

Fan or Follower

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[0 : 00] Let's try it again.

Let's try it again. How about that? Does that make a difference?

There we go. Oh, this is fun. Normally I do this behind closed doors, but y'all get to see it all. That's okay.

There's no secrets. Okay. Here we go. Is that better? All right. So we're talking about a definition of what it means to be a disciple.

Let's see if this thing is working yet. Yes. Hey, we're all there. Okay. I like this one. It was not original to me, but I found it and I found about 45 of them and I really like this one.

[1 : 07] So I wanted to share this with y'all. A disciple is someone who is following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and is committed to the mission of Jesus.

How about that? I think that's pretty good. It's someone who is following Jesus. It's someone who is following Jesus. I say it that way because different than was following Jesus, or maybe wants to be following Jesus, or thinks following Jesus is a good idea.

But an actual disciple is someone who is following Jesus. Jesus is being changed by Jesus. Jesus is being changed by Jesus. Jesus is being changed by Jesus. And is committed to the mission of Jesus.

Jesus is being changed by Jesus. Jesus is being changed by Jesus. So, if we keep that definition of what it is to be a disciple in our minds, then let's look at our text.

Luke chapter 9. Would you mind standing with me as we read it together? And then you can be seated as we go on a recap of the previous weeks. Let's read Luke chapter 9 and verse 23 together.

[2 : 10] I'm reading from the New Living Translation. Then he said to them all, if anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me.

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life because of me will save it. For what does it benefit someone if he gains the whole world and yet loses or forfeits himself?

Let's take one more look at verse 23. Then he said to them all, if anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me.

Would you be seated? God, I pray that you would speak to us deeply from this verse.

We've been breaking it down. We've been diving into it, taking a deep look at this verse, at your definition of what it looks like to follow you.

[3 : 17] I pray that you would let it take strong, deep roots within us. Change us into a church of Jesus followers.

We'll give you the glory for it. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. By way of review, three weeks ago, we looked at this first part of the verse that we highlighted just a moment ago.

If anyone wants to follow after me, and we talked about the Jesus way. Our choir sang that powerful song, I choose the Jesus way. Well, that's a wonderful thing to choose.

It's a wonderful thing to say and to sing. But what does it mean? Well, we accepted the challenge. If we commit to the Jesus way, then we can watch God transform us from the inside out into becoming his disciple.

Then we moved on just a couple of weeks ago into the next part of the verse. Jesus said, if anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself and then take up his cross daily.

[4 : 21] And so what does it mean to live in denial the Jesus way? And our takeaway that Sunday was denying myself starts on the inside as God transforms me again from the inside out into becoming his disciple.

Man, our man focus is so often from the outside in, right? As long as we've got the outside looking good, we're not so much worried about what's going on on the inside. But Jesus is completely the opposite.

You start on the inside. He challenges us that the inside is so often rotten. And then he will change what's on the outside starting from within.

And then we moved on last Sunday as we observed the Lord's Supper into taking up our cross. We read the final commandment here to take up his cross daily right before he reminded us to follow him.

So what does it look like to take up his cross daily? There was a cost involved, wasn't there? And so what is the daily cost? Our takeaway last Sunday, following Jesus means daily following him to the cross.

[5 : 33] It was a one-way journey to the cross that would result in death. There was a daily death to ourselves, to our ambitions, to our goals, to our preferences, to our desires, and embracing the life of Christ, dying to ourselves and embracing his life.

So we're on to the last part now. Follow me. Before we get there, I want to take a little pivot, a little about face, and take you somewhere unexpected.

Does anybody know who these guys are? I know he does. Austin, why don't you come up here and tell everybody real loud.

I mean, you've got to use your outside voice. Why don't you come up here and tell everybody who they are? Seriously, you've got to use your outside voice. Tell them who they are. Dude, perfect. Everybody hear that?

For the people in the back? Dude, perfect. There you go. All right. Dude, perfect. Yep, that's who they are. Now, I am a fan of dude, perfect.

