

## 5-1-22 Message FOLLOWERS OF ME?

I Corinthians 10:31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

I Corinthians 10:32 Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:

I Corinthians 10:33 Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

I Corinthians 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

I Corinthians 4:12 And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:

I Corinthians 4:13 Being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

I Corinthians 4:14 I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.

I Corinthians 4:15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

I Corinthians 4:16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

Philippians 3:17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

Philippians 3:18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

Philippians 3:19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

Philippians 3:20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

Paul many times in Scripture said to be followers of Him as he was of Christ. This is quite a statement to make. In fact that this statement is in Scripture we can be assured that this is a command of God. This is inspired of God. In fact this is not just a suggestion, this is a command of God. We have a divine call to be like Christ, like Paul tried to be like Christ. To follow his example of following Christ. In other words if you want to see an example of a person who followed Christ, look at Paul the Apostle.

### **Consider how much of the Bible was written or about the Apostle Paul's ministry.**

Over half of the New Testament books were written by the apostle.

Consider:

Total 82590 words In the Gospels.

Total 67150 words Written by or about the Apostle Paul.

70% of the book of Acts is about Paul's ministry.

14 of 27 books of the New Testament were written by Paul.

The epistles of Paul contain 50190 words.  
Book of Acts consists of 24229 words.  
2/3 of the book of acts was a record of Paul's ministry.  
That means the 16,960 of the 24229 words were about Paul's ministry.

It seems to me that next to the Lord Jesus Himself, God wanted His church to be influenced by the Apostle Paul more than any other person.

So I think those words, "BE YE FOLLOWERS OF ME AS I AM OF CHRIST" ARE A COMMAND OF GOD.

In the Bible we read about Christ and about all that He did and said, but in the Apostle Paul we see an example of a person who followed Christ.

So biblically I could say, how well does our commitment to Christ line up with the example of the Apostle Paul?

My question to each of us this morning is, could you say as Paul said, Look at my life as an example of what a Christian should be. Could you say to others, follow my example of being a Christian. Is your life worth emulating?

**CAN YOU SAY TO OTHERS,  
FOLLOW MY EXAMPLE?**

Paul once said to Agrippa:

Acts 26:29 And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

***I. PAUL COULD SAY FOLLOW MY EXAMPLE OF CONVERSION AND SALVATION.***

When Paul said, I would to God that everyone were such as I.

Do you have something that is worth emulating?

In fact, Paul said that his conversion was a pattern of what true conversion to Christ is and should be.

I Timothy 1:16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

Most of the book of Acts, is a record of Paul's conversion and ministry. Most of the Epistles were written by Paul. The New Testament consists of 27 books and Paul wrote 14 of those books.

Paul said in his conversion we should see a pattern of our own conversion to Christ.

Do you see that pattern in your life and conversion?

### **1. WE SHOULD EMULATE PAUL'S EXAMPLE IN REGARDS TO HIS CONVERSION AND TESTIMONY.**

Paul had a supernatural conversion experience.  
What is your conversion experience?

Acts 9:3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

Acts 9:4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

Acts 9:5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

Acts 9:6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

He immediately wanted to know more.  
He wanted to know what he was supposed to do.

### **2. WE SHOULD FOLLOW PAUL'S EXAMPLE IN BEING BAPTIZED.**

Acts 9:6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

Then he was told to wait for a man to come tell him what to do. Ananias was that man , and he told him to be baptized.

Acts 9:17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

Acts 9:18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

Why is Baptism so important?

It is important because Christ commanded it.

Ananias went to Paul and told him this is what God wanted him to do.

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Matthew 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Why don't people get baptized?

Many reasons, none of them good.

**A. Embarrassment.**

Mark 8:38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

**B. Some Feel it is not important.**

Matthew 5:19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

C. Other reasons some feel they are not ready.  
Some think they are saved and don't need anything else.

What ever reason you have for not obeying God is not a good reason.

**III. WE SHOULD FOLLOW PAUL'S EXAMPLE IN TELLING OTHERS ABOUT CHRIST.**

Acts 26:16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

Acts 26:17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Acts 26:19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

Acts 26:20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

Acts 26:21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.

Paul immediately after he was Baptized and received his sight, went and preached Christ.

#### **IV. PAUL WAS FAITHFUL IN MINISTERING IN A LOCAL CHURCH BEFORE HE WAS CALLED TO BE A CHURCH PLANTER/MISSIONARY.**

Acts 11:25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:

Acts 11:26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year **they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people.** And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

Acts 12:25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.

Acts 13:1 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

Acts 13:2 **As they ministered to the Lord,** and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

Acts 13:3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

Too many people are self called, self sent, and cause great dis-reproach to the cause of Christ. If someone is not faithful in the local church first then how can they claim to be called to a higher ministry?

Luke 16:10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

Paul was an example to follow and Paul spent his life ministering in the local church, establishing churches, building up the church, working in the church.

He said, follow my example. Do as I do. Minister as I ministered.

Consider some questions.

Can you say to others, follow my example of serving Christ in His local church.

- 1. If Everyone attended Church like you, how healthy would the church be?***
- 2. If everyone served in the church like you, how healthy would the church be?***
- 3. If everyone gave to the church like you give, how strong with the finances of the church be?***

**4. *If everyone witnessed and invited people to church like you do, how many people would come to Christ?***

It is sad but Paul said that he knew very few people that had a passion to serve Christ.

He said only Timothy was totally committed this way.

Philippians 2:19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.

Philippians 2:20 For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.

Philippians 2:21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

Can you say, like Paul, follow my example! Your life is an example to others. Your life as an example either encourages people to do right or your life as an example teaches people to do wrong. You lead others by way of example. What kind of example are you?

