

Follow Me Two Words That Changed Everything

Easter Sunday Believers Statesboro 04-04-21 Follow Me Week 1 - Pastor Scott Moore

There is a call from Jesus that is so simple, yet so profound. It's an invitation to a life that is far better than the life most people live, AND ITS ONLY TWO WORDS.

But these two words have changed individual's lives more than any other two words spoken.

IN RESPONSE TO THESE TWO WORDS:

- Wealthy people have given up everything.
- People living a mundane life have discovered purpose.
- Those bound in addictions have been set free.
- The anxious, downcast and depressed have discovered joy.
- Those who were dying have discovered hope.

These two words only have importance and life changing ability because of what we are celebrating here today, the death, the burial, and the powerful resurrection of Christ Jesus!

These two words are His words. It's Jesus' two-word invitation to "**Follow Me**". Two Words That Changed Everything. And if you say yes to those two words, it will change everything for you too.

Jesus said "follow me" thirteen times in the Gospels and in the context of preaching repentance and the gospel, the good news. Jesus used these two words to call many people to follow Him.

Peter, Andrew, James, and John - **Matthew 4:18-22** As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called **Peter** and his brother **Andrew**. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 19 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." 20 At once they left their nets and followed him.

21 Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, **James** son of Zebedee and his brother **John**. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, 22 and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Phillip and Nathanael - **John 1:43** The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "**Follow me.**"

The Rich Young Ruler - **Mark 10:21** Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

Levi, the Tax Collector - **Luke 5:27-28** ...Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of **Levi** sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, 28 and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.

But what if Jesus had called these people to follow Him only to fail. I mean three and half years later Jesus would be arrested and brutally crucified by the Roman government. How futile and worthless to follow someone who would be defeated, his story suddenly coming to an end.

Of course, you know that's why we are here today. We are celebrating because that was not how the story ended. As prophesied and as Jesus promised, on the third day Jesus arose, defeating even death!

The Resurrection Makes These Two Words Significant and Powerful

The Apostle Paul tells us in **1 Corinthians 15:3-4** For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

Paul goes on to say in verses 14 and 17 of **1 Corinthians 15**.

14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

If Christ Jesus had not been raised from the dead, those who followed Jesus wasted their time.

What we are celebrating today is the fact that Jesus not only died for our sins, but He also rose from the dead to bring us abundant life! And today, He is still extending to us the call to **follow him**.

The Call to Follow Me

Jesus wanted his disciples, and us as well, to know that the call to “Follow Me” has not come to an end. It doesn’t matter what has happened, if you’ve never followed Jesus before, or if you once followed but now you don’t. It doesn’t matter where you’ve been or what you have done. The call is still being extended to you to be a Christ follower and be enabled with the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit.

Who or What Do We Follow Now?

After the death and resurrection of Jesus, his followers weren’t really sure what to do at that point.

John 21:1-3 Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Tiberias. It happened this way: **2 Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee (James and John), and two other disciples were together.**

3 "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you."

So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Peter, renamed the Rock, who had spent the last three and a half years with Jesus, the one who made the confession that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, saved, sent by Jesus, and called to be a fisher of men... Yes, that Peter. He is the one who said, “I’m going fishing!” He probably thought, “Well I won’t be able to follow Jesus anymore, so I will just go back to following my business as a fisherman of fish”.

Peter did like we do today, when we are faced with a crisis in life, when we find ourselves in confusing times, when we are having a hard time figuring out what is happening in our lives, we tend to fall back to what is comfortable! The familiar, what we are used to, a safe place, that's where we go.

Not only do we do that, not only did Peter do that, but the other six disciples did the same thing. They said, **“We'll go with you.”**

But when Jesus has called you to follow Him, and you follow other things, you may not like the results.

John 21:3b So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

John 21:4-5 Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. **5** He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered.

There was a 100-yard geographical distance between them and Jesus, but sometimes we don’t recognize Jesus either because we are spiritually distant.

- The further we get from Jesus, the harder it is to recognize Him in our life.
- The further we get from Jesus, the harder it is to hear His voice.

Three Memory Reminders

John 21:6 He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some."

