

“Follow Me!”
March 2, 2014

Mark 1:14-45

PROP- Jesus’ words, *“Follow Me,”* are a powerful invitation to:

- Trust Me
- Stay close to Me
- Know Me
- Hear Me
- Do what I do

1. PERSEVERE WITH ME!

- Jesus returned from 40 days in the wilderness (wild animals, no food or water, constant harassment by the devil) still focused
- CLEAR IDENTITY—*“I am My Father’s much-loved son!”*
- CLEAR DESTINY—*“At last! The time has finally come! His Kingdom is at hand—coming to the earth in a touchable, tangible way. And everyone can experience it!”*

“May the Lord direct your hearts into God’s love and Christ’s perseverance.” (2 Thessalonians 3:5)

- “Repent!”—You can “change” and “believe the BEST NEWS you’ll ever hear!”
 - Released from *“the leaven of Herod” (NO God)*
 - Released from *“the leaven of the Pharisees” (DISTANT God)*
 - You can experience Me and My world FIRST-HAND!

2. RESCUE & RESTORE PEOPLE WITH ME!

- *“I will make you...”- change something inside of you!*
- *“Fishers of men”* is a phrase used in Jeremiah 16
 - (v. 15) *“I will restore them”*
 - (v. 16) *“Find them on every mountain, hill and crevice”*
 - (v. 17) *“My eyes are on all their ways”*
 - (v. 18) *“I will repay them double” (restore what was forfeited)*
- Various ways to fish (i.e., cast fishing; drag fishing) and minister

3. MOVE WITH ME IN MY AUTHORITY!

- He taught *“with authority”*—*“they were astonished (receptive)”*
- CONFIDENCE—not arrogance (i.e., “UNDER authority”)
- “Immediately” Jesus faced demonic opposition

- Jesus stood in His authority: *“Sternly rebuked”* (i.e., threatens the enemy, not threatened by the enemy)
- (Lit.) *“Be muzzled”- same command given to storm in Mark 4*

[NOTE: Popular exorcism involved a bag of herbs placed under the nose, forcing the demonized person to sneeze, and a command in the name of Solomon]

4. HEAL PEOPLE WITH ME!

- Peter’s mother-in-law with a *“high fever”*—life-threatening
 - Jesus simply *“helped her up”*
 - He then *“healed many”*
 - He then spent time with His Father *“in a solitary place”*
 - He resisted the pressure to please *“everyone,”* doing what His Father wanted Him to do—preach in a nearby town

[NOTE: In Jesus’ day, Galilee was most densely populated province in Middle East. Strategic area to plant His ministry. Clearly, not moved by “press of the crowd.”]

- There He met *“the man with leprosy”*
 - Physical impact: *ghastly deterioration & stench*
 - Social/emotional impact: *isolated; banished from social contact*
 - Levitical law: *“I’m unclean! Pray for my healing.”*
 - Pharisaic law: *“I’m unclean. I’m cursed. Stay away from me!”*
(warning bell around his neck)
- Two key elements of Jesus’ healing ministry:
 - *“(Of course) I am willing (to heal)”- we have a choice RE: what we “abide in”: EITHER dwell in doubts, fears & opinions OR “abide in His words”*
 - *“Moved with compassion”- internal wrenching*

[NOTE: First recorded occurrence of leprosy being cleansed with a touch—Lit.- “to embrace” (i.e., Moses prayed for Miriam to be healed of leprosy in Numbers 12). When Jesus touched this man, CLEAN OVERCAME UNCLEAR!!!]

It’s no wonder His disciples followed Him “with immediacy”!