

one to mix his faith and his experience, and where God becomes a chief thing in this world. And the chief element of his life is to live that life of faith.

He is converted to Christ and not to a set of ideals, not to just a good life, not to behave himself. But he is converted to Jesus. We must know who Jesus is. And we must find out that he performs these things, that he was always meek and mild, and that he was the spiritual master. He left no doubt that we were to believe in him. Now there is all kinds of liberal thinking along this line but the point is, what is true. It is the deepest and the universal fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. We become converted to him. And this comes through the power of prayer. We pray. We see a need. It is a cry to God in the darkness. And (he hears) that cry and he lights up the way for us. Many of us have discovered that through prayer begins where we can begin to say with Jesus, not my will but thine be done. It is not just a fate but it means co-operation with the will of God. If it helps God to get his will done, for us to carry out in earnest petition that which is right, then we certainly need such an experience of prayer.

This will bring us into fellowship as Jesus brought a dozen men about him - that he wanted them to do in the

"FOLLOW ME"

John 1:43

The story is told of the traveler who stopped to talk with the farmer. He had noticed that all of the fields along the road were grown up in weeds. Thinking that the farmer's fields were probably hidden from view and wishing to make conversation he asked, how are your crops this year? The farmer answered, I never have any crops. But said the traveler, I thought that you were a farmer. I am, was the reply. But you have no crops. No, no corn. No, no cotton. No garden, no. When the traveler asked why, the farmer replied, "well, I usually have a crop, but last Spring I just got to thinking. I thought of the seed that don't come up, the grass and weeds, the insects and drought, and of all the hard work and crop failures of the past, so I decided that this year I would play it safe. I just decided not to plant anything."

Now this doubtless is a very humorous story but it speaks of a tragedy. It is a tragedy of being defeated. It is a tragedy of magnifying ones difficulties. The

tragedy of losing ones opportunities. It really marks the failure of faith. Now the farmer thought that he had found the answer to life's problems but had he. For while he was idol his land was not. For instead of lying idol, it grew weeds, and it became a wilderness. And this little story is a parable of life. Now that our yester year failures may be turned in a similar way.

Somehow we need to know how to get going and to keep on going. Nearly any Christian who has any little touch with the spirit of Christ will agree that Jesus had a great thought when he said "follow me". And of course we summarize this in the word evangelism. The word comes from two Greek words which means "well" and "message". The "well message" is the "good news" and the spreading of it is called by its own name evangelism. You may push aside any unfortunate thing or any aspect of this word but you have to go right back to the beginning. And you have to stand before Jesus as he tells his people to go out into the world and to give good news to all people.

What is the means by which this is done. There may be several different angles or aspects of it.

There are three or four things that we think of.

First, there is the matter of conversion. We do not

transmit some set of doctrines or facts, but here is a truth. The blind man in John 9 received the truth and it was clear to him that now he could see. The Christian faith does not become effective in the world until that faith somehow is mixed with personal experience. We must be part of the truth we transmit. It comes to others through the experience of life. And that's why we say we must be converted, we must be evangelized, we must follow Jesus. It is impossible to hand the gospel out to somebody else. You take it wrapped up as a package delivered to you, as something that is delivered without opening it. Now, lots of Christians are like that. They seek to hand on to somebody else without ever finding out what it is like.

What are we converted from. And whom are we converted to.

We are converted from the whole of the state that the New Testament describes (as sin). It means everything that is obvious, like anger, pride, lust, laziness, right on up and out to living in the world, as if there were no God. It is a state of being away from God. You only have to be away from God, out of Christ, or separated from faith that meant to save you.

Christianity then is that great thing that helps the

ask children to accept some doctrine in order to become Christian but this is not what Jesus said. Jesus said, you come along with me, you walk my way, and this is the simplest terms stated that even a child can hear and understand and can obey. Nothing other than trust and need are necessary on the part of the one that he calls. We must remember that he came to reveal God. And that he claimed his supreme business to speak to men in a spiritual way. And he simply said to a man, join me in the way.

