

Follow Me Pt1

by Phil Beach Jr.

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life that reflects Christ, encouraging believers to examine their influence on others and confidently invite them to follow their example as they follow Him.

Duration: 45:15

Scripture: Matthew 7:13-14, Matthew 7:21-23, Matthew 11:28-30, 1 Corinthians 4:16, 1 Corinthians 11:1, Philippians 3:17

Topics: "Following Christ", "Living as an Example", "Transformation through Christ"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the importance of living a life that reflects Christ, urging believers to consider whether they can confidently invite others to follow their example. He highlights that God's presence and grace are not merely for personal comfort but serve a greater purpose in transforming lives to be worthy examples of Christ. The sermon challenges listeners to examine their lives and ensure their actions align with their faith, as the ultimate goal is to be able to say, 'Follow me as I follow Christ.' Beach encourages believers to seek God's transformative power to overcome areas of shame and to live transparently in their faith.

Transcript

warmed our hearts and has ministered grace and mercy and love and truth to us. And I believe that it is not an end in itself, though it has been glorious and wonderful, though the Lord has been marvelously manifest in our midst, it's not an end in itself. The Lord does not come and delight the hearts of his people simply that we might be able to say wasn't that nice or wasn't that a good time we had or boy, how I felt so wonderful.

The Lord has a greater end in mind when he visits us in this way. He reaffirmed the promise to us this morning that he is the king of kings in the Lord of Lords. He reaffirmed the promise that he is going to take the impossibility of our situations, the impossibility of our requests, and he himself is going to make them possible.

He has reaffirmed the fact that this morning, in spite of our weaknesses and our powerlessness and our foolishness and and our seemingly nothingness, that he is using those very, if I may use the name qualifications because they're the only qualifications that we can offer to the Lord. He takes those qualifications and he uses them in order to reveal the splendor and glory and wisdom of himself. The Lord has a greater end than simply to go through the experience of knowing his presence and being encouraged this morning and having heard so many testimonies from so many different people all saying

the same thing, all having a remarkable sense of witness by the Holy Ghost and a clear word from the Scriptures.

The end that God has in view. Now, I would encourage you to please pay attention. God willing, this is going to be the first of three messages, but the end that God has in view is a very sobering end.

It is a very sobering end. It is a very thought-provoking end. It is a very heart-searching end.

The end that God has is a very personal end for you and me. So I'd like if we could, for a short time this morning, collect our thoughts together, understand and let's just recall the things that God has done this morning, not only this morning, but what God has done in our lives, what he's doing, and gather all of those things together and focus them on this particular end that I'd like to introduce this morning and hopefully, God willing, conclude after three messages, three weeks. The Lord is wanting to establish a testimony in our lives.

The title of this message, this three-part message, is this. Follow me? Question mark. Follow me? Question mark.

Is it right to follow another person? Is it right to follow another person? What are the thoughts that come to your mind if you were asked to say within the sphere of your influence, that is, within the parameters of those that you are connected with in a relational way, what would the thoughts, what would the feelings you would experience if you were asked to stand and speak to all of those that you are currently influencing through some kind of a relationship within the body of Christ? If you were requested to stand and say, follow me, could you say with confidence to every single human being that you are currently influencing in some way, in some fashion, follow me the way I live my life. Follow me the way I spend my money. Follow me the way I spend my time when I'm all alone, when nobody sees me.

Follow me in the way that I talk about my enemies. Follow me in the way that I talk about those who have disappointed me, who have wronged me. Follow me the way that I talk to my wife.

Follow me the way I talk to my children. Follow me in the example I set at work in relation to my diligence, in relation to how earnest I am. Follow me.

What kind of feelings and thoughts come to you if you were required to stand in the midst of all those that you're influencing and say, follow me, follow me in the way that I respond to the voluptuous temptations of this world. Follow me in the way that I am living a life of moral purity. Follow me in the way that I conduct myself when I'm home alone and nobody is interfering with my life and I have my hair down and I don't have my guards up.

