

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Matthew 16:20-27**.
- B. In our leaders we look for someone who is:
 - 1. Persuasive, determined, appealing, and authoritative.
 - 2. We usually desire someone with high goals, and who is understanding in the needs of others while providing a good example.
 - 3. He/she should be concerned for their followers, and willing to serve.
- C. Jesus possesses all the right things. By His life, and example, we should be drawn to follow Him.

I. WE ARE COMMANDED TO FOLLOW CHRIST.

- A. The NT specifically teaches that we are to be followers of Christ.
 - 1. Since He is the only true way to the Father, we need to follow Him to be on that way (Jn. 14:6).
“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.”
 - 2. If we gain the whole world and lose Christ, then we eternal losers! Notice the context of this passage (Mt. 16:24-26).
Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. **25** For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. **26** For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”
 - 3. Just lip service is not enough. To be worthy to wear the name of Christ we must be willing to follow Him as the Lord of our lives (Mt. 10:38).
“And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.”
 - 4. There is a price to be paid for following Christ. He must be first in our lives. Let those who desire to follow Christ forsake the pursuit of worldly gain, and the social cares of life, and follow the Lord (Mt. 8:19-22).
And a certain scribe came and said to Him, “Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.” **20** And Jesus said^ to him, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” **21** And another of the disciples said to Him, “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.” **22** But Jesus said^ to him, “Follow Me; and allow the dead to bury their own dead.”

II. WHY SHOULD WE FOLLOW THIS JESUS CALLED THE CHRIST?

- A. There are many good reasons to give up our lives in following Jesus.
- B. NT traits of Jesus:
 - 1. **CHARISMA**.
His presence affected Peter and Andrew (Mt. 4:18-20).
And walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. **19** And He said^ to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” **20** And they immediately left the nets, and followed Him.
Philip and Andrew were excited about Jesus (Jn. 1:40-46).
I want to be around/follow someone like that!
 - 2. **AUTHORITY**.
Jesus knew God’s word unlike anyone else. His teachings were not the opinions of men, or commentary on what others thought--He spoke with (divine) authority (Mt. 7:28-29).
The result was that when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at His teaching; **29** for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.
I want to be around/follow someone like that!
 - 3. **COMPASSION**.
 - a. Jesus went about doing good healing the sick (Mt. 14:13,14).
Now when Jesus heard it, He withdrew from there in a boat, to a lonely place by Himself; and when the multitudes heard of this, they followed Him on foot from the cities. **14** And when He went

ashore, He saw a great multitude, and felt compassion for them, and healed their sick.

- b. Jesus had great compassion on the people. They were, in His eyes, as lost sheep needed in shepherd (Mt. 9:35-36).

And Jesus was going about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. **36** And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd.

I want to be around/follow someone like that!

4. **LOVE OF MANKIND.**

It is easy to love those who love you back. It is easy to love those who are like you. The great difficulty comes in being able to love those who are very un-loveable. Jesus, the perfect Son of Man, loved sin-sick mankind (Mk. 2:15-17).

And it came about that He was reclining at the table in his house, and many tax-gatherers and sinners were dining with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many of them, and they were following Him. **16** And when the scribes of the Pharisees saw that He was eating with the sinners and tax-gatherers, they began saying to His disciples, "Why is He eating and drinking with tax-gatherers and sinners?" **17** And hearing this, Jesus said[^] to them, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

I want to be around/follow someone like that!

5. **ACTIVE INTOLERANCE OF WRONG DOING.**

Jesus was not one to sit by idly and allow sin and wrong doing to continue on. He took a stand on the religious issues of His day and then acted upon them. Spiritually speaking, everyone knew where Jesus stood--such conviction and godly determination was refreshing and compelling to the masses (Mk. 11:15-18).

And they came[^] to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to cast out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who were selling doves; **16** and He would not permit anyone to carry goods through the temple. **17** And He began to teach and say to them, "Is it not written, 'MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL THE NATIONS'? But you have made it a ROBBERS' DEN." **18** And the chief priests and the scribes heard this, and began seeking how to destroy Him; for they were afraid of Him, for all the multitude was astonished at His teaching.

I want to be around/follow someone like that!

6. **SUBMISSION TO GOD'S WILL.**

Jesus struggled with obedience like every other human has. He suffered in His obedience (Heb. 5:8). But because of His total surrender to the Father's will, he chose to endure Calvary for the salvation of all men (Mk. 14:36).

(Heb 5:8) Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

(Mk 14:36) And He was saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for Thee; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what Thou wilt."

I want to be around/follow someone like that!

7. **WILLING TO SACRIFICE FOR OTHERS.**

Jesus said that no greater love has a man than the one who lays down his life for his friends (Jn. 15:12-13), and then He went and did it!

"This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. **13** "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."

I want to be around/follow someone like that!

8. **EXAMPLE OF SERVING HIS FOLLOWERS.**

Jesus is the author of servant-leadership. He said that those who would be the greatest among you will be the servant of all (Mt. 20:26; Mk. 9:35). The example of Christ is perfect because it illustrates the proper priority of God first, others second, and yourself last (Jn. 13:15-17).

"For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. **16** "Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master; neither is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. **17** "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."

I want to be around/follow someone like that!

9. **LOVE OF FOLLOWERS.**

Jesus never asked His followers to do anything that He did not do Himself. Such is true when it comes to the love of His own. We are to love because He loved first (Jn. 13:34-35).

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

I want to be around/follow someone like that!

C. Nine great reasons to follow Jesus!

II. **ARE WE GOOD ENOUGH TO BE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST?**

A. No, but God calls everyone. He is not a respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11; 2Th. 2:14).

(Rom 2:11) For there is no partiality with God.

(2Th 2:14) And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

B. Many types of people have heard the call of God:

1. Levi was a tax collector, hated by Jews, but Christ called him.

2. Paul was an enemy of Christians, but Jesus called him.

3. Peter was a simple fisherman, but was called to become a fisher of men.

4. David was very young, but had his heart in the right place.

5. Abraham was very rich, but put his trust and faith in God.

6. Moses was born of slave parents--but became the great liberator of the Jews.

C. Following Christ is not a question of whether you are good enough, it is a question of whether you are will to make the effort. God is not concerned about your ability or inability--He desires your availability!

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

A. Whatever your station in life, God is calling you through JC (Mt. 11:28-30).

“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 “Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and YOU SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 “For My yoke is easy, and My load is light.”

I want to be around/follow someone like that!

B. Where He leads I will follow... will you?

C. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.