

TO FOLLOW YAHSHUA

Matthews 8:19-22; Luke 9:62

Lord, I will accompany You wherever You go, said a scribe to Yahshua. This man was a doctor of the Jewish law, a teacher a professional man-pen, he knew the Law very well. Today he would be qualified to be behind a pulpit of a church to preach. However, God knowing his heart, answered him, Foxes have holes; birds have lodging places, but I have nowhere to lay My head. That meant I have no earthly things to offer you; I have nothing to support your life style. He, like the rich man, wanted to follow Yahshua with all his luggage of earthly goods. He was a good man in the eyes of the people, but he was found lacking in the eyes of God, to follow Him. The kingdom of heaven does not consist of position and things; it consists of righteousness- inner righteousness; the kingdom of heaven is for the humble in spirit. For one to follow Christ, he must first be born again, to enter the kingdom of heaven. It is in this new birth that a person is transformed into the likeness of Christ and able to carry his cross continuously as he follows Him. The one who follows Christ in this way will be accepted by Him.

When Yahshua sent His twelve apostles out to preach and teach, He gave them power, authority over demons and diseases, but He strip them of the earthly goods. Do not take anything for your journey, He told them; travel lightly, depend on God for your provisions; He will be your sufficiency in everything you do; He will be your provider in every need you will have. They followed Yahshua, empty of themselves, with eyes closed to the world. All they needed was to be dressed in true faith to follow and to serve God. Paul, in his letter to the Philippians gives us the most beautiful testimony of how he followed the Lord, Whatever former things I had that might have been gains to me, I have come to consider as loss for Christ's sake. I count everything as loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege of knowing Christ Yahshua, my Lord and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him; my determined purpose is that I may know Him and that I may share in His suffering, as to be continuously transformed into His likeness as in His sufferings (Philippians 3:7-10). To be a faithful follower of Christ we must strip of self completely as Paul did. He was a true hero of faith who shined through centuries and will continue to do so through the pages of God's Word. In following Yahshua, he suffered with endurance and faithfulness shinning the Love of God to all his persecutors. He said, To this hour we have gone both hungry and thirsty; we wear but one

undergarment [and shiver in the cold]; we are roughly knocked about and wander around homeless, and we still toil unto weariness, working hard with our own hands. When men revile us we bless them. When we are persecuted, we take it patiently and endure it, when we are slandered and defamed, we answer softly and bring comfort. We have been made and are now the rubbish and filth of the world; we are hedged in on every side, but not cramped or crushed; we suffer embarrassments and are perplexed and unable to find a way out, but not driven to despair; we are pursued, but not deserted; we are struck down to the ground, but never struck out and destroyed; always carrying about in the body the liability and exposure to the same putting to death that the Lord Yahshua suffered (I Corinthians 4:11-13; II Corinthians 4:8-11).

We will never know what road Yahshua will take us; many of us will turn around, because we have not understood what it takes to follow Him; our minds are framed into the easy faith of the comfortable zone of our Christian circle –the church; we want the comfort of the coolness of the air conditioner and the comfort of the pews, where a snooze or two awaits us. My friend, the continuously carrying of the cross requires us to get out of our comfortable zones; it is something for us to be considering. When Yahshua took up **our** cross He reconciled us to Himself. The cross we bear is for submission to follow Him; it is with self denial that comes from the soul – the heart, for it is with the heart that we exercise our will; we believe with the heart and desire with the heart. Our will must be submitted to the will of God in agreement with Him for us to be able to walk with Him, as we know that two will not walk together if they do not agree with each other. If in the center of the will is self, the direction it will go will be toward the world; if in the center of our will is Christ our desires will be to follow Him. Before Yahshua went to the cross, He surrendered His will to the Father, for the plan of salvation to be fulfilled through Him. We must do the same, for the plan of God to be completed in us in the short time we have on earth.

The invitation to follow Yahshua was rejected by two of His disciples: One was concerned with family and wanted to wait for the death of his father. His situation was not that of emergency, for his father had not yet died, neither was at the point of death, even when he asked, Permit me first bury my father. His priority was me, and my first, he had placed himself with the dead and set aside the most important task given him. In love, Yahshua redirected him by saying, Let the dead take care of their own, but as for you, go and publish abroad throughout

all regions the kingdom of God. The second disciple responded by saying, I will follow You, Lord, but let me first say good-bye to those at my home. In going back, he was not fit to serve God; he was not fit to follow Yahshua, for one who keeps looking back lives in the past, unable to move forward and follow. He was not qualified to be His follower. Yahshua had a word of warning for this disciple. He said, No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God (Luke 9:58-62). The door was closed to him. The Apostle Peter told Yahshua, Lord, I am ready to go with You both to prison and to death. However, before the cock crowed he had denied the Lord three times. His was a watery faith, as it is with many of us. We say we desire to follow Him with the conjunction **but**, which denotes the true direction we desire to go.

To follow Christ is not to wait around for Him to tell what to do; it starts with a life of surrender and of obedience to Him: Speak Lord, for your servant is listening; Here I am send me; not my will, but Yours be done. Here are some guidelines the Word of God gives us on how to follow Him:

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| 1. Acknowledge Him in everything you do | Proverbs 3:6 |
| 2. Trust, be confident in Him and do good | Psalms 37:3 |
| 3. Delight yourself in the Lord | Psalms 37:4 |
| 4. Commit your way to the Lord | Psalms 37:5 |
| 5. Make yourself available to the Lord | Isaiah 6:8 |
| 6. Be still and rest in the Lord | Psalms 37:7 |
| 7. Loose yourself from your past | Philippians 3:13-14 |
| 8. Press on to follow Christ | Philippians 3:13-14 |
| 9. Deny self take the cross and follow Him | Luke :9:25 |

On the cross Yahshua gave us the gift of life; in return, we give Him our will to follow and serve Him. Our reconciliation came in His cry, My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me? This reconciliation was not only for our salvation, but also for us to follow and serve Him, as the heroes of the faith did. They were men and women of whom the world was not worthy; they died sustained by faith as heroes of the faith; they followed Christ in obedience to fulfill God's will unto death and they compel us to strip of all that entangles us to follow Yahshua, with willingness and humbleness of heart in obedience until death leads us home.