[6 : 42] Do you know why I'm a fan of dude, perfect? Anybody want to take a guess? Just take a guess. They're not perfect.

Trust me, they're not perfect. Because they're funny. That's actually not why I'm a fan of dude, perfect. Christian. I like that.

Athletes. Yes. We're hitting all around it. Yes, because they're unique. Disciples.

That's good. That's good. Do you think I would care at all about them if my kids, that's it. Because my kids like them.

That's why. They were not even on my radar until my kids started watching them. Well, then, obviously, I'm going to check them out. You know, what are these guys about? Well, I found out they are very bold Christians.

[7 : 41] I mean, they don't hide their faith at all. And they produce clean content. Absolute clean content. And I really am very grateful for that. Because it's really hard to find clean content that you can just let your kids watch and not worry about what they're watching.

So, that's why I'm a fan of Dude Perfect. It's really nice to have that in today's world. So, I'm a fan. My kids are more than fans.

They're followers of Dude Perfect. Right? I took Austin. We drove up to Oklahoma City. And we attended one of their shows. Because he is a follower of Dude Perfect. They clicked the follow button on YouTube.

And they, if anything else is going on, they're playing with toys. Or they're playing in the backyard. Or they're, you know, doing something else. And all of a sudden, they hear that there's a new Dude Perfect video on YouTube.

Everything else stops. And they're going to run over and watch the new Dude Perfect video on YouTube. Whatever it is. And it's usually some death-defying stunt or something ridiculous. But it's entertaining.

[8 : 42] Right? And these guys are some of the most popular people on YouTube. Which I'm kind of glad about in today's world. With all the crazy stuff that's out there. So, I'm a fan of Dude Perfect.

My kids are followers. There's a difference there. Right? Here's the question. I used that particular example.

We could use anything. We could go to football. I don't want to get into football right now. Because, you know, there's the Texas OU game that happened yesterday. And, you know, I'm a Texas fan. And we had a good time. Anyway, I want to have class in victory. So, anyway. Man, when we're talking about football for a minute. Now, I was raised in Texas.

But I have not met people so devoted to high school football until I came up here. I mean, I met guys that will travel to the Metroplex to watch teams play that they're not even connected to. [9 : 52] And I'm like, wow. Those guys are followers of Texas high school football. That's amazing. There's a difference between a fan and a follower.

My question for you is, are you a fan of Jesus or are you a follower of Jesus? Let me take another turn for a moment.

Let's go back to the passage that we read just a moment ago. Look back at your text for a moment, would you?

Luke chapter 9 and verse 23. Then he said to them all, If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me.

Jesus never asked for fans. I don't think Jesus wants fans.

[11 : 04] I don't think he's interested in fans. But do you think there's a lot of fans of Jesus in the world today? Do you think... Whoa. Apologies, y'all.

Do you think that the majority of people who would identify as Christians in the world today are more fans or followers?

Y'all talk back to me. I would agree with you. I think that's absolutely true. I read a book a long time ago, many, many years ago now, that kind of struck a difference between these two things, fans and followers.

And that stuck with me all these years later. And every time I read this passage, Luke 9, 23, I'm reminded of the difference in being a fan and being a follower.

In my study for this sermon, I came across the following paragraph, and I'd love to share it with you now. The ancient Jews had a saying that captures this idea of discipleship and transformation.

[12 : 20] Y'all stick with me through this. This is gonna be really, really cool and something that I really doubt you've ever heard before. I know I hadn't heard it before. The ancient Jews said that if you find a good rabbi, you know what a rabbi is?

The teacher, kind of the great pastor leader for the ancient Jews. If you find a good rabbi, you should cover yourself in the dust of his feet and drink in his words thirstily.

The expression probably draws on a well-known site for ancient Jews. Disciples were known for walking behind their rabbi, following him so closely that they would become covered with the dust kicked up from his sandals.

This would have been a powerful image for what should happen in the disciples' life spiritually.

