

February 18, 2024

I Choose to Follow Jesus: All-In

Theme verse for 2924: 1 Kings 18:21-22 *And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word.*

***Follow:** Strong's #190 Greek, *akoloutheo* (ak-ol-oo-theh-oh); To accompany, go along with, go the same way with, follow one who precedes. "A" means "in union with", and *keluethos* is a road. *Akoloutheo* is being on the same roadway with someone. Since the word was used for soldiers, servants, and pupils, it can easily be transferred to the life of the Christian. *Word Wealth SFLB

Matt 4:18-20 *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**.*

Matt 9:9-13 *As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named **Matthew** sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him. 10 Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. 11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" 12 When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 13 But go and learn what this means: '**I desire mercy and not sacrifice.**' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."*

*Jesus defied the religious norms of the Pharisees by having fellowship with sinners. He was demonstrating His authority over man-made religious customs that disregarded the laws of God, *F/N SFLB. Jesus did not call the qualified people to follow Him, He qualified those who He called. He called sinners to follow Him and through His mercy, He placed His righteousness upon them. God has mercy on those who choose to follow Him, but He wants 100% of their heart (loyalty).

Mercy: Strong's #1656 Greek, *eleos* (el-eh-oss); Compassion, tender mercy, kindness, beneficence, an outward manifestation of pity.

Mercy Strong's #2617 Hebrew, *chesed* (ch eh sed); kindness, unfailing love, tenderness. It also means compassion and forbearance shown to an offender. A desire to remove distress from another.

Matt 10:34-39 *"Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 35 For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; 36 and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.' 37 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. 38 **And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.** 39 He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.*

Choose: Either you are all-in, or you are not in at all.

Our relationship with Jesus must be superior to every other relationship; even our spouse, children and parents. If Jesus is first, all of our other relationships will be in proper order and therefore blessed.

Loyalty is huge to Jesus! 1) Jesus 2) spouse 3) children 4) parents 5) ministry/church family/employment.

Mark 10:17-22 *Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, **knelt before Him**, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" 18 So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. 19 You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,'*

'Do not bear false witness,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'" 20 And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth."

21 Then Jesus, looking at him, **loved him**, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, **take up the cross, and follow Me.**" 22 But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Mark 10:23-28 Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" 24 And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is for those **who trust in riches** to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

26 And they were greatly astonished, saying among themselves, "Who then can be saved?"

27 But Jesus looked at them and said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible."

28 Then Peter began to say to Him, "**See, we have left all and followed You.**"

Matt 6:22-25 "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! 24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be **loyal** to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and mammon.**"

Luke 9:57-62 Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him,

1. "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go." 58 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

2. 59 Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." 60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and **preach the kingdom of God.**"

3. 61 And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house."

62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is **fit for the kingdom of God.**"

*1. Emotional enthusiasm that does not consider the cost of abandoning material security is insufficient.

*2. Loyalty to Christ takes precedence over all lesser loyalties. The man was offering the excuse that he must care for his father until he died. Jesus was not insensitive, but teaching a lesson against procrastination.

*3. This is a lesson in being halfhearted, which will eliminate someone from God's maximum use. *SFL Bible foot notes

James 1:2-8 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 **he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.**

1 Kings 11:4-8 For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was **not loyal to the Lord his God**, as was the heart of his father David. 5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 6 Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not fully follow the Lord, as did his father David. 7 Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. 8 And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

King Solomon, the richest, wisest King that every lived in order to maintain "peace and safety" for his Kingdom, did not remain loyal to the Lord his God; the one who gave him his wealth, wisdom and kingdom. Instead, he did it his way; compromising and appeasing his wives and their gods believing he could form a more powerful, even larger kingdom by bringing everyone together. By compromising, he lost everything, and the Kingdom was torn from him.

Are you loyal to Jesus? Are you all-in? Are you following Him? Or loving money, compromised and double-mind?