

A CHRISTIAN IS A FOLLOWER

Part I

Mark 2:14-15

The simplest definition of a Christian is “one who follows Christ.” Think of what it meant to those early disciples. Their lives were changed completely and permanently. It was the opportunity of a lifetime for them.

And so it is for us today. Jesus calls each of us saying, “Follow me.”

We often fail to consider however what is involved in following Jesus – what demands He makes on us who would follow Him!

I. To follow Jesus we must consider the cross as well as the crown.

The cost of most things has changed through the years. One hundred years ago a penny would buy two eggs, a cup of coffee, a large piece of candy, or a soda. A doctor charged .25¢ for an office visit and a prescription could be filled for .10¢. A laboring man was paid about .85¢ for a twelve hour day, and a school teacher made \$25. for three months.

Times have changed, have they not? The cost of most things varies tremendously from generation to generation, but there is one cost that never changes.

The cost of following Christ has not changed. Jesus warned “would be” followers to first evaluate the involvement. In Luke 14:26-33 Jesus said, “Whoever does not bear his cross and come follow me, cannot be my disciple.” He pointed out that no one starts to build a tower without counting the cost and no king would go to war without counting the cost. He then concludes saying, “Whosoever of you that forsaketh not all that he hath he cannot be my disciple.” (verse 33) He was saying, “count the cost!”

- It cost Andrew and Peter their fishing business to follow Jesus.
- It cost James and John their livelihood to follow Jesus.
- It cost Matthew his lucrative tax business to follow Jesus.
- And it will cost us!

He promised those who followed Him that they would have a new life – one of fellowship with the Father. They would have an abundant overflowing life with Him. He promised they would have an eternity in heaven and a crown of victory and rejoicing.

This is all true, but we forget sometimes that he also told them of the difficulties they would face. He promised them they would be despised and persecuted. "People will insult you and hurt you. They will lie and say all kinds of evil things about you, because you follow me. But when they do you will be happy. Rejoice and be glad because you have a great reward waiting for you in heaven." (Matthew 5:11)

II. To follow Jesus means to Follow Him Completely, not Partially

When you started following Christ your life changed. Robert Munger describes the change this way, "He came into the darkness of my heart and turned on the light. He built a fire in the cold hearth and banished the chill. He started music where there had been stillness and harmony where there had been discord. He filled the emptiness with his own loving fellowship. I have never regretted opening the door to Christ and I never will."

But then perhaps something happened. You began to reserve areas of your life where you didn't want interference. You began to pick and choose what you would and wouldn't do in your spiritual life.

Perhaps you are like the little boy who prayed – "God make me a good boy if you can. If you can't don't worry, I'm having fun the way I am."

Maybe like the one who wanted to follow Christ, but only as an advisor. Or perhaps we forget that incomplete obedience is complete disobedience.

Jesus refuses to accept a partial obedience. If we are to follow Him we can't choose which of his commands we'll follow. Churches have members who see the church (and Christian life) like a cafeteria. They come in, choose what they like, get fed, pay the bill and then leave. It doesn't work that way.

Christ doesn't demand obedience in the Christian life and use force to achieve it. He lovingly asks for it and therefore we think it is unimportant. Wrong!

Make no mistake about it. His request is our command. He requires that changes be made.

Two friends were talking. One said, "Has your wife changed much since you married her."

"Oh, yes – yes indeed – my hours, my friends, my habits, and my bank account."

Your life changes when you follow Christ. He will accept nothing less.

When He says, "Love one another as I have loved you" and we create confusion and conflict in our church by not loving, we aren't following the one who loves us eternally.

When He says, "Give" and we refuse to give sacrificially we aren't following the one who gave Himself for us.

To follow Jesus at all is to follow Him completely!

*Lord, I will follow you with all my heart and strength
and will find joy in the journey.*