I've taken down my religion. You know, we put on religion and we look good. But when we have taken off our religious garments and we've taken off our forced smiles and our forced kind words and we are what we are, what we truly are.

Follow me then in that way. What kind of feelings come to us? Can we say in all confidence, follow me, beloved, dear friends, listen closely to the word of God this morning. I would invite you to turn your Bibles to 1st Corinthians, verse four or chapter four, verse number 16.

And I want you to hear the bold words of a man called Paul, who was an apostle of Jesus Christ. And I want you to hear these words in relation to the questions that I just asked, the record, the rhetorical

statements that I just made. 1st Corinthians, chapter four, verse number 16.

Wherefore, I beseech you. That word beseech is a Greek word. That's that implies to beg to strongly implore somebody.

So Paul is not simply saying here, I want to make a casual statement. I want to just say something from from my hip. No, he's he's saying something with intensity.

He's actually begging and imploring and exhorting those who are hearing and reading this letter and listen to what he is saying. The implications of the statement are so heart searching, the implications of this statement touch to the very root of what Christianity is really all about. The implications of this statement really touch on the on the on the real intention of what Jesus Christ is after in the church today.

Listen, as we read. Wherefore, I beseech you, be ye followers of me. 1st Corinthians, chapter 11, verse number one.

Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ. Philippians, chapter three, verse number 17. Philippians three, verse number 17.

I'd like to show you a number of places in the scriptures. Brethren, be followers together of me. So in three distinct instances, Paul is admonishing the church.

He's admonishing the believers to follow him. As he followed Christ. Beloved, the end, the intention, the desired purpose.

For which Christ has apprehended you and I and all believers in this hour that we live in. Is so that our lives can be so connected to him and so transformed by him and so permeating and so filled with his presence and so filled with his spirit and so changed by his power in so much that it affects our words and our actions and our behavior patterns and our goals in so much that we can confidently say in humility before God and before one another, follow my example as I am following the example of Christ. We cannot detach our Christianity from our lifestyle anymore.

We cannot detach our profession of Christ from the things that we are actually doing. The purpose of Christ saving the lost sinner, you and I, is so that we earthen vessels that we may be can become a means through which the world can see the lovely qualities that are in Jesus Christ as they are demonstrated through us by the power of the Holy Spirit and the power of the word of God, the searching, penetrating truth that these words that Paul spoke have upon us are far more reaching than we could ever imagine or grasp. Where do you and I stand in relation to this incredible testimony of Paul when he admonishes the Corinthians, he admonishes the Philippians, he admonishes Timothy and those who read the letter, the epistle to Timothy to follow him.

Where do we stand? In light of this incredible statement of Paul, how confident can we be? To say the same thing to those who are in the sphere of our influence, the purpose of your and my salvation, which has been granted to us by the grace of Jesus Christ, is to so apprehend us and so change us and so radically affect the core of our existence and the core of our being so as to enable us to come to the place where we can confidently say, as Paul did, follow me as I follow Christ. It is very possible that the only Bible that some people will ever read, listen, the only Bible that some people will ever read is the Bible that they see you living. It is very possible that the only Christ that people will ever see is the one he sees living in you.

It's possible that the only moral purity that people will see is the moral purity that they see working in you. It was never God's intention for the church to simply profess Christ. It was never God's intention for you and I to simply possess a profession that we are Christians and not be affected drastically and dramatically in our entire lifestyle.

I would encourage you, if you would please, to turn your Bibles to the book of Matthew. And I want to read the words of Jesus Christ here. Matthew chapter seven, beginning in verse number 13, and it is my belief that when listen closely, it is my belief that when we separate our profession with our actions and therefore it becomes more and more difficult for us to say, follow me.

We want to name the name of Christ. We want to possess the name of a Christian, but we don't want the scrutiny of other people looking at our lives, saying, are you really representing Christ? We want to name his name, but we want our own life. We want our own territory.

We don't want it. Listen, we don't want to be responsible. We don't want to be held accountable.

