Followers

Lake Erie Church

2023

Follow Me (Part 3)

May 21, 2023

(Mark 13:1-13)

As Jesus was leaving the Temple that day, one of his disciples said, “Teacher, look at these magnificent buildings! Look at the impressive stones in the walls. Jesus replied, “Yes, look at these great buildings. But they will be completely demolished. Not one stone will be left on top of another!” Later, Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives across the valley from the Temple. Peter, James, John, and Andrew came to him privately and asked him, Tell us, when will all this happen? What sign will show us that these things are about to be fulfilled?” Jesus replied, “Don’t let anyone mislead you, for many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah. They will deceive many. **And you will hear of wars and threats of wars**, but don’t panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won’t follow immediately. **8**Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be **earthquakes in many parts of the world**, as well as **famines**. But this is only the first of the birth pains, with more to come. When these things begin to happen, watch out! **You will be handed over to the local councils and beaten in the synagogues. You will stand trial before governors and kings because you are my followers**. But **this will be your opportunity** to tell them about me. For the Good News must first be preached to all nations. But when you are arrested and stand trial, don’t worry in advance about what to say. Just say what God tells you at that time, for it is not you who will be speaking, but the Holy Spirit. A **brother will betray his brother** to death, a **father will betray his own child**, and **children will rebel against their parents and cause them to be killed**. And **EVERYONE WILL HATE YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE MY FOLLOWERS**. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

Introduction:

**I believe we are living in the final moments of life on this earth as we know it.** It is altogether possible that Jesus may return before this service is concluded, before this day is over, before you go to bed tonight...that’s how close I believe we are to the coming of the Lord.

* **Spiritually**, our world is now more secular, believes far less in God, and is more hostile to faith.
* **Economically**, the financial landscape is so volatile that a few banks get into trouble and the markets crash, runaway inflation, it cannot be long before someone is going to propose a one-world monetary system that will include what Biblical prophecy called “the mark of the beast.”
* **Prophetically**, the nation of Israel is now surrounded on all sides by its enemies, China and Russia are aligned, Iran is agreed to Russian military might—how long before there is an attack on Israel that brings Armageddon to occur?

**These are the LAST DAYS.**

Which makes **the understanding of what it means to be a FOLLOWER of Jesus very important**, in my view and this passage especially important to understand what will happen to those who faithfully and fully devote themselves to Jesus as followers.

With growing persecution, every follower of Jesus will be forced to answer the question--**Is following Jesus worth it?**

**Followers Of Jesus Must Be Prepared To Endure Hardship**

* Following Jesus means hardship is not only a possibility, but a guarantee.

(James 1:12)

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

* Something good happens to us when we suffer—and I know that sound weird but if we didn’t have trials and temptations, some of us would never pray!
* Everything we treasure about Jesus, everything we hold dear about our faith came to us in the hardest places of our life.
	+ We learn to value God’s Word.
	+ We learn to appreciate God’s faithfulness
	+ We learn our security is in His love.
* When we live in prosperity, we take these things for granted.
* Hardship produces something in us…

(Romans 5:3-5)

More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

(Deuteronomy 8:2)

Remember how the Lord your God led you through the wilderness for these forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, and to find out whether or not you would obey his commands.

Is He worth all that hardships?

**Followers Recognize The World Will Not Accept You**

* When you truly know Jesus Christ, it’s hard to fathom how others won’t receive him and his followers.
* Jesus did not shield us from this sobering reality…

(John 15:18)

If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first

* As a follower of Jesus, don’t be surprised or alarmed if you find yourself in situations of persecution, misunderstanding, condemnation, unacceptance, hostility, and oppression.

(2 Timothy 3:12)

All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

* Too many of us think the Christian life is easy. Jesus warned us…

A **brother will betray his brother** to death, a **father will betray his own child**, and **children will rebel against their parents and cause them to be killed**.

(I Peter 3:13-17)

Now, who will want to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don’t worry or be afraid of their threats. Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong!

Everything in your life comes down to what you do with Jesus!

Do you believe He is the Son of God?

Will you stake your life on that conviction?

Is your faith that strong?

Jesus said some people only worship with their lips because their hearts are not with Him.

If you are not fully convinced and willing to go all the way with your faith—then there will always be something to distract you away…

Friends

Association

Money

Addiction

Are you a follower of Jesus Christ?

(Luke 9:23-24)

Then He said to them all, If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.

God I am a sinner

I’m sorry for my sins

I believe Jesus died for my sins

I believe Jesus will forgive my sins

I choose Jesus