

Have you tried to follow someone somewhere you have never been?

**Lead** humbly with love and truth  
**Invest** eternally with hope and purpose

F-Follow

**Follow faithfully with grit and grace.**

**We trust and obey God daily with a determination that doesn't quit and a heart that is quick to repent.**

**Follow:** go or come after a person or thing proceeding ahead

**Faithful:** remaining loyal and steadfast

**Grit:** courage, resolve; strength of character.(a measure of potential)

**Grace:** the free and unmerited favor of God

One of the first people to follow Jesus was a man named Simon.

**So this morning we will start in MATTHEW 4:18**

We will use the life of Simon as an overlay for follow faithfully.

Simon, later Simon Peter is an interesting character...

**John MacArthur:** *Peter's name is mentioned in the gospels more than any other name except Jesus. No one speaks as often as Peter, and no one is spoken to by the Lord as often as Peter. No disciple is so frequently rebuked by the Lord as Peter; and no disciple ever rebukes the Lord except Peter (Matthew 16:22). No one else confessed Christ more boldly or acknowledged His lordship more explicitly; yet no other disciple ever verbally denied Christ as forcefully or as publicly as Peter did. No one is praised and blessed by Christ the way Peter was; yet Peter was also the only one Christ ever addressed as Satan. The Lord had harsher things to say to Peter than He ever said to any of the others.*

**There is a lot to learn from Peter...and today we want to look at what it looks like for a flawed human to follow a perfect Savior.**

Matthew 4:18 And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 19 Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." 20 They immediately left *their* nets and followed Him. 21 Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, 22 and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

If you have ever played "follow the leader" or "Simon says"...  
You know that following is not about knowing but doing.

FIRST POINT:

**Following Jesus is an action not an understanding.**

These guys physically followed Jesus.

They left their father and their nets to follow Jesus.

*This was a great honor to be called to follow by a rabbi.*

Following was not just an idea, it was an action.

**They were following to learn to be loyal to Jesus' teaching**

**Now full disclosure, this was not the first time they saw Jesus.**

Andrew, Peter's brother was a disciple of John the Baptist.

John the Baptizer proclaims in **John 1**, "Behold the Lamb of God ...  
**who takes away the sin of the world!**"

Andrew finds his brother, Simon, and brings him to meet Jesus.

Jesus sees Simon and promptly changes his name to Simon Peter.

SECOND POINT:

**Following Jesus is about identity not just activity.**

Jesus meets Peter and Jesus gives him a vision for a new identity.

**He would go from Simon, meaning “to hear or be heard”...  
...which is appropriate because he always wanted to be heard.  
-To Peter, “stone/rock” one others can look to for stability and  
strength**

Going back to our original Scripture in Matthew...

**He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.**

When we follow Jesus...

...He changes us from who we are to who He is.

We do become like our friends...

**Jesus wants to be our friend and influence our life...**

**...and yet there is an even greater degree of divine development**

**...when we follow Jesus.**

*Being a Christian and following Jesus isn't “fake it til you make it”*

*...It doesn't mean, just “do what you see other people doing”.*

Being a follower of Christ means you are born again.

You have a new life, a new heart, and a new identity.

II 5:17: NLT: **This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!**

When we have a new spiritual life, we have new spiritual senses...

- We begin to feel our heart touched
- We love and care for others like we didn't before.
- Maybe we speak like we didn't before
- We hear His Spirit thru His word and His servants.

So Peter leaves the nets, leaves his father and follows Jesus...

This is the first step...but there are many steps in following Jesus.

Our third point is

**Following Jesus is incremental not instant.**

**Following is step by step, day by day, lesson by lesson journey.**

We follow step by step and we are transformed day by day.

**We are not completely transformed on the day of our salvation...**

**...We just begin the process of sanctification...**

**...becoming more like Jesus.**

Let's look at another step for Peter...Luke 5:8

Jesus is teaching on the Sea of Galilee...

Peter is there cleaning the nets and Jesus tells him to

... "go out into the deep for a catch."

**...Jesus may call us to go deeper...**

**But Peter was not excited about it:**

**It is the wrong time to fish, the wrong way to fish, and he just finished fishing so he was tired and ready to get comfortable.**

**BUT Peter obeys Jesus despite his feelings or logical judgment.**

...He is learning to follow Jesus.

They go out, throw out the nets and they catch an enormous amount of fish!

They need help with the nets, their boats nearly sink, and what is Peter's reaction?

Luke 5: 8 When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" 9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; 10 and so also *were* James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to

Simon, “Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.” 11 So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

This seems to be another step forward for Peter.  
Peter had begun to follow Jesus, but he hadn't forsaken all.  
***Jesus was the teacher, but not the Lord.***

*The step of Lordship...*

*...of full faithful following can be a scary proposition...*

*But this is how it works...*

*...Jesus calls us and then calls us again and again.*

*We worry about ourselves*

*Will Jesus really take care of me?*

*Can I really trust Him with the wheel?*

*Peter later tells Jesus that “they had left all to follow Him” and then... he asks, “what will there be for us?”*

*...Jesus assures him their reward will be great.*

**Spurgeon, prince of preachers says Peter had three calls...**

The first was to be a disciple. John 1:37

The second was to be an evangelist. Matthew 4:19

The third was to be an apostle. Matthew 10:1-2

**I think these are three specific steps that are worth examining.**

**FIRST:** We begin our walk of faith in following Jesus as a disciple.

**First, I am a disciple, learning to hear and obey the Word of God.**

**NEXT:** As time goes on, He calls me deeper and begins to reveal personal gifts and callings. (Fisher of men)

**Next, I am a servant, with a revelation of gifts and purpose.**

### **THIRD:**

**Lastly, I am sent, Jesus calls me to go and put it all into practice.**

You have learned, you have practiced your gifts, and then He sends you out to do what you are made to do.