As a representative of the Christ that we serve. We don't want that responsibility. But the Bible teaches us that it is imperative to understand the essential existence of the church in this world is that we might be an example of what God is like.

That we might be an example of what the character of our Savior is like. And if our profession in Christ cannot be evidenced through an ongoing, ever increasing demonstration of the likeness of Christ, then our very profession must be called into question. Because when the grace of God appears to us and quickens our heart and delivers us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear son, the Bible says that with the grace of God comes a teaching, comes a power that enables us to say no to ungodliness, no to worldly lusts.

It enables us to say no to the very principle of selfishness, which is the root of sin. And in being able to say no to these very things, in exchange, we are given the life of the son of God, the very infusion of the life of the son of God by faith comes into our lives. And it radically affects me.

It radically affects you. It imparts to us those virtues that are found in God that we are in ourselves destitute of. Hallelujah to God.

It enables the church not only to be a professor of Christ on the earth, but a possessor of Christ on the earth. Matthew chapter seven, beginning in verse number 13, enter ye in at the straight gate for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction. And there be many which go there at because straight is the gate and narrow is the way which leads unto life and few there be that find it.

So here we have a wide gate and we have a narrow gate. The Bible says that the wide gate is traveled by many and the end of that wide gate. In which many travel is destruction, ruin.

And then Jesus says there is a straight gate, a narrow gate, and there are few that be on this pathway and the end of that gate is what it leads unto life. Hallelujah. Verse 21, not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of God, but he that doeth the will of my father, which is in heaven.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name and in thy name? Have we not cast out devils and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you depart from me, ye that work iniquity or a better translation, depart from me. You who

never cease from working iniquity, who never stop sinning, who never take a break from sinning, depart from me. You whose whole entire life is characterized by a continual baptism into sin.

Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock and the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon the house and it fell. Not for it is founded upon a rock and everyone that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand and the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house and it fell and great was the fall of it. So here we see in these three sections of scripture that I just read that there are features, characteristics, and I want to parallel these two characteristics to this message of follow me.

Listen closely in the first section. We see two gates, two ways and two ends. In the second section, we see two kinds of people, two professions.

Once as I cast out devils, I've done many works in your names. And Jesus said, I've never knew you. And then in the third section, we see two kinds of foundations, a rock and sand.

Beloved, our Christianity, if it is to accomplish God's ultimate intention, if it is to accomplish God's ultimate purpose, must produce in us an ongoing, ever increasing confidence in the work of his grace and the work of his power in our life. So as to enable us, as Paul, to be able to say among those that we are influencing among the lives of those that we are mingling in, follow me. As I follow Christ, look at the example that I am setting.

All my friends, all my acquaintances, my family. Those that know me, can we say along with Paul, follow me? Follow my example. And you might be thinking, brother, that is a very dangerous thing.

We don't want people to follow us. We want people to follow Christ. We don't want people to look at us.

We want people to look at Christ. Well, that's all well and good. And that's the way I feel.

But the fact is, people are looking at you. You might not want it, but it's happening. So therefore, being known unto you and me this morning that God tells us, even though it's our ultimate intention that men follow Christ and not us.

The fact is, it is within the human heart to follow someone. It's within the human heart to be influenced by the examples of people in your life. Therefore, it would behoove us to pray that since we want people to follow Jesus alone, but it's inevitable that our influence in our example is going to affect people.

Therefore, it is imperative that we allow God. We beg that God would so change us and so transform us so as to enable us to say follow Christ. But if you're going to follow me, you can, because my life is apprehended by Christ.

My life is so consumed with Christ. My life is so under the power of Christ. My life is so baptized in the word of God in so much that if you do follow me, you're going to see the pattern of righteousness.

You're going to see the pattern of godliness. You're going to see the pattern of genuine love. You're going to see the pattern of patience and kindness.

You're going to see you're going to hear words that edify and build up. So if you must follow me, if if if my influence is so much upon your life that you are prone to to be emboldened by my example, then so be it.