Disciples were expected to follow the rabbi so closely that they would be covered with their master's whole way of thinking, living, and acting.

Thousands of years later, you and I are called to do the same. Though you and I might travel more often on paved roads instead of dusty ones, although out here we have some dusty roads, don't we?

[13 : 39] We are still called to be disciples, to follow our rabbi, Jesus Christ, so closely that we are covered by the dust of his life.

This is exactly the kind of disciple that Jesus is looking for. He calls us to imitate him. When I read that paragraph, that impacted me so powerfully.

And I found this, and I wanted to share it with you. This was a first century Jewish blessing. May you be covered in the dust of your rabbi. Y'all, that is what I want our church to look like.

Forget what I want. That is what God wants our church to look like. That we would be covered in the dust of Jesus' feet. That we would walk so closely behind him, following in his footsteps, that you and I would be covered in the dust of his feet.

So my question to you is, how dusty are you? How dusty are you? How dusty am I? How dusty are we? Church, the truth is, we're all dusty.

[14 : 51] We're all covered in the dust of whomever or whatever we have been following. We've all been following something.

We've all been following someone. So whose dust is on you? Is it the Lord's? Or something else? We all have a rabbi.

We all have something that we follow. Something that we listen to. A voice that we give honor to. A voice that we heed. A person that we listen to.

A passion that we prioritize. We all have something that we follow. Whose dust is on you. May you be covered in the dust of your rabbi.

So what does it look like to follow our rabbi? The Lord Jesus Christ. Well, I believe it looks like serving him and going wherever he goes.

[15:59] I think that's what the disciples did. I think that's what our Lord wants us to do. We serve him and we follow him wherever he goes. Let's look at John chapter 10 and verse 27.

My sheep listen to my voice. I know them and they follow me. Jesus wants us to follow him wherever he goes. He calls us sheep and we know that sheep are ignorant.

And I don't think God wants to demean us but he wants us to remember who we are and who he is. That we are in desperate need of him. We are helpless without him.

And we must lean on him and look to him for help. And so we follow him wherever he goes. And we must listen to the words and learn to depend on them and crave his teaching.

Because otherwise we tend to think that we can get through this life just fine without it. My sheep listen to my voice and they follow me. And then John 12, 26.

[17:02] Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me because my servant must be where I am.

Sounds like we got to get dusty. We got to stick pretty close to him. The father will honor anyone who serves me. We've got to stick close to our rabbi.

So what does it look like to follow our rabbi? Well it looks like being an acolyte instead of a stylite. We're going way back to the beginning here okay?

I got to remind you what was a stylite? Well a stylite way back in week one three weeks ago that was an extreme example of self-denial. Remember the guy who would erect a pillar and he would sit on top of it and he would shut himself off from society and he would stay there for weeks, months, or even years.

Guy sat there on top of his pillar for 30 years and eventually died because that's what he thought God wanted him to do. That certainly wasn't what God wanted him to do. Well that of course is not what God calls us to do.

[18:12] That has no part of God's mission on this earth as according to scripture and what's revealed to us in the word of God. So instead of doing that how about being an acolyte?

What is an acolyte? An acolyte is one who attends or assists a leader. I just thought the comparison of these two words was kind of cool.

Okay? Since we introduced you to the word stylite, well let's compare it to this. And why did we choose this word acolyte? Because we get the word acolyte from the Greek word akalutheo.

Why are we getting into the Greek word akalutheo? Do you know why? Because we just read Luke 9 23 a minute ago and the final words of Luke 9 23 were do you remember two words?

What was it? Follow me. Do you know what that Greek word is there? It's one word follow me. Akalutheo.

[19:19] Akalutheo. From that we get this word acolyte which means one who attends or assists a leader.

It can also mean to become a disciple. So I challenge you don't be a stylite.

Don't be someone who shuts yourself off from everybody else. says that's just who I am. Don't be someone who puts yourself up on a pillar and raises yourself up above everybody else.

