

FOLLOW ME



WEEK OF PRAYER
FALL 2023



MISSION CITY
BIBLE CHURCH

FOLLOW ME

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2023 WEEK OF PRAYER

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INTRODUCTION

Jesus had what many people today would call a strange habit. To the casual onlooker, Jesus walked from one town to the next – from one village to another – and said the same thing everywhere he went. It appeared seemingly random to many, but we know it was eternally planned from before the beginning of time.

In every location and to every person, Jesus uttered the same two words that would forever change people's lives. It happened to Simon, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Levi, an overly zealous scribe, a pre-emptively grieving son, and a young entrepreneur. It happened in large crowds, and it happened in one-on-one conversations. It happened over meals and while walking on the road. And most often, it happened when people least expected it.

Two words, one call, and a simple message that would change them forever.

Follow me.

It is a bold statement. Jesus wasn't making a polite request and, frankly, demands like that generally don't sit well with

people like us. You know the kind of people: self-sufficient, wise in our own eyes, fine-on-our-own-thank-you-very-much.

I believe we could safely say that most of us are comfortable with a life of our own making. We have carefully crafted plans and purposes. We have jobs to do, families to care for, and pleasures of the world we like to enjoy. If anything, we would rather call other people's attention toward us and what we're doing instead of being called away from it. We want to be in control. We want to set the path forward, and we don't want to bend our direction to someone else's idea of what we should or should not do.

For goodness' sake: it's not even good planning! Why would you let go of projects you've invested so much in to seemingly get little or nothing in return – just to follow someone else when you're not even sure where that person will take you or what you'll have to do when you get there? What about your return on investment? What about your market share? What about . . . well, you?

Somehow, we've taken two of the simplest words Jesus ever put together – follow me – and we've made it about only one of those words.

Me.

And because we're so enamoured by it, we fail to see that the road marked "Me" is an endless pursuit for happiness, fulfillment, satisfaction, glory, hope, joy, peace, love, and myriads of other pitstops along the way that leave us empty and searching. It's like filling up your vehicle at the rest-stop gas station only to pull away and find you're still running on empty.

This call from Jesus is so critical for this very reason: It takes my eyes off me and puts my eyes on him. It rightly diverts my attention from my inability to save myself. It finally gives me solid ground on which to stand. It brings a stop to my cease-

less running for meaning, for purpose, for help, (for whatever!) and it gives me the rest I didn't even know my soul was craving.

To truly understand what it means to follow Jesus, we need to keep growing in our understanding of the Jesus we are being called to follow. He is Saviour and King, Son of God, and Son of Man. He is Judge, Ruler, Defender, and Protector. He is our Great Shepherd of the Sheep and our Friend who sticks closer than a brother. And among many other things, He is the only One who calls us to follow him. What we discover along the twists and turns of this lifelong adventure, and what most people end up discovering with a sense of great joy, is that as we get to know Jesus more, a once fruitless pursuit for a life of meaning is, over time, transformed into a life-changing journey that will give us everything we need in abundance from the One who calls us to follow him.

If you will take Jesus at his word and follow him, he will change your life both now and forever. I mean, *truly* follow him. Like: lay down your life . . . pick up your cross . . . letting go of me so I can hold on to him . . . follow him. That's not a flimsy guarantee from me. That's a sure-fire promise from Jesus himself.

“ *And whoever does not take his cross and **follow me** is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.* ”

MATTHEW 10:38-39

“ *Again, Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”* ”

Jesus promises that life will never be the same if you will accept his call to follow him. He doesn't promise that life will be easier, but it will be better. He doesn't promise that life will be safer, but again, it will be better. Following Jesus has never guaranteed an end to your struggles with anxiety or fear or worry or depression or grief or loneliness or any other sin. Jesus never promised ease of life or comfort unending. What he did promise is an endless provision of what he knows we need and, even more than that, his endless presence with us as we follow him on the greatest of adventures.

All he asks of us is this. Follow me.

Will you do it? Will you take up the call? Will you follow Jesus with every part of your life?

My prayer for us is that this week of seeking the Lord together will be only the beginning of many great stories of following Jesus, all of which are already written in heaven and are just waiting to be told here on earth.

Let the adventure begin.

Together for the Kingdom,

pk

DAY 1: MONDAY

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

And Jesus said to them, “***Follow me***, and I will make you become fishers of men.” And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

MARK 1:17-18

Pray:

- that we trust the Spirit of God to strengthen us to accomplish our mission as a church: to glorify God through the fulfillment of the Great Commission in the spirit of the Great Commandment
- that we will be disciples who make disciples of Jesus Christ
- for the power of God to:
- boldly proclaim the authority of God’s word without apology

- passionately worship Jesus Christ
- fervently pray to the living God
- courageously evangelize the lost
- intentionally disciple one another
- strategically plant churches

FOR REFLECTION & APPLICATION:

1. What are some areas in your life where you may be holding back from God's plan?
2. What needs to happen for me to surrender and seek God's guidance in these areas of my life?

