is this what your desire is? So to come after him means, do you want to take and embrace everything that I am embracing? Is this what's in your heart? Do you want what God has for you more than anything else in the world? Yes. Then take up your cross. Take up your cross.

And then he says, join me in the way. Join me in the way. So if you're willing, if it's in your heart to walk with me, I'm going to a certain direction and I will not be dissuaded.

I got to go to the cross. Now, Peter is speaking to Simon. I'm telling you, he's dealing with Simon.

He said, I called you, but you're still keeping your way of living as the foremost in your heart and love. You haven't embraced everything that God has for you yet. You still want my way and your way.

I still want to be comfortable in middle class America. Nice place to worship God. Friends of the Lord, no bombs.

Don't send me anywhere bad. Comfortable dinner after service tonight. Fellowship with one another.

Go home, sleep well. See you Sunday. Praise the Lord.

Oh, Gloria, I love church. Don't you love church? You see, if Jesus comes and says, follow me, join me in the way. He's saying, join me where I'm going.

So he has to deal with Peter and he says, take up your cross and then join me in the way. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. Okay, turn with me to John chapter 21.

Peter again. You see, when Jesus deals with Peter, he gives him a calling, but he must give him the consideration. If you're ever going to follow Jesus Christ the whole way, with all of your heart, it needs to be with consideration.

You need to consider the cost. You need to consider, what is it that God is asking of me? He might ask China for one person, India for another person, for some of you single moms. It may be just be faithful in the house and raise your kids up in a godly environment.

His call for every single individual is so different. But he gives you the call and then he says, join me. And it's a victorious call, but it must come with consideration.

You've got to consider where I'm headed. That's why he took the money. Who do you say that I am? Gates of hell, all those things.

And then he's got to bring into consideration that if you're going on this way with me, then you've got to take up your cross and you've got to follow me. In other words, you've got to say, God, unequivocally, I lay down everything. I won't even think about it.

I lay it down and say, call me. I consider the cost. I'm yours.

See, now it's a little bit different. If Jesus came in tonight and said, follow me, what would you say? After the consideration, are you willing to pay the price? Are you willing to go to the cross? Are you willing to go the whole way with him? So he says that. So now he brings Simon Peter to this.

And this is where it gets glorious. You see, Simon Peter rejected the cross. He didn't want the suffering.

He doesn't want Jesus to go that way. He wants the blessing but not the cross. Don't give me tough times.

Folks, unless we are willing to walk with Jesus, if we walk with Jesus, just think of it like this. He said, follow me. Join me in the way.

They didn't know where he was going. They didn't know what was next. They didn't know there was a storm on the horizon.

They didn't know that there was going to be 5,000 fed and 3,000 fed. They didn't know that a blind man was going to get healed. They didn't know these things.

They're just walking and trusting. See, some of the benefit of saying yes to Jesus and trusting in him is that he becomes your provider and your protector. It's an awesome walk with him.

He says, if you join me in the way. Listen to this. Paul, he picks it up in other places.

He says, who goes to war? Who goes into the military and has to pay his own way? Who goes to the general and says, I want to sign up. And by the way, he has \$10,000. I want to pay my way to go through a year of training.

Who pays to go to the military? Nobody. They pay you. Does it make sense? So, if they conscript you into the military, they pay you.

They give you a uniform. They feed you. They train you.

They give you a weapon to protect yourself. So, this is what he's saying. So, when you come to Christ and you say, yes, I want to join you in the way.

Then what he's saying is this. Then I will be your provider. I will look after you.

I may not always tell you and you may not always understand where you're going. You may not always understand why you're going through some tough time. You may not understand it.

But trust me, I'll protect you. That's the consideration. So, now he gets to this last part and I want to close real quickly on this last part.

So, look at this in verse 18. John chapter 21, verse 18. Verily, so here he's talking to Peter and we heard a marvelous message by Pastor Carter on 15 down through 17.

Feed my sheep last Sunday. But let me pick up from verse 18. Verily, verily, I say.

Now, he's talking to Simon Peter and he says, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young and girdest thyself, thou what? You walked wherever you wanted to go. You, see, beloved, we choose where we want to go. You chose who you wanted to marry.

You chose what you want to do in your life. You chose to do drugs. You chose to do this.

You chose to do that. You chose, you chose, you chose. See, what Jesus is saying to Simon, he says, Now, remember, you've got to understand that he is now on the other side of the grave.

So, he said, do you want to join me where I'm going? You might not always understand this, guys, but I've got to go to the cross. No, no, no, no, don't go to the cross. No, I've got to go to the cross.

And so, we see him die on the cross. But now he's in John chapter 21. He's on the other side.

He's on the other side. He's gone through the valley of the shadow of death. He's been in the grave.

The one who's talking to Simon Peter is the resurrected Christ. And now he's saying, do you want to join me? Do you want to come with me? See, this is the call of Jesus. He says, if you come with me, you may not always understand the suffering and the difficulties in this lifetime.

But I want to tell you what's at the end of the road. A resurrected life. Glorified body.

And so, he says, when you were young, you walked where you wanted. You did what you wanted. You went here.

