

## A Pastor's Heart

### Encouragement from Pastor McGill

#### Follow Jesus

**Luke 9:23** *And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*

Early in my ministry God gave me an awesome revelation in His word. I went home and studied the scripture and did what many preachers do, I prepared a sermon to preach that Sunday. I just knew this would bless the congregation as it has blessed me and they would receive it and have the same enthusiasm as I had. That Sunday came and I preached that sermon. I did not feel God's anointing. I knew the congregation was not "getting the message." They had blank looks on their faces and the sermon had no effect whatsoever. No one got saved and there were no conversions, just looks of "I didn't get it." I was extremely disappointed and went home and got in my prayer closet and asked God "what just happened? He told me in no uncertain terms. "YOU FOLLOW ME." DON'T EVER GET AHEAD OF ME." That particular revelation was for me to study and live, not preach at that time. I did not have permission to preach that message. One of the worst things that a believer can do is attempt to do ministry their way, void of the Spirit and the anointing of God. It is a very hollow and empty feeling, one that will not produce fruit. I learned a very valuable lesson that day and one that I will never forget. We are all FOLLOWERS of Jesus. We cannot do what we want to do, even if it does not appear to be sinful. All disobedience is sin. For the sake of clarity, blank looks by the congregation does not mean that God is not in the message. Most of the sermons Jesus preached left people with blank looks. I have preached many sermons and people have had the same blank looks, the difference was, I knew I was being obedient to Jesus and following Him.

When we examine the text, Jesus declares that if we will come after Him, it will require self denial. The Greek word for "come" in this verse is *erchomai*, it is a verb and it means to appear from one place to another publicly. Following Jesus is not a task that can be accomplished in private or in secret. This definition also denotes moving from one place to another. No one follows and remains in the same place. Followers of Jesus must grow. We can never truly follow Jesus without going higher. When Jesus finished His earthly ministry He went higher and is now seated at the right hand of God. If you are not going higher, who are you following? In order to follow Jesus we must be willing to lay aside our agenda and do exactly what He is doing and what He wants us to do. Our eyes must stay focused on Him.

Finally let's examine the word follow, it is the Greek word **akoloutheo**, it means to follow one who precedes, to join him as his attendant, to accompany him. I made the crucial mistake of going before Him and not following behind Him. We must be careful not to make this critical error, even when we have the best intentions. Mistakes often

happen this way. We want to do something, then we ask God to come along, follow us and oh! By the way God, bless what we are doing. This is out of order and will never work in the Kingdom. We must follow Him, when we do, He is already where we are going and what we are doing has already been blessed. Once you begin to truly follow Jesus prepare yourself mentally for the journey. We must go through what He went through. The key word here is “through.” We must remember to rejoice “in through” not wait until we are out of through. He is the same God when I am going through that He is when I am out of through. There will be pain, heartache and persecution, test, trials and tribulation. You may lose friends and people you care deeply about for a season, just remember who you are following, the Greatest Leader to ever walk the planet. You are on a road and following the path that leads to victory. Keep following Jesus and make it great day. Congratulations to those who completed the 21 day Daniel fast. You are awesome!

### **Blessings and Peace**

*Pastor McGill*