If I might help you to solve this mystery and to examine just what Jesus meant when he said this -- I would direct you to three or four references in the Bible.

First, John 1:43. In this verse of scripture he speaks to a slow man. Somebody has described Phillip as a slow man. You have to but look at John 14:8 to discover this. He was always the slow man, he was the man who was on the fringe of the crowd and therefore he was able to help others. He was a man who did not seek Christ. Not that there was no longing in his heart for these high and holy things, but he was a man whom Christ went and found. And Jesus said to him, simply, "follow me".

world. And when you came to him, you didn't just come to him, he came also to his followers, his church, his body. There is no trace, no where in the New Testament of that odd modern notion that a person can seek Jesus alone in a book, or by prayer, and a lone walk with him and carry out his principles in living.

He gave his life and his cause for his church. And when you become his, you become ours too. And when he becomes yours, we become yours. The church is not always what it should be, but it is more like a school or a hospital than it is a museum. And because there are so many people in it who are too much like you and me and get complicated and stop growing, but with all of its human mixtures and failures it is still his fellowship. The fellowship of Christ is not just an outward temple of the house of God. Our lives ought to speak louder than our words. But as a matter of fact, they do not. And perhaps, they cannot. For while our example may be potent, when we face trouble, courage, or to live evidently we are not disciplined. I cannot by being good tell men of all the atoning deaths and resurrections of Jesus. The emphasis many times is (too much) on me and too little on him. Our lives must be consistent as we can make them if we are to be Christians. That's why the witness is

important. We begin with something he has done for us. He gives you release in your body and you recognize that power. We do not need to wait until we are great saints to follow him, and witness for him. But we need to begin where we are, with what we believe, and with those we know. We do not have to be pious or professional. Do not say that you cannot do this kind of thing. You may not be able to do it just as somebody else does.

There were two favorite words of Jesus and were often upon his lips. One of his disciples expressed a desire remain with his father. And he said follow me. And he passed by a man at his work and he said, "follow me". He came to the man Phillip in the great hour and said "follow me". This gives to us the simplest meaning of his call and the different circumstances. This was the initial call which he issued to Peter and Andrew, James and John. In Matthew 4:22. Jesus found them fishing, and he called them. Our old version reads, he said unto them follow me and I will make you fishers of men. The revised version reads, come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself to come after and to follow. To follow is to come after. But we are dealing with the words which

our Lord used. He did not say come after me to Phillip when he first found him. He did not say come after me to Peter when he last left him. What then did he say. Jesus said, come in the way with me. This is my way. I am walking this way. Come after me. Though involved in many things, he emphasises that he wants them to join him in the way. He said to Peter by the shore of the sea. When thou was young, he said you walked where you would. But he said I want you to join me now.

Isaiah in his prophesy says, we have turned everyone to his own way. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord. And he will have mercy upon him - to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways, sayth the Lord. For as the Heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways. And my thoughts, than your thoughts.

Here is the simplest formula of the Christian life. And it is found in the pages of the New Testament. This is my way. Join me in this way, demands a surrender, subjection to him, a comradeship with him. And it is the simplest way, it is Christ's word, even to the smallest child. And we should never forget that. Sometimes people

life. Follow me was the word of command. And it was the secret of victory. This man was in the lap of luxury, the fine temperament, he had a clean record. And how was he to be saved. He must follow Christ.

