

LET THE BIBLE SPEAK SERIES

Ronny F. Wade, Speaker

If Any Man Will Come After Me

Mt. 16:24-26

In verses 21-23 of Matthew 16 Jesus had foretold of his coming suffering and death on the cross. Peter declared "it shall not be unto thee." But Jesus rebukes him, indicating that Peter had become an instrument in the hand of Satan, when using such language. He then proceeds with the message of vs. 24-26.

I. If Any Man

The statement is plain and means just what it implies. "Any man"
Any man of accountable age, and in possession of his faculties can come to Jesus.

a. Matters not how evil one may have been: "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God: Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." 1Cor.6:9-11

b. Matters not how poor one may be: James 2:1-4 "My brethren do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory with partiality. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him "you sit here in a good place" and say to the poor man, "you stand there" or "sit here at my footstool," have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?"

c. Matters not what one's race or skin color may be: "But the Lord said to Samuel, "do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." 1Sam. 16:7 "Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean." Acts 10:28 Hence Peter made it his practice to engage in open fellowship with Gentiles in accordance with the vision that led him to Joppa. However in Galatians 2 when certain (Jews) came from James, he changed his practice to suit their scruples. His actions, motivated by fear of Jewish brethren, were wrong and Paul withstood him to his face. "He was to be blamed.." He was essentially operating on the basis of policy rather than principle. Hence, Paul rebuked him before all. "When I say they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, If you being a Jew live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel the Gentiles to live as Jews?" Gal. 2:14.

Racism had reared its ugly head and corrective action took the form of a public rebuke.

It matters not whether we be black, Caucasian, or Mongolian, Jew, Gentile, ALL may come to Christ.

II. If Any Man Will

- a. following the Lord is a matter of choice. Josh. 24:15 "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve...but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord." Acts 2:40 "save yourselves..."
- b. If we can obey, then we can disobey. The ability to do right, necessitates the ability to do wrong. We are creatures of "free will" Adam and Eve are an example. They could and did choose the course of action they took in life. So do we all.
- c. All heaven pleads with man to make the right choice. Deut. 30:19 "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live." 1Tim. 2:3-4 "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our savior who will have all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth."
- d. If a man is lost, it is because he wills it that way. "Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, it was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles." We can't blame others if we are lost.

III. Come After Me

- a. Many today follow the wrong one, some man. 1Cor. 1:12-13 "Now this I say that everyone of you saith I am of Paul...Cephas, Apollos, Is Christ divided?..." Some follow Charles Russell, John Wesley, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Joe Smith, A. Campbell or some preacher. It is foolish and wrong to follow any man.
- b. Many today follow the wrong thing i.e. the doctrine of man Mt. 15:9 "In vain do they worship me teaching for doctrines and commandments of men."
- c. We should follow Christ in the matter of:
Salvation: Jno. 14:6 "I am the way the truth and the life, no man cometh to the father but by me." (We are not saved by morality, good deeds, pedigree, etc.) Only by Christ.

Authority: Mt.28:18-20 All power or authority resides in him. Jno.12:48 "the words I speak unto you the same shall judge you in the last day." Heb. 1:1-2 "God who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers through the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son..."

IV. Let Him Deny Himself

- a. Self-denial is a forgotten concept. Most believe they can have whatever they want. Not only have, but actually deserve it.
- b. Let him surrender his will to God's will. Let him dedicate his body and affections to the service of Christ Let him refuse to seek his own happiness as the supreme object of life.
- c. Mt. 18:8-9 "If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet,

to be cast into the everlasting fire, and if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire." A figure of speech is used here to show the terror of being lost and making the point that just as in life we sometimes have to amputate in order to save the body, just so we should cut from us anything that will cause us to be lost. We will be willing to deny ourselves of those things we want or think we need in order to be saved. We must love God more than pleasure "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth..." 1Tim.5:6 We must love God more than the world Rom. 12:1-2, 1Jno.2:15

V. And Take Up His Cross

- a. Persons condemned to be crucified were compelled to bear the cross on which they were to be crucified to the place of execution. Such was an addition to the punishment. It was burdensome and disgraceful.
- b. Take up the cross is a figurative statement denoting that we must endure what ever is burdensome or trying in following Christ.
- c. Christ made cross-bearing a necessary condition of discipleship. Peter nor any other man can avoid it. We must be willing to bear the trials and sorrows and sacrifices of being a Christian, just as Christ was willing to endure the suffering of the cross for us 2Cor.11:24-28.

VI. And Follow Me

Sweetly Lord have we heard thee calling, come follow me
And we see where thy footsteps falling lead us to thee
Footprints of Jesus make the pathway glow
I will follow the steps of Jesus where 'ere they go.

Following Jesus will lead to:

- a. Baptism---Mt. 3:13-17 Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan river. We are baptized in answer to the command of Christ in Mark 16:15-16.
- b. Worship---Lk.4:16 "and he came to Nazareth where he had been brought up, and as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up for to read." We should be consistent in our worship on the first day of the week Acts 20:7.
- c. Resistance to temptation---Mt. 4-11 Just as Jesus resisted the devil and temptation, we should also.
- d. Sacrifice---Jno. 10:18 "No man taketh it from me I lay it down myself..." Romans 12:1-2 The Lord was willing to lay down his life as a sacrifice for sin. We should be willing to give up whatever is necessary in order to be a Christian.
- e. Heaven---Jno. 14:1-4 If we live faithfully, we can someday follow Jesus to heaven.