**Being a Christian Means Following Jesus**

Imagine being at your daily job, perhaps working on your fishing nets when you hear the following words, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." (Mark 1:17b) Give them credit as they could have easily continued working but they made the choice to leave behind their nets and follow Jesus. The words “follow me” is both an invitation but also a challenge. Jesus pointed out the cost, the sacrifice in following Him. “When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” (Mark 8:34). After His death on the cross, Jesus again tells His disciples to follow Him. “Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me." (John 21:22). One older gentleman, a fellow Christian said one of the greatest invitations in the Bible is to come to Jesus.

The Christian is a person who has made the decision to come and put on Christ. He is their Savior, Redeemer, and Lord. They will make sacrifices in serving Him. As Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20). Sacrifice by definition has a cost attached to it. As said in an earlier article, commitment is essential in living for Christ. Their mindset should be, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4.13).

Following Christ means looking to Him as our example. “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth"; (1 Peter 2:21-22). His example should be a source of encouragement. Jesus was maligned, rebuked, and treated shamefully but He endured to the end. This is part of bearing the cross which we accept.

The Christian follows Christ instead of their personal desires and wishes. Perhaps you would like to change the word of God to make it more accepting of social sins, more tolerate, easier to obey. However, no one has editorial rights over God’s word.

The Christian follows Christ instead of their family. Jesus said we must love Him more than our parents. "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.” (Matthew 10:37). I know the heartache many have faced when choosing Jesus over their family. I admired a young lady who decided to follow Jesus. Her parents told her if she did not hold to “their religion” she would not be welcomed back home. She lost her physical family but found her spiritual family.

The Christian follows Christ instead of the religions of men. Jesus came to establish His church. “Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. (Matthew 16:16-18). Jesus is the Savior of His church; this excludes those man-made churches of today. Just as there is only one Savior, there is only one body of Christ, one church established by Him.

The Christian follows Christ instead of human traditions. Many religious practices today cannot be found in the Bible. Infant baptism, praying to Mary, and creed books, are not recorded in the Bible. It is hard to cast aside traditions we are accustomed to but the only “traditions” the Christian follows are those based on the Word of God. “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.” (1 Corinthians 11:1-2). As the Apostle Paul delivered the word of God not his personal opinion. Any practice we develop must be based on the Law of Christ.

The Christian follows Christ instead of the world. In fact, the world will think the Christian is a rather strange person. Sins the world accepts the disciple of Christ rejects. Look at James’ words. “Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” (James 4:4). The term “friendship” means to place the world over God. Instead, we humble ourselves before God and submit to Him.

The Christian follows Jesus no matter where He leads us. Dennis Tucker