Why should there be such a high price. You remember Jesus said that he offered the blessings, that the meek should inherit the earth. In Matthew 5:5. We might take

just a note to see what that means. And we can look at ZEN-O-JON Xenophon, the great philosopher who was riding one day, and the horses attracted his attention. And he remarked to the driver in a casual way, the horses are meek today. Well, that simple statement will give you a clue to the

meaning of the sermon on the Mount and to what Jesus meant to this young man. Xenophon meant when he said the horses were meek, that they easily and readily yielded to the guiding hand of the driver. The old philosopher greatly appreciated the fact. And that's a very precious thought. And I think that is what Jesus meant here. He meant that the men and women who easily and readily yielded to the guidance of the holy spirit should inherit

the earth. And this idea gives us new meaning to this passage. The meek man yielded to the guidance of the spirit. As the philosopher said the horses were yielding

Second, Matthew 8:21, 22. A disciple. Jesus asked here, was asked by his man if he could return to his home, take care of his father. This may be very interesting to the young people. Dr. George Adam Smith once said that while he was in Syria, he was anxious to secure a certain young Arab to be his guide. The young man sat in the door of his tent and there by his side sat his father. His father was well and healthy and was a great ruler of his people. Dr. George Smith was trying to persuade the young man to accompany him on a pairless journey. But the young man refused. ("Suffer me first to bury my father." ) He used the actual words in the gospel story. He then was a man who asked to be permitted to bury his father, to stay by him, to care for him until his earthly life was run.

Now Jesus said, "follow me". Let the dead bury the dead. You may mark this, that this call of Jesus, brooks no bearing of the dead, if that interferes with loyalty to the Lord. But here is tenderness in his call. Here was Mat. 9:9 a man sitting at the seat of custom, Matthew 9:9.

Now the Hebrew would understand this picture. What was he doing. Well, he was bent to the Roman yoke. In order to collect from his brethren the taxes of the

oppressor. Matthews ideal was that of kingship, empire, authority. He was a man molded among these lines. I believe that was the reason why he had hired himself to Rome. The glamour of Rome had possessed his soul and he was a Levite to collect taxes from new brethren. This was looked upon in a lowly manner. Jesus Christ passing, saw him, knew him, understood him, and knew something of his devotion of the high ideal of the empire. He said to him, "follow me". He took him with him. He led him through the years, he revealed to him the kingdom, and the king.

Matthew 16:24, Mark 8:34. Caesarea Philippi where

Jesus said if any man will come after me, that literally means if any man will come behind me, follow me in our usual sense of the word, then let him join me in the way.

Jesus is emphasizing here the supreme thing. You remember

that he said to Peter, when Peter said, "thou art the

Messiah". Jesus said, "I will build my church, I will

give thee the keys to the kingdom of Heaven." Christ had

said to him in order to enter the kingdom and build that

church I must go to Jerusalem, I must suffer, I must die.

And Peter said, that be far from thee. God have mercy

on thee. Now the Lord said, if any man will come after me,

if you really mean to follow me, if you, my disciple desire to come with me, then your coming must be complete.

You must come by way of the cross, the way of the resurrection, the way by which I am going. If any man will come after me, let him join me in the way. He must

come my way, but let him come with me. You cannot shun the cross, you must share it with me.

✓ Matthew 19:21. The (rich young ruler) He used these

same words in speaking to the young ruler. Good master

what must I do to inherit eternal life. And Jesus replied

to him, thou knowest the commandments. And briefly he

repeated six of the commandments, these conditions. The

man looked back into the eyes of Jesus and he said, all

of these things I have observed from my youth up. What

did the king say to this man. One thing you lack, and

what was the one thing. The Lord said before you decide,

sell what you have, distribute to the poor, you will have

treasure in Heaven, and come join me in the way.

What did this man lack. Poverty, well, yes - but

the element of control and mastership. Jesus said you

follow me. And he first pointed out to him that which

thou not evil in itself, was nevertheless the destroying

force of his life. And Christ would sweep away the forces

that destroy in order for him to recognize the dignity of

door to be with his saints.

There is always a lonely pathway to the Christian soul but the master said one thing, follow me. Join me, you can never enter say as you crown him Lord. No man can call him Lord but by the Holy Spirit.

And how can I be true when I am alone. There comes into the room the one who says, join me in the way. That is the answer.

What is the secret to the great call of Christ. It is a vision of the Lord himself.