Apostles are sent out ones....and then it starts over and over.

**God gives us steps, not jumps because following Jesus is hard when you are human.**

**We need time to grow....from baby to child to teen to adult...**

**Fourth point:**

**Following Jesus is simple not easy.**

We will need grit not to quit.

**Jesus may call you to forsake everything, so that He can be your everything.**

...But Knowing his faithfulness helps us have faith and be faithful.

Peter would write in his epistle...I Peter 5:10

**But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. 11 To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.**

God of all grace...After you have suffered a while...perfect, establish strengthen and settle you...to God be the glory.

**The grit gets us thru the suffering and...**

**...His grace gives us strength and comfort and desire to follow.**

So no matter how hard things get, we don't quit Jesus and He never quits on us.

**It is better to follow Jesus through the hard times than to quit Jesus, and try to navigate on your own!**

There will be challenges and we don't want to be those that quit/DNF.

Our final point is

**Following Jesus is unattainable but not impossible.**

**Wait what?!? Let's define terms...**

Unattainable: "not able to be reached or achieved."

Impossible: "not able to occur, exist, or be done"

We need grit, resolve and strong character to finish the race...

**Everyone in Christ will finish the race...**

**...But not everyone will finish well.**

*There are some of us that allow the glory of God to shine through our lives more than others because we follow Jesus more faithfully.*

Here is the truth:

**You can't follow Jesus on your own power.**

It's like trying to run to keep up with a car...you need an engine.

...The engine we need to follow faithfully is the grace of God.

Grace means gift.

We need the gift of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit

Jesus is perfect and we are not.

**Perfection is not attainable, but we are not trying to be perfect...**

**...we are trying to be faithful.**

Faithfully following Jesus is not impossible because...

Jesus said all things are possible for those that believe!

Peter was the poster child for grace...

...God's unmerited favor on those that don't deserve it.

*Peter needed lots of grace...and He needed to learn grace for others.*

**Jesus is going to call us to situations and even put us in places where we reach our limit...and we may fail...and that's ok...**

It is the failure that reveals our need for his strength.

It is the transgressions that allows God to reveal His grace for us.

Our failure doesn't disqualify us, it prepares us.

We just need to fail forward.

**That's the difference between Judas and Peter.**

One hung himself and the other clung to Jesus.

Jesus knew the failures were coming.

Jesus sees beyond them.

Sometimes we think we are doing pretty good, and then we aren't...

- We walk on water...then sinks in the storm, we call out to Jesus and He graciously saves us.
- We declare Jesus the messiah, but then can't imagine Jesus dying and tell Jesus what to do but get rebuked for sounding like Satan!
- But then we graciously are brought up on the Mt. Of Transfig. Where we promptly start talking when we should have been listening and God has to tell us to be quiet and listen.
- But Jesus graciously tells us don't be afraid and brings us even closer

We could go on and on...

When we sin, when we fail, when we falter and wander and get lost...

We just need to turn around and keep following Jesus.

**When you realize that you are going the wrong way, the best thing to do is turn around and go the other way.**



That is really what repent means...

...to change your mind and the direction of your life.

And that is a constant, daily process when we follow Jesus faithfully.

Our natural reaction is to run or hide or quit...

But the thing about Peter was...

...he just kept faithfully following the Lord with grit...

...and the Lord kept covering Him with grace.

**And it is the grace of God that opens the door for us to return to the Lord anytime we find ourselves outside of His will.**

**And it is our grit and resolve that is needed to make that choice to get back up, and push thru and keep going.**

**Final point: Following Jesus is about staying on mission not dwelling on mistakes.**

Jesus sees past our mistakes into our mission.

He sees our purpose not our imperfections.

Luke 22 <sup>31</sup>Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat. <sup>32</sup>But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith will not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

Peter knew the value of repentance, the joy of being forgiven, and the privilege of being restored.

Do you?

So the reality is...Jesus is calling...are you responding?

After Peter failed, he ran to the tomb but Jesus wasn't there.

Later, he swam from a boat and met Jesus on shore.

When he got to shore, Jesus made him breakfast and asked Him if he loved him three times. And Jesus told him to love and tend His sheep.

You don't have to be perfect.

You don't have to have amazing gifts.

You just have to turn from your own way and follow Him.

When things get hard and life is painful, be resolved to keep following with grit ...And keep living in God's grace for yourself and for others.

**Because of my grit, I press on towards the goal, because of His grace, I fall into His ever-loving arms every day.**