Says I'm too good for everybody. Be one who walks in the feet of Jesus. Be one who gets covered in the dust of Jesus' feet from following so closely.

Be one who walks so closely you're there to serve Jesus. You're there to learn from his teaching. You're there to hang on his every word. I'm thinking of the difference in Mary and Martha, right?

[20:29] Martha was just there to impress Jesus. She was there to make sure everything was in order. Mary was just there to hang on the teaching of her rabbi.

she was there to sit at his feet and soak up every word she could. She was his disciple. So, Deuteronomy chapter 13 and verse 4, it is the Lord your God you must follow and him you must revere.

Keep his commands and obey him. Serve him and hold fast to him. Serve him and hold fast to him. So, where is Jesus leading? Before we get there, I want to share this quote with you. The victorious Christian neither exalts nor downgrades himself.

This was J.C. Ryle, a great Christian author. He says, the victorious Christian neither exalts nor downgrades himself. His interests have shifted from self to Christ.

[21 : 43] There's your difference between a stylite and an acolyte. There's your difference between someone who exalts themselves or someone who even beats themselves down all the time.

Someone whose problem is seemingly pride and self-exaltation or someone whose problem is seemingly depression and always down on themselves. Neither one is what Christ wants. What Christ wants is the attention not on you. What Christ wants is the attention on his will for you because he knows that that is what will be best for you.

That is what will get you onto the path that he designed for you and he is your designer. He is your creator. He is who knows what is going to be best for you.

So when your interests shift from ourself to Christ we've hit our sweet spot. Right? We've hit what we were made to be.

[22 : 52] That's why we can be then a victorious Christian. So, secondly, where is Jesus leading? Matthew 4 19 tells us where Jesus is leading.

He says, follow me and I will make you fishers of men. Luke 19 10 shed some light on it. The son of man came to seek and to save the lost. John 10 10 says, Jesus came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

Luke 15 7 says that there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over 99 others who are righteous and have it straight away.

Jesus is leading us to the lost. Jesus is leading us to those who are without him. Fact is, let me share this with you. If you're following Jesus and he isn't leading you to people without him, then it isn't Jesus you're following.

Can we look at that again? If you think you're following Jesus and he isn't leading you to people without him, then it's not really Jesus you're following.

[23 : 59] how many years has it been since you had an opportunity to share Jesus with somebody who needed to hear about him?

And how much longer has it been since you took that opportunity? I'm not trying to shame you, I'm not trying to guilt trip you. Jesus doesn't do that.

Just trying to remind you of what our mission is. Trying to remind you of what Jesus' priority is.

Trying to remind you of what Jesus' heartbeat is. Of why he's got us here.

Of where he's leading us. If we want to follow Jesus, that means we're walking where he's walking. What's his destination? His destination is to go to more people like you and me.

because somebody came to us at some point and shared the gospel with us. Maybe he did it to your parents, maybe your grandparents, maybe an aunt or an uncle.

[25 : 06] Somebody in your family tree was reached by the saving power of Jesus. Maybe it was you. And because of that, you're sitting where you are today.

Because of that, you got baptized, maybe in those waters. Because of that, maybe life change happened. Maybe you got set on a new road. Maybe transformation happened.

Maybe you got saved from certain death. And Mabod wants to use you to do that for somebody else. And that's why he called you to follow him.

How dusty are you? How close are you following? How closely are you walking behind him? If you're not walking closely, you may not see where he's walking.

You may not end up at the same location. You might miss where he's leading you. And then that leads us into the final thought.

[26 : 10] Romans chapter 10 and verse 15. How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news. how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.

Y'all, we cannot go through a series on being a disciple without finishing here. This is what Jesus has called his disciples to do, is bring the good news of salvation to those who need to hear it.

So, we must have beautiful, dusty feet. These are the feet I'm talking about. beautiful, dusty feet.

Okay? I'm not talking about going and getting a pedicure.