When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

Memory Reminder One: They think to themselves, wait a minute, this isn’t the first time this has happened. Didn’t this happen about three and half years ago when Jesus said to us, “follow me”?

A memory recorded in Luke 5 where after an unsuccessful night of fishing, Jesus told them to cast their nets again and they hauled in a large miraculous catch.

John 21:7 Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water.

Was Peter just that excited to see Jesus? Was he just being Peter, always wanting to lead? Or, was he wanting to get to Jesus first due to his shame and embarrassment of his betrayal of Jesus. He wanted a private moment to say, “Hey Jesus can you and I just talked about this before the others get here.”

John 21:8 The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.

9 When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.

Memory Reminder Two: “A fire of coals” (GW: Anthrakia) a heap of burning coals or a charcoal fire, used only twice in the Bible. This charcoal fire with its unmistakable aroma, brought back memories of Peter’s three denials of being a Christ follower.

John 21:10-11 Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.” 11 Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn.

Memory Reminder Three: Luke 5 records the first big net-breaking catch, leading them to follow.

Guilty But No Condemnation

So here stands Jesus and Peter on the beach, nothing separating them but a fire of coals. Peter stands there letting the smell of burning charcoal send memories rushing through his mind.

- He remembered his pledge of loyalty, his denial, and his bitter tears.

How have you denied Jesus?

- Left your first love, denied Him your time, denied Him your talents,
- denied Him your resources, denied Him your devotion, denied Him your life?

Peter standing by the coal of fires, GUILTY! And not a word spoken. Jesus and Peter are standing face to face both knowing. *And not a word of condemnation spoken!*

Do You Love Me?

John 21:12-14 Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord.

13 Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish.

14 This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

This was the third appearance to them as a group. Jesus had appeared to other individuals.

What occurs next is a conversation between Jesus and Peter where Jesus forgives and restores him.

- Three different times Jesus would ask Peter, “Do you love me.”
- Twice Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him with agape love, God’s kind of unconditional love. Twice Peter answered that he loved the Lord with phileo – brotherly love and kindness.
- The third time Jesus asked Peter, “Do you even love me with phileo love?”

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” John 21:17

Each time Peter answered Jesus, Jesus would restore Peter’s calling and purpose. Telling Peter to “feed my lambs” and “take care of my sheep”.

Why Three Questions? The three questions offset Peter’s three failures, denials of Jesus.

Then Jesus said to Peter the Two Words That Change Everything.

Follow Me

John 21:18-19 I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." 19 Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "**Follow me!**"

Peter's original call: "Follow Me". The icing on the cake is that Jesus brings it all back around.

And the promise is still there. If you follow me, I will make you a fisher of Men, not fish.

Matthew 4:18-22 ... "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

The difference now is that Peter can follow Jesus enabled by Jesus' resurrection power!

You Must Follow Me!

Peter looked at John. **John 21:21-22** When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?"

What about everyone else? What if they don't follow you? Will John have to die for you too?

22 Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?"

You must follow me."

Maybe today you are thinking I used to follow Jesus. I had a call on my life, and I use to really serve Him **BUT...**

- I got pregnant outside of marriage... *Jesus is saying to you: Follow Me*
- I had an abortion... I committed fornication...
- I became an alcoholic... I got my girlfriend pregnant...
- I was unfaithful to my spouse... I became a drug user...
- I got divorced... I killed...
- I stole... I fell in love with money...
- OR I just slowly slipped away and left my first love.

If Jesus was standing right in front of you today, looking you in the eyes, He would ask you the same question He asked Peter. "**Do you love me?**"

And then he would charge you with the two words that change everything, "**Follow Me.**"

The Promise to Those Who Will Choose to Follow

John 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. **Whoever follows me** will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

What do you choose to do? Follow others, your own way, or follow Jesus?

Bold Next Steps

- For the first time, I choose to follow Jesus today.
- I will daily make a conscious choice to follow Jesus.
- I will commit to hear each teaching in this series to really understand what it means to follow Jesus.

Song: "I have decided to follow Jesus."

Old One or Elevation Worship <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRb769P50IQ>

- Salvation Call.
- To everyone in the house, stand to say you will follow Jesus.