

## **“Follow the Leader”**

**Luke 5:27-32**

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November 4, 2001

As a child, did you ever do it? Did you try walking in the footprints of your parents or another adult? I suppose all of us have done that with mixed reaction. It was both fun and awkward, wasn't it? Most of the time, we would stumble and fall, but usually laugh doing so.

Following a person is serious business, isn't it? It's one thing to respond to someone's casual request to “follow me” for a few minutes or a short distance. It is another to honor their request for a longer period of time.

Perhaps this is why I am so intrigued by Jesus' method of calling his disciples. When he approached them, he merely said, “Follow me,” and twelve of them dropped what they were doing and followed him.

I believe Jesus is still issuing that simple yet powerful invitation to people. This is why I like the theme of this year's stewardship campaign, “Following in the Footsteps of Jesus.” Through eyes of faith, I see him standing before each one of us with his hand outstretched repeating those irresistibly challenging words, “Follow me.” Before we respond, though, I think we need to ask some questions. Allow me to do that for us

**Where is he going?** He is going wherever people are hurting and need help.

**Why?** Because he loves them and wants to help them.

**What can he do for them?** He can provide whatever they need. He can supply wisdom, guidance, direction, peace, forgiveness, strength, confidence, courage, hope, healing and eternal life.

**What does he want me to do?** He wants me to be his partner and help him. He wants me to reach out to hungry people and feed them. He wants me to reach out to naked people and clothe them. He wants me to reach out to homeless people and shelter them. He wants me to reach out to grieving people and comfort them. He wants me to reach out to confused people and counsel them. He wants me to reach out to discouraged people and encourage them. He wants me to reach out to uneducated people and teach them. He wants me to reach out to sick people and heal them. He wants me to reach out to people in despair and give them hope. He wants me to reach out to lonely people and befriend them. He wants me to reach out to dying people and calm them.

**Why should I follow him? Why should I do these things?** Four reasons. You will discover the **purpose for living**. You will come to understand that the roads to personal fulfillment and compassion run parallel like two rails on a train track.

Secondly, you will **make the world a better place**. Anyone who follows Jesus will make the world safer and better. If you have any doubts about this, look at what Mother Teresa, Albert Schweitzer, Jimmy and Rosalyn Carter, Archbishop Tutu, Pope John XXIII, Martin Luther King Jr., Billy Graham and a host of others have done. Heaven knows we need more people following Jesus like these role models at this crucial time in our history.

Thirdly, you will have some great **traveling companions**. You won't be alone. Many are already following him and you can work alongside of them. They will become your dearest friends.

Fourthly, you will end up in the very **presence of God**. That's where Jesus is and he will take you there, too.

You see, following Jesus does not mean you will be a drifter, but a pilgrim. You will have both a purpose and a destination for your journey.

Will you accept his invitation? I certainly hope so and encourage you to do so. I accepted his invitation forty-two years ago and it was the best decision I ever made. Join me on this incredible journey.