I'm not talking about putting nice socks and fancy shoes on. I'm not talking about physical feet at all. I'm talking about feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

As we talk about the armor of God in Ephesians earlier in the start of this year, I'm talking about feet that carry the gospel of Jesus Christ. Those are the feet that Jesus says are beautiful.

[27 : 19] And if you walk closely to Jesus, then your feet will get dusty as he leads you to people who need to hear the gospel of Jesus. The saving message of Jesus Christ that a long time ago on a hill far away, Jesus willingly laid down his life for you and for me.

Because once you and I were lost and we had no hope. of saving ourselves. But Jesus in his kindness laid down his life willingly and said, I will be the sacrifice. I will pay the penalty so that you can be saved. You can be forgiven. And as many of us in this room have said, Jesus, I believe.

I believe that you are the Son of God. I have faith that you not only love me, that you are not only willing, but that you are able to forgive me, cleanse me, make me your child, that we are now saved, signed, sealed, and someday will be delivered to heaven to be forever with our Lord.

God, we have that, but so many don't. So that's why he wants us to get dusty.

[28 : 48] It's not all about us being a disciple. It's not at all about us. God loves us so much.

He loves us so dearly. He treasures us. He looks forward to a joyous reunion in heaven someday when all the family, all the children are gathered home. So why would he wait?

Why would he delay that? Why don't we just all go and get it started now? Because not all the sheep are yet in the fold. So it's our job to carry the good news.

It's our job to get our feet dusty and beautiful. So every week we've said this, the Jesus way is always a way of transformation.

Becoming a disciple will change you. I can promise you that from personal testimony. I know many of you would agree. Walking the Jesus way will change you.

[29 : 54] It will transform you. If it hasn't, or if it hasn't in a long time, then you might need to look back and see where you strayed from the Jesus way.

Because you haven't changed in a while. So here's our takeaway. How dusty am I from actually following Jesus?

From listening to His voice? From sharing in His work? Not just talking about His work.

Not just criticizing His work. But actually sharing in His work. Actually doing His work. Somebody came to the great evangelist D.L.

Moody so many years ago. Some of you maybe heard this story. They said, you know, I don't like how you do evangelism. I don't like how you tell other people about Jesus. And he said, you know, I don't like it either.

[30 : 53] But I like my way of doing it a whole lot better than I like your way of not doing it. And I think God's probably good with that.

You know, we don't have to be perfect at it. We just got to stick our ugly mugs out there and do it, right? Would you share in the work?

Would you do it? Would you get on board? Can we be disciples together? Can we walk closely?

Can we get dusty together? Can we all get covered in the dust of Jesus' feet together?

We'll see more of that happening. We'll see more of these pews filled. We'll see more decisions for Jesus happening. God promises it.

Let's pray together. God, we just want to be your disciples. disciples. We don't have it all figured out. We're going to make mistakes. We're going to mess up. We're not going to do everything right.

[31 : 59] But we want to get covered in your dust. We want to keep learning from you. This is a lifelong walk. This is a lifelong journey. We want to keep growing. We want to keep changing. We want to keep transforming.

We don't want to stay the same year after year after year. If we do, then God, just take us on home to heaven. We've ceased to be useful to you here.

But instead of doing that, change us. Soften our hearts again. Some of the most encouraging things I've ever seen in my life is when older saints serve, beyond what you would think their stage of life would call for.

And we see that happen in our church. That's so encouraging to me. Sometimes I don't know where they get the energy.

Well, I do know it comes from you. It's an inspiration to me. Soldier up and just keep going. They don't want to be useless to you anymore.

[33 : 22] Their time's not over. God, I ask that every single man, woman, and child in this church would get covered in your dust from walking so closely to you.

when we stray, get us back. Help us to hang on your words, listen closely to you.

Challenge each other. Hey, are you still getting dusty? Convict us, God.

show us where we've strayed. Move powerfully in our church. Make us a church of disciples of Jesus' followers and we'll give you the glory for it. In Jesus' name, amen.

Amen.