

WELCOME TO



**BELL CREEK**  
Community Church



**JANUARY 4, 2026**

**FOLLOW – WHERE THE JOURNEY BEGINS**

RAISING THE WHITE FLAG TO JESUS

**MARK 1:17**

SERMON BY: PASTOR FRED WRIGHT

CURRENT SERMON SERIES: SERIES: FOLLOW – OUR  
JOURNEY WITH JESUS

**FOLLOW – WHERE THE JOURNEY BEGINS**  
RAISING THE WHITE FLAG TO JESUS  
**MARK 1:17**

**Jesus Invites Us to Follow Him**

**New Life Begins When Trust in Jesus Replaces Sin and Self**

**The Grace of Jesus Gives Us a New Identity and a New Purpose**

**FOR NEXT WEEK**

Read John 14:15-27 and Ephesians 1:11-14

**DAILY CHRONOLOGICAL  
BIBLE READING**

JANUARY 4: JOB 1-5  
JANUARY 5: JOB 6-9  
JANUARY 6: JOB 10-13  
JANUARY 7: JOB 14-16  
JANUARY 8: JOB 17-20  
JANUARY 9: JOB 21-23  
JANUARY 10: JOB 24-28

# UPCOMING AT THE CREEK

## ETHICS SEMINAR

Our Ethics Seminar continues today at 11:00 AM in the Prayer Room with Pastor Dylan.

## NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY CLASS

The New Testament Theology Class will not meet tonight, but will resume on January 11.

## FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY

Take control of your money with Financial Peace University! This nine-week class uses biblical wisdom and common sense to help you tackle budgeting, pay off debt, and invest for your future! Please see Meg Watkins or call 734-778-3272 to sign up. Class starts on January 10.

## BETWEEN TWO TREES BOOK STUDY

Our Between Two Trees study will meet Sunday, January 11 at 9:15 AM to discuss Faith in the Wilderness: Words of Exhortation from the Chinese Church by Hannah Nation and Simon Liu for January 11th! Please contact Pastor Dylan (dylan@bellcreek.org) for more information.

## EVOLUTION: FACT OR FAIRY TALE

Join Bill Durkee for a seminar on Evolution on January 11 & 18 in the Prayer Room during both services.

## BAPTISM SUNDAY

Our next Baptism will take place on Sunday, January 25 during both services. If you are interested in being baptized as a believer, please contact Pastor Adam (adam@bellcreek.org).

## NIGHT TO SHINE

We are so excited to be an official host church, partnering with 242 -Livonia, for this year's "Night to Shine" sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation! The event will be Friday, February 13th from 6:00-9:00 PM at 242 Church on Five Mile. Night to Shine is an unforgettable worldwide celebration event, centered on God's love, honoring and valuing people with special needs. On one night, hundreds of churches of different denominations from all over the world will come together to celebrate people with special needs! To find out how you can be a part of this worldwide movement, visit the information table located in the back of the gym or contact dylan@bellcreek.org.

# MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

## PRAYER MEETINGS

WEDNESDAYS 6:30 - 7:30 PM

FRIDAYS 12 NOON

## PRE-TEEN & MIDDLE SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY

WEDNESDAYS 6:30 - 7:45 PM

SUNDAYS AFTER WORSHIP

2ND SERVICE

## HIGH SCHOOL BIBLE

## STUDY

SUNDAYS 11:00 AM

## AWANA

WEDNESDAYS 6:30 - 7:45 PM

SEPTEMBER-MAY

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

AND EVENTS AT [BELLCREEK.ORG](http://BELLCREEK.ORG)

# OUR MISSION

## MATTHEW 22:37–40

He said to him, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest commandment. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the law and prophets depend on these two commandments.”

## MATTHEW 28:19–20

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember that I am with you always to the end of the age.