In this very hour, what that means to me today I can not tell you. What it means to you, I do not ask you to tell me. But shall we not obey. The Lord says, follow

The son of the pastor of a Baptist church in Sao Paulo, Brazil decided to leave home earlier this year despite his parents' pleas. He boarded a bus for Campina Grande, more than a thousand miles to the north in the vast country.

This was during the time of the nationwide evangelistic crusade being carried on by Brazilian Baptists.

"As I rode along the highway," he said, "I looked out the left-hand side of the bus and saw the words, 'Christ, the Only Hope.' Then I looked out the right-hand side and saw the same words, 'Christ the Only Hope.' I grew tired and dozed awhile. I opened my eyes and there it was again, 'Christ, the Only Hope.'

"I reached the distant city, checked into a cheap hotel, unpacked my suitcase, then opened the window to get a breath of fresh air. Outside was a sign with huge letters, 'Christ, the Only Hope.'

"I couldn't stand it any longer. I remembered my father, my mother, my home. My father was preaching this. I went back home and said, 'Dad, I'm sorry. Forgive me. I have learned that Christ is the Only Hope."

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gracefully to the reign of the driver. Romans 8:17.

Guide me oh thou great Jehovah, pilgrim through this barren land. I am weak but thou art mighty. Hold me with thy powerful hand. The starting point for the young man was join me in the way.

John 20:19. To Peter. On the seashore we discover here the word transfigured the cross. It was to make clear Christ's intention and I believe it was inspired of the Holy Spirit of God that must remain. In order to make impossible any doubt as to what Christ meant when he said to Peter, when thou was young and girded thyself and walkth whether thou wouldst, but when thou shall be old, thou shall stretch forth thy hand, and another shall gird thee, carry thee where thou wouldst not. John said

this, he simplifies us, signifying the manner of his death. Without any break Christ added to his telling about the cross, his word, follow me. What did that mean to Peter. The word was spoken by the side of the lake that morning. What relation did that morning bear to the past. It was the risen Christ, who spoke. Now remember it was at Caesarea Philippi that Peter had shunned the cross, and had been rebuked. Now by the lake, Jesus brought him back to the cross, to his own personal cross. And Jesus said to

Peter, you shunned the cross for me and you were afraid of it. When you first saw it, you have been afraid of it, through the months that have passed. But you must come to it. Actually you must stretch out your hands and be crucified, die by the cross. Follow me, join me in the way.

Immediately, Peter would say to himself, he went to the cross. But he passed beyond the cross, he is risen from the dead. And when Jesus in this connection said, follow me to Peter, it transfigured the coming cross by revealing to him the fact that whatever man shall follow Jesus by the way of the cross, also, he shall follow him beyond the cross into the light and glory of the Easter morning which lies on the other side.

In Verse 21, we read that Peter further asked what shall this man do, concerning John, and what is that to be -- follow me. There was light, there was humor, and yet here was the dignity of one man's life. That is, everyman must follow for himself. That is enough for a man to do. To look after his own business.

Verse 22. He must realize that this is his purpose. If the Lord demanded all his loyalty he was not unmindful of John, leave him to me.

I wonder if we could hear it again - follow me, join me, come my way. What was his way. How shall I answer my own inquiry.

It was the way of Nazareth, long years of the daily round and the common task. It was the way of the wilderness. It was the way in which the crowds follow him. It was the way of Gethsemane, it was the way of Calvary. It was the way of the high places and the out poured spirit.

Is that it. Then in the name of God, I am helpless. And I cannot do it. But strange and wonderful, you will find that all through the Bible, even in the Exodus story, the pattern that God gave Moses on the Mount -- seemed almost impossible but they moved in that direction and finally it was finished.

Where am I to begin this following. I begin where he ended. We begin when we receive the spirit of God. He has poured forth this which ye see and hear. I enter into fellowship with him and the agony of the garden. I pass into fellowship with his ministry amidst the crowds of men. The temptations come to every Christian. And when the enemy assails us we know that our Lord constantly will be with us. And he even comes through the closed