Because I am a man or a woman that has come to see the light.

And I have come to see that Jesus Christ is my righteousness, and though I am an imperfect vessel and though I will fail you. Yet, I want to say that the sum total of my life is going to be characterized by desiring the things that please God. I'm not going to be after greed and covetousness.

I'm not going to be delighting in telling lies. I'm not going to be a slanderer. What if every single person that you know suddenly had a tap on your phone and they were able to listen into your phone conversations for the next month and they were able to listen into the last months of your phone conversations? And at the end of listening to the next month and last month, could you say to every person that heard be followers of me when I'm on the phone? How much would they hear that would bring shame to your heart? That would misrepresent the Christ that you claim.

Now understand, beloved, this message this morning is from the heart of the Lord, but it's not intended to be a scathing message. It's not intended to be a woeful message of condemnation. It's intended to be a message of reminder that God has a goal, Christ has an end, and that end is to deliver us from that which makes us unable to say, follow me as I follow Christ.

Because that's what Christianity is. For this purpose, the Bible says, was the Son of God made manifest. Why? That he might destroy the works of the devil.

And before God destroys the works of the devil in the world, he's got to start inside the circle that we draw and stand in. Now, once we do that individually, we got to work on our families and our homes and then our church. And then as the righteousness of Jesus Christ and the moral perfections of Christ more and more and more become evident in our lives, that is how a community is affected.

As we begin to go into our community, not as Bible bashers condemning people, making ourselves to be more holy than them, we're no holier than anyone. It is not because of our righteousness and holiness that God has had mercy on us. The Son of Man has not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. It is it is it is our sin and our imperfections that qualifies us to be a person, a participator of the grace of God. We can't offer to the Lord goodness and righteousness.

Then he'd say, well, you have no need of me then. He's the physician. He comes to heal.

Are you able to acknowledge your need this morning, even with this word from the Lord? Does it make you feel, oh, God, there are many things in my life that I certainly would not want people to follow. Then praise God. Ask the physician to come and heal you.

Ask the miracle worker to come and change your heart. Don't allow condemnation to grip you. Don't be swallowed up in a feeling of, oh, I'll never change.

No, believe God. Look to the Lamb of God. You remember what happened when the children of Israel murmured in the wilderness and they began to be bitten by serpents? Moses erected a a snake of bronze and he said, everyone who looks to the snake of bronze will be healed.

And that was a picture of Jesus Christ being lifted up on the cross to bear your sin and my sin. So if you feel this morning that, yes, this this is what I want. I want people, even though I want them to look to

Jesus, I know I'm influencing people.

So if I'm going to have to influence people, I want to be in a place in my life where I can say, follow me as I follow Christ. But if you agree with those words, but yet you feel the pain and the shame of knowing that there's areas in your life that are not worthy for other believers to follow, then I would admonish you by the love of God this morning, by the grace of God this morning to come to Jesus, your Savior, and to confess those areas. Don't avoid areas in your life that need change.

One characteristic of society today is we're not dealing with problems. I was reminded of being over my mom and dad's house a few days ago and we were sitting on the porch and my dad noticed that his steps. Are made of bricks and there was a brick that was loose and had fallen off.

And he had done work on it a few years ago, but other pieces of it had begun to fall off, and my mother immediately said, now, Phil, you want to make sure that you fix that quickly. We can't neglect that because if we neglected, eventually one piece will turn into two pieces. Two pieces will turn into four pieces, and before you know it, all your steps are going to be broken.

Then you're going to have a massive job. And that she's talking, I guess, I don't know, this way preachers think. Here I am hearing God speaking to me, saying, oh, if my people would apply that kind of diligence to their spiritual life.

As is applied to that illustration, how wonderful the house of God would be, how frequently do we see that there's something going on in the inside of our life that's not right? And instead of immediately attending to it, immediately addressing it, going to God, going to the word of God, confessing it, looking to Christ, even possibly seeking out help among members of the body that you know you are close to. Rather, we neglect it and it goes on for weeks and weeks and sometimes months, and before we know it, that which was so little at the beginning, months down the road turns into a massive problem that's going to need major repair when all we needed to do is when way back in the beginning we saw that loose brick. We should have dealt with it right then.