DAY 2: TUESDAY

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and *follow me* is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

MATTHEW 10:37-39

Pray:

- for the growth, unity, and multiplication of our small groups
- for our flock leaders and small group leaders to trust God for his wisdom and grace
- for our children's ministry, youth ministry, young adults' ministry, and our men's and women's

ministries to remain steadfast in teaching God's word and loving one another

- for God to raise up more people to serve in the ministries of MCBC
- for more people to respond to God's call to be obedient by being baptized

FOR REFLECTION & APPLICATION:

- i. What are areas on your life where self-centredness is hindering you in your ability to follow Jesus? Will you repent of those things now?

DAY 3: WEDNESDAY

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, “**Follow me.**” And leaving everything, he rose and followed him.

LUKE 5:27-28

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “**Follow me.**”

JOHN 1:43

Pray:

- for your family, friends, loved ones, etc.—by name
—to hear Jesus’ call to “follow him” in repentance and faith

- for the Spirit of God to move in revival across our city and region
- for the Lord to raise up more people who will pick up their cross and follow Jesus to another part of the world for the purpose of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ
- for God to send more workers into the harvest field
- for us to see God as our source of strength and courage to share the gospel with the people around us

FOR REFLECTION & APPLICATION:

1. Where is God using you right now? Is God showing you any new places where He might want to use you?
2. Upon reading Proverbs 3:5-6, how will you follow Christ through trusting him, acknowledging him, and then following him?

DAY 4: THURSDAY

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

Jesus said to him, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”

MATTHEW 19:21

When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”

LUKE 18:22

Pray:

- for the Lord to continue to grow in us an ever-increasing spirit of generosity and sacrifice

- that God would grant us, as needed, the grace of repentance for holding too tightly to our material resources
- that 2023-2024 would be a year of unparalleled generosity in resources of all kinds going out from Mission City
- for our compassion ministries to see how the Lord is leading in meeting needs for people in our church and beyond
- for repentance, faith, and sanctification to be so evident through our Biblical Soul Care ministry

FOR REFLECTION & APPLICATION:

1. Reflect on what you have and how you use it. Are you giving priority to any earthly possessions or belongings that are preventing you from following Jesus?
2. How might God be asking you to use what you possess to serve others? To help others? To give to others with no expectations for anything in return?

DAY 5: FRIDAY

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they ***follow me***. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.”

JOHN 10:27-28

“Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.” (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, “***Follow me.***”

JOHN 21:18-19

Pray:

- to thank the Lord for the gift of your salvation and all it brings to your life
- for a renewed personal passion for holiness and sanctification within your life
- for your own personal needs
- for the needs of your family, friends, neighbours, etc.

FOR REFLECTION & APPLICATION:

1. Looking back on your life, how have you seen God strengthen you to persevere in following him through trials? Spend time thanking him for his grace to you.
2. How can you encourage someone else to keep following Christ during their difficulty? Ask the Lord to help you see how you can be used in this way.

DAY 6: SATURDAY

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

Again, Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

JOHN 8:12

Pray:

- for Brantford and the surrounding region to know Jesus Christ as the light of the world
- that Jesus would rescue the lost from the darkness in which they wander aimlessly
- for wide-spread and undeniable repentance and revival from the Spirit of God across our country
- for the mayor of Brantford: Kevin Davis
- for our city councillors and other elected officials

- for our first responders: health care, police officers, firefighters, etc.
- for our MPP: Will Bouma
- for our MP: Larry Brock
- for our Premier: Doug Ford
- for our Prime Minister: Justin Trudeau

FOR REFLECTION & APPLICATION:

1. How has God specifically called you to be an ambassador for Christ? (See 2 Corinthians 5:20.)
2. Identify someone you can pray for and share the gospel with in the next several days. Pray for the Holy Spirit to prepare their heart in advance.

DAY 7: SUNDAY

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about this man?” Jesus said to him, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!”

JOHN 21:21-22

Pray:

- How must you follow Jesus today?
- How must you follow Jesus this month?
- How must you follow Jesus this year?
- How must you follow Jesus?



MISSION CITY
BIBLE CHURCH

OUR MISSION

To glorify God through the fulfillment of
the Great Commission in the spirit of
the Great Commandment

Matthew 28:18-20, Matthew 22:37-39