## STAY CONNECTED

**WE HOPE TO SEE YOU HERE!**

[WWW.BELLCREEK.ORG/CONTACT-US](http://WWW.BELLCREEK.ORG/CONTACT-US)

**FOLLOW US!**



**BELL CREEK**  
Community Church

30000 FIVE MILE RD.  
LIVONIA, MI 48154

## Sunday Sermon for 1.04.2025

(New Sermon Series: Follow – Our Journey with Jesus)

Sermon Title:

FOLLOW – Where the Journey Begins

Raising the White Flag to Jesus

Sermon Text: Mark 1:17

“And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.’” (Mark 1:17, ESV)

### Introduction to the New Series: Follow – Our Journey with Jesus

“Follow - Our Journey with Jesus” is a sermon series emphasizing practical theology. During this series, we reaffirmed our beliefs as we studied the Nicene Creed. Your enthusiastic response indicated the importance of revisiting solid doctrinal teaching. As the new year starts, it's a good time to reflect on how to apply these truths in our daily lives.

This series aims to give God's people clear, practical guidance on following Jesus, discovering our identity in Christ, living through the Holy Spirit, growing spiritually, enjoying fellowship, sharing our faith, and making disciples. Each message will provide resources, including Scriptures, instructions, and assignments, to help us apply the teachings each week.

Before we explore what it means to walk with Jesus, we need to be sure that we are actually following Him. This first sermon in the series aims to inspire us to do exactly that!

### Jesus Invites Us to Follow Him

“And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.’” (Mark 1:17, ESV)

Peter, Andrew, James, and John were working-class Galilean fishermen. They lived in a culture familiar with prophetic language that predicted the fulfillment of Israel's long-held hope for restoration while under Roman occupation. Then they met Jesus, heard that he might be the Messiah, and witnessed his miracle of the catch of fish. Jesus arrested their attention and He spoke to them, saying, “Follow Me.”

When Jesus says “Follow me,” he uses language loaded with rabbinic and prophetic weight.

To follow a rabbi meant leaving one's trade, attaching one's life to the teacher, adopting his teaching of the Scriptures, and participating in his mission.

“And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.’” (Mark 1:17, ESV)

Jesus goes further by claiming the authority to redefine their vocation: “I will make you fishers of men.” This is not just a figure of speech; it is a claim of Jesus’ sovereign authority over them and mankind!

This must have seemed a little strange to Peter and John. In Old Testament texts such as Jeremiah 16:16, Amos 4:2, and Habakkuk 1:14-17, fishing imagery carried powerful judgment and end-of-the-age overtones.

So, Jesus’ use of this “fishers of men” imagery is something new! It signals that God’s decisive act of redemption for the souls of men and the renewal of creation have begun, and that Peter and John will join Him in His mission.

Notice what Jesus does not say: “Follow Me and...” “I’ll make you wealthy.” “I’ll make you healthy.” “I’ll elevate your social status.” “I’ll kick the Romans out of Israel and give you the nation you’ve always wanted.”

Jesus does not argue or persuade; He summons. They are not persuaded by an idea but commanded by the Man who is God. Jesus’ call is not to abandon hard work (just the opposite!) but to have their lives radically reoriented around the One who will accomplish God’s redemptive plan for mankind.

Did Jesus’ call attract everyone? No, many heard Jesus and walked away (Pharisees, rich young ruler, and others walked away)

This summons appeals to those who:

1. Sense that the world is broken and that they are broken and need forgiveness and rescue.
2. Believe the only hope for salvation is that God must act decisively on their behalf.
3. Are willing to risk all they possess and all they are and place their trust in Jesus.

Jesus’ Call Still Rings Out Today:

““For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.” (John 3:16–18, ESV)

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.” (Revelation 3:20–21, ESV)

## New Life Begins When Trust in Jesus Replaces Sin and Self

How the New Life Begins: We Raise the White Flag of surrender to Jesus.

The Scriptures have much to say about how to surrender to Jesus!

Zacchaeus the Corrupt Tax Collector Repents and Trusts in Jesus

"And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."" (Luke 19:8-10, ESV)

The Conversion of Saul into Paul the Apostle

"At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me. And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' And I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.' "Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance." (Acts 26:13-20, ESV)

The Jailer in Philippi

"Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family." (Acts 16:30-33, ESV)

The Apostle Paul Tells us How to Trust in Jesus

"because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame."" (Romans 10:9-11, ESV).

Many Times, Jