

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **John 12:32,33.**
- B. Mankind, by his very nature is a follower, not a leader.
- C. Jesus wants to be our leader. He says that if He will be lifted up that He will draw everyone to Him.
- D. Our lesson today is about how to stop wandering and start following a lifted up X.

I. EXAMPLES OF BEING A FOLLOWER.

- A. In school, once the exam is over, it takes the first one to hand in their paper and then many others will do the same (they need a leader to follow!).
- B. I remember working in the grocery store as a teenager and noticing that once one person went to check-out they all seemed to go to the check-out.
- C. Greeters at the church exhibit at the IL State Fair could get people into the exhibit by simply walking up and down the aisles and into the exhibit--people would naturally follow them!
- D. The Bible has several references to the idea that man is more a follower than a leader:
 1. Not within a man to direct his own footsteps (Jer. 10:23).
 2. Do not follow a multitude to do evil (Ex. 23:2).
 3. The way that seems right to man, ends in death (Prov. 14:12).

II. WITHOUT LEADERS PEOPLE WILL BECOME WANDERERS.

- A. But let's take this concept one step farther. Without a good leader; people don't know who to follow and begin to wander.
- B. I believe that a wanderer cannot find a narrow gate! (Mt. 7:13,14).
- C. A new Xian, a young Xian, a struggling Xian; all of these need a strong church family to follow so that they can remain faithful.
- D. Wanderers get into all kinds of trouble. One of the definitions of sin is "to miss the mark." Wanderers become sinners because they miss the mark of righteousness. People who are not following X as the leader of their lives find themselves in the sins of alcohol, drug abuse, apathy, pride, selfishness, etc.
- E. The book of Hebrews shows Jesus to be a trailblazer. He is the pioneer and perfecter of our faith--follow Him (Heb. 12:2).

III. WE MUST LIFT CHRIST UP.

- A. First, we must lift Christ up by **looking up ourselves**.
When you want to improve your life you don't look around at other people and other things, you must first look at yourself. We must be "head-over heels" in love with X (Rev. 2:5).
- B. Second, we must lift Christ up by **not following the world**.
Because I was a preacher, I was told to leave a party. There wasn't much drinking, smoking, and gossiping going on and one person didn't want me around! I didn't preach a sermon with words, but I guess I did with my life. I didn't follow the sinful lifestyle of this person, and by doing so lifted up X (Gal. 2:20; 6:14).
- C. Third, we must lift up Christ by **preaching His word**.
See Rom. 10:17. Preaching and teaching others is not so much denouncing their sins as it is extolling the virtues of following Christ. Preach the truth and false doctrine will take care of itself. Tell people why you quit doing certain sins because you made X your leader.
- D. Fourth, we lift up Christ by **knowing the important things of life**.
Paul talked about that which was of first importance--the death, burial, and resurrection of X. Instead of arguing doctrine, different churches, etc., tell your friends that the most important thing in the world to you is the D,B,&R of X (1Cor. 2:2; 15:1-4).

- E. Filth, we lift up Christ by **letting our light shine, not shining our light**.
We are not here to show people how great we are. We are not here to let everyone see our works for the Lord. James said that he would show his faith by his works (so that God could get the credit). Jesus told us to let our light so shine that God is glorified, not us (Jas. 2:18; Mt. 5:16).

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Jesus is the good shepherd. His yoke is easy and His burden is light. To follow X is to find happiness and rest for your soul (Jn. 10:1-10; Mt. 11:28-30).
- B. When you turn from sin, you lift X up.
When you make X your Lord, Savior, and Master you lift Him up.
When you become a Xian you lift X up.
- C. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.