Now the truth is, some people are so self centered they could not care less about what their life tells others. They do not even give it a thought.

PAUL SAID FOLLOW MY EXAMPLE.

Can you say that to others?

He was an example to others of church service.

**V. *PAUL LIVED AN ORDERLY LIFE AND TOOK CARE OF HIS NEEDS AND THE NEEDS OF OTHERS WHO DEPENDED ON HIM.***

I Corinthians 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

II Thessalonians 3:7 For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

II Thessalonians 3:8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

II Thessalonians 3:9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

II Thessalonians 3:10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

II Thessalonians 3:11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

II Thessalonians 3:12 Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

II Thessalonians 3:13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

There are a lot of people that could say to a minister of God like Paul the Apostle, Paul you don't live in the real world. You don't have to work and make a living like I do. You don't know what it is like.

Paul went over and above to be an example to others.

He worked and supported himself with his trade and still ministered and served in Church work.

Paul worked and provided for his own needs and the needs of those around him.

He didn't have to do that, but he did so to be an example of labor, love, and sacrifice.

Paul said this:

II Thessalonians 3:6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

II Thessalonians 3:7 For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

II Thessalonians 3:8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

Paul said, look at how we laboured night and day to support ourselves and minister.. so too... you need to work and take care of your needs and still you should have time to serve the Lord.

People have all kind of reasons why they cannot minister, serve, and be faithful in serving Christ.

All those excuses, are self centered and selfish.

***I wonder if Paul were to use these excuses. Some say my health is bad.***

***DID NOT PAUL HAVE BAD HEALTH? He had a thorn in the flesh.***

***Some may say they need to make a living and have to work.***

***Did not Paul make tents to support himself in the ministry?***

***Some would say, I have family needs and need to spend time with my family.***

***What did Jesus say about this?***

Matthew 10:37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

God says, put Him first and all other obligations will fall into perspective.

## **VI. PAUL WAS AN EXAMPLE OF BEING A SOLDIER FOR THE CAUSE.**

Consider this:

In times of war, a nation will call upon men to leave their family to go to a strange place and sacrifice their life for their country. Some of those men will be wounded, some of those men will die in battle, some of those men will have parents die back home while they are gone. Some of them will have a parent die and mother die, a father die. Yet because of the importance of the war, because of their importance to the battle, they are called upon to sacrifice. Some of those men may get sick on the battlefield, yet that is no excuse to leave the battlefield.

Now the question is, what does it mean when Paul said,

II Timothy 2:3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.  
II Timothy 2:4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

Are we soldiers for the Lord or are we just pretending to be soldiers?

Consider the hardships of war. We have the following account of George Washington's army.

Washington's victory at Trenton changed the way Americans felt about the war. Before the battle, the rebels had been defeated in New York. They were beginning to lose faith in their commander. Now that faith returned. Congress increased Washington's powers, making it possible for the fight for independence to continue. Another result of the victory at Trenton was that more men decided to join the army. It now had ten-thousand soldiers. This new Continental Army, however, lost battles during the summer to General Howe's forces near the Chesapeake Bay. And in August 1777 General Howe captured Philadelphia.

Following these losses, Washington led the army to the nearby area called Valley Forge. They would stay there for the winter. His army was suffering. Half the men had no shoes, clothes, or blankets. They were almost starving. They built houses out of logs, but the winter was very cold and they almost froze. Many suffered from diseases such as smallpox and typhus. Some died. General Washington and other officers were able to get food from the surrounding area to help most of the men survive the winter. By the spring of 1778 they were ready to fight again.

How could we describe the tremendous sacrifices our men have made in times of war? It is beyond our understanding. All these sacrifices were made for an earthly kingdom. How much more should we find it honorable and necessary to make sacrifices for a heavenly kingdom?

Notice what the Lord said to the church Smyrna.

Revelation 2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Are we soldiers or are we just playing Church?

When Paul said, Be Ye Therefore Followers Of Me,

Think about what things Paul suffered for the Lord.

II Corinthians 11:24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

II Corinthians 11:25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

II Corinthians 11:26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

II Corinthians 11:27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

II Corinthians 11:28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

II Corinthians 11:29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?

Paul goes on to say:

When he first got saved they tried to kill him in Damascus and he had to be let down in a basket to escape.

He was stoned at Lystra and literally died, but God raised him up.

Think about that. If God has a work for you and it is not your time to go, God will not let you die.

Then he said he suffered a thorn in the flesh and God let him suffer with that thorn. He was sick, and ministered still.

II Corinthians 12:7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

II Corinthians 12:8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

II Corinthians 12:9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

The Lord let Paul suffer all these things so we could read this and say to ourselves, what have I to complain about? Stop feeling sorry for yourself and get off your face and start serving the Lord!

### **CONCLUSION INVITATION:**

**DO YOU HAVE A TESTIMONY?**

**HAVE YOU BEEN BAPTIZED SINCE YOU BELIEVED?**

**ARE YOU BEING FAITHFUL IN WITNESSING AND SERVICE CHRIST?**

**ARE YOU A SOLDIER FOR JESUS AND WILLING TO SUFFER HARDSHIPS?**

Can you say to others, BE YE FOLLOWERS OF ME?

If people were to follow your example and do what you're doing, what would become of the Lord's church and work???

### **EVENING MESSAGE**

**I Corinthians 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.**

Think about this statement. Are we followers of Christ, like Paul was?

Those early disciples turned the world upside down for the cause. What are we doing for Jesus? How far short we fall.

### **VII. DO WE FOLLOW PAUL'S EXAMPLE IN MINISTRY OUTREACH?**