You went there. Life was everything revolving around me, mine, my own. But if you join me, then you're not going to be able to do that, because others are going to take you where you don't want to go.

What he's saying is, there's going to be tough times, and you're not going to have control over it. And it's signifying when death is going to die, but it's also telling us that there are times that you have no control over the difficulties that come. You have no control over the force, the attack, or what's coming against you.

You have no control. And he's saying to Simon, he said, by the way, this is going to happen to you. You're going to be in a situation that you have no control over.

But look at me. Look at me. I'm through the other side, and I'm coming for you.

If you join me, I'm taking you through there, and I'm taking you through the other side. You'll never die. Join me in this pursuit, beloved, and you'll never die.

Follow thou me. He said he makes it personal. He says, don't just follow me.

Don't just join me in the way. He says, follow thou. You.

Singular. You as an individual. So don't bump the person next to you and say, are you going to go to the altar call tonight? Are you going to answer the call of Jesus in your heart tonight? Boom, boom, boom.

No. You follow him. You make the choice.

You make a decision. Knowing that the end result, beloved, I know that I am in the hand of God. When he says, it's up, it's up.

I'm so confident in that, it doesn't matter. Because I know that when life closes in on me, and it is no more, I am still held in the hand of God. Through death, to the other side, brand new life.

Let me ask you a question. Jesus came in here tonight, which he has in his word, and said, would you follow me? Would you join me in the way? Let your answer be the altar call tonight. In Jesus' name, let's stand.

Father, we thank you tonight for your word. I love the word. Because you never ask us to blindly follow you.

But you give us the consideration of a revelation of who you are. But you graciously, even though we are such miserable failures, our hearts are so desperately wicked, and yet you come alongside of these people who stumble, who fall, who are so weak. We capitulate at the first attack.

Our thoughts are not always pure. That's why Isaiah says, let the wicked man forsake his thoughts. God, but yet you still come alongside of us.

It amazes me that you would come to us, who are so weak, and say to us, would you join me? Would you join me in my way? Do you want to walk with me? Oh, Jesus, I don't understand it. I don't comprehend why you wanted me to walk with you. I don't understand it.

I can't hardly comprehend it. But you came to me, and you've invited me. And now, Lord, I know that I'm just like Peter, who says no to suffering, no to hard times.

Where are you, God? But I ask you, bear with me, Jesus. I say yes to your call tonight. In Jesus' name.

Amen. They're going to play. If you make your answer between... You can stay in your seats and make your answer, but if you want to say yes to Jesus, and you want to show it by coming out tonight, step out and you come at this altar tonight, and remember, follow thou me, not somebody else, just you and Jesus.

You come tonight. I have decided to follow Jesus. I have decided to follow Jesus.

I have decided to follow Jesus. No turning back. No turning back.

I have decided to follow Jesus. I have decided to follow Jesus. I have decided to follow Jesus.

No turning back. No turning back. Though not though with me, still I will follow.

Though not though with me, still I will follow. Though not still I will follow. No turning back.

No turning back. The cross before me, the world behind me. The cross before me, the world behind me.

The cross before me, the world behind me. No turning back. No turning back.

A fun scripture tonight, just to give you a closure on this. In Mark chapter 16, verse 15, Jesus said unto his disciples, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.

And these signs shall what? Shall follow. Now, listen to this. The word follow here in the Greek, it means this.

It doesn't mean join me in the way. It doesn't mean now you come and be a part of this now. That's not what it's saying.

What this particular word in the original language says is that those who believe that right by their side as a present attendant who will never leave them will be the power of God against every attack. That's what it means. Those who believe, these signs shall follow, shall be a present attendant all the time, right there with you 24-7.

These signs shall follow them that believe. So, the following says it will always be with you. So, beloved, when you walk down the street and all hell is breaking loose round about you, the Bible says you can tread on serpents and nothing is going to hurt you.

Because your present attendant is there right now as you believe God. So, as you reach out and you say, I put my trust in you, then the present attendant says, that's all I need to know. Boom! And there's the power of God.

They that believe. Do you believe that? When you join Him in the way, He doesn't send you powerless. He sends an attendant with you.

And by the way, that's the blessed Holy Spirit. Holy Ghost will never leave you nor forsake you. Amen? Pray this with me.

Lord Jesus, I make a commitment as much as I know how to say yes. That's my position. To say yes to you.

I may not understand all the details of saying yes tonight. But I know one thing. When I say yes to you, my sins are forgiven.

I am washed and I am cleansed from all sin and declared righteous in the Beloved. And I thank you for that. I've joined you in your way and in your righteousness.

And now tonight, I may not understand all the things that may come my way. But I know one thing. As I am with you, no hell can prevail against me.

And in the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow. And I thank you for that. Lord, yes to you.

Now let me pray. Now Father, I thank you that as much as we know how, we say yes. We don't make promises because we can't keep them.

We just say yes. Knowing as you walked with Peter and you taught him and you brought revelation to him and you showed him the resurrected life, so you too will do the same for us. So we say yes, but we don't make promises.

We trust that as we say yes to you, you will lead us and you will teach us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

I give him thanks. Hallelujah. This is the conclusion of the message.

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