

## "Follow Me"

by Pastor Jeffrey Miskus

Preached on Confirmation Sunday

Text: Matthew 9:9

**DATE: June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST, OUR CRUCIFIED, RISEN AND ASCENDED LORD, WHO IS NOT DEAD BUT ALIVE, WHO IS NOT IN THE TOMB, BUT IS WITH US HERE, NOW WITH HIS LOVE AND HIS POWER AS HE LIVES AND REIGNS AT THE GLORIOUS RIGHT HAND OF GOD OUR HEAVENLY FATHER. DEARLY BELOVED CHILDREN OF GOD...

Jesus has two simple words for you today – "Follow me" (Matthew 9:9)

Follow – it means keep your eyes fixed on me – keep your heart and mind fixed on me. Do what I do – say what I say – believe what I believe - accept what I teach. Follow me – It means live how I live - go where I go – relate to God how I relate to God. Love those I love. Care for those I care for. Suffer for the things I suffer for. Avoid the things I avoid. Follow me.

But this part of the command is most important... Jesus says... Follow "me". Me – Jesus of Nazareth - the Son of God. I'm not an idea – I'm the Son of God. I'm a real human being – and I'm the one and only Son of God. I'm not one of many philosophies – I'm the Son of God. I'm not one of many religious figures – I'm the Son of God. I came to earth from heaven - born of the Virgin Mary. I'm real. I lived – I gave my life – I rose from the dead – I continue to live and rule at God's right hand. I'm the one who conquered the powers of sin, death, and the devil for you. Follow me.

Don't follow anyone else or any thing else. Don't follow the crowd... Follow me. Don't follow your friends. You can have friends – but don't follow them – follow me says Jesus. Don't follow some crazy singer just because they can sing. Don't follow some crazy actor just because they can act. You can enjoy singers and actors – but don't follow them – follow me. Don't follow some athlete just because they shoot a puck, or hit a ball. You can enjoy watching them – but don't follow them – follow me. Don't follow your school teachers or your university professors – they will have much to teach you and you may learn from them – BUT FOLLOW ME.

And don't follow yourself – that will be your biggest temptation. The world will tell you – follow your own heart. Jesus says to you - deny yourself – take up your cross daily and follow me.

Be part of my Kingdom – that means – I'm your King – I rule your heart! You follow me. The past where you directed your life is over. You are my disciple now. I'm always calling you to follow me.

You're free to become whatever you want to become as far as you life and career. But remember – when you do you job – or go to school - you'll be

serving me because you follow me – so work hard at school and do your job well. When you're older and become a husband or a wife a mom or dad – you'll be serving me because you follow me – so love and serve your spouse and family as I serve you.

Jesus says to you this morning - I'm the one who created you – follow me. I'm the one who has a plan for your life – follow me. Jesus says – I'm the one who loved you before the world began – follow me. I'm the one who sees your whole life from beginning to end before you've even lived it – so follow me.

But many people argue and say – I'm such a sinner – how could Jesus want me to follow Him? Jesus says, "I know every thought that has even passed through your mind – and I still want you to follow me." "I know every sin you've ever committed in the past and every sin you will commit in the future – and I still want you to follow me."

Jesus says, I'm the one who has saved you, follow me. I can answer every prayer you pray – follow me. I can heal your body, your heart, and your mind – follow me. I can work every trial to your eventual good – follow me. I gave my life on the cross to pay for your sins so you could spend eternity with God – follow me. I suffered your punishment because I love you – follow me. I died on the cross and rose from the dead so you could believe that God forgives sinners – follow me. I promise to forgive your sins - to be with you always – to never leave you or forsake you – follow me.

Jesus says, "I have given you my Holy Spirit to help you follow me." He will help you pray, and will pray for you when you don't know what to say. He will convict your heart when you stray from my path to warn you. He will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said so that you can follow me. He will guide you, comfort you, teach you, and counsel you to follow me.

I have given you your family and my church to help you follow me. They will teach you my words and all that I have done. They will be examples to you of how to follow me. They will share my forgiveness with you through my Word and Sacraments. They will challenge you, keep you accountable, and help you to mature as you follow me. Remember Jesus' words to you every morning for the rest of your life... 'Follow me.' Today you are saying, "Yes Lord I will follow you."

In an act of pure grace Jesus made you his disciple when you were baptized. Jesus says to his disciples in John 15:16, "You did not choose me, but I chose you" Most of you were infants when that happened and so you couldn't speak. So we taught you all about Jesus at home, in Sunday school, and Church.

Today you can speak and you are saying – "Yes Lord I will follow you." Jesus I will follow you wherever you lead me. I will deny myself – take up my cross and follow you. I will strive to walk according to your will and your ways. I will live my life for you. I will serve your people and be active in your church. I will care for others and love those you love. Yes Lord Jesus I will follow you.

Perhaps this is a good time for each of us here today to ask ourselves what these 4 young people are confirming today.

Because the same Son of God that calls them calls us each and every morning, "Follow me."

- † Have we grown cold to his call?
- † Have we begun to follow other voices and teachers?
- † Has following Jesus become keeping a list of rules or keeping up a certain moral standard?
- † Has following Jesus become a religious habit?
- † Have we spiritualized his call to the point where it means nothing in our lives in the practical sense?
- † Are we denying ourselves, taking up our crosses each day and following him?
- † Does the Son of God have your heart?
- † Only you know – but he says to you today, no matter who you are and what you've done – follow me.