It is because of this failure to be diligent in spiritual matters that we end up being ashamed at our life. And we end up being ashamed at the thought of having people follow us. Because we've neglected certain things.

And in neglecting them, they've gotten into big, massive problems. But today there is a savior. Today there is a God.

Today there is a loving Heavenly Father who bids us to come unto him. In light of this high and holy calling, God wants us to be able to say confidently, follow me as I follow Christ. But you cannot fulfill that unless you are living a life of utter dependence upon the working of God's mighty power, the working of God's mighty word in your life.

In closing, I want to read in the book of Matthew. Listen closely, please. Matthew chapter 11, verse 28, 29 and 30.

The message was entitled, follow me? Question mark. We've seen that it's biblical for men and women who are apprehended by Jesus Christ to be so intimately involved and transformed by him that their lives are worthy of being examples for others to follow. And when our lives are not worthy of that and our Christianity is not progressively making us worthy examples of what Christ is like, then it must be called

into question.

But if, in fact, our lives truly are lives that could say, yes, that's what I want. Yes, I know Jesus lives inside of me, but there are areas of my life that I would not want people to follow. There's areas of greed, covetousness, lust, areas of uncontrolled language, whatever the Holy Spirit may show you.

Then in response to that dilemma, I would read the words of Jesus Christ in closing to this message and would admonish you. To consider his words, come unto me, the call this morning to you individual is come unto Jesus this morning. That's your only hope and my only hope.

It all begins and it all ends at the feet of Jesus Christ. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart and you shall find rest unto your souls.

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. When you and I respond to the Savior's invitation to come to Him and allow His power and His Word and His presence to transform us. When we come to Him confessing those areas of shame in our life that we would not want other Christians to follow.

When we don't allow condemnation and devilish guilt to consume us and drive us away from God. But rather allow our imperfections and our sins to draw us to God. There to receive mercy and grace in time of help.

Then we can know the ongoing transforming power of Christ and that will deliver us from those shameful things. And bring us to the place where like Paul we can say in the world of our influence, follow me as I follow Christ. God will be pleased and the testimony of Christ will be seen and men will be transformed.

God willing, next time we get together I'm going to go into the Scriptures and specifically show in what ways was Paul admonishing us to follow him. In what specific ways his life was so radically transformed by the power of Jesus Christ that he could be transparent before people. And say in this way follow me, in this way follow me, in this way follow me for I am following Christ.

And then the subsequent message we will conclude those various different ways that Paul was admonishing us to follow him. And close by seeing the transforming power of the indwelling Christ as the source of our ability to say follow me as I follow Christ. But now this morning let us bow our hearts and remember the words of the apostle, follow me as I follow Christ.

Are you prepared to come to a loving Savior who will put his finger on every area of your life not worthy of being an example for other Christians. And by his transforming power change you so that you can so speak come out of the closet. And say before all men I am an open book follow me as I humbly with much fear and trembling follow Christ.

Father we thank you and praise you for thy word. We thank you Lord for the promises that you gave us this morning. The confirmation of the Holy Spirit.

We thank you Lord that we have discovered that there is an end. There is a purpose for all the wonderful things happening in our lives. And that is that our lives might be so transformed by the grace of God.

They might be worthy of an example that others might follow and see something of the perfections of Jesus Christ living through imperfect earthen vessels. I pray Holy Spirit you'll take the word. Let it find

good ground and bring forth much fruit to the praise and honor and glory of your name.

If you want special prayer this morning. This word has struck a chord in your heart and you just want special prayer for the power of Jesus. To continue this work of making your life worthy to be an example that others may follow.

That I want to admonish you to come forward and to kneel down at the seats here and we'll pray with you. May Jesus Christ perform his word and search us thoroughly by his power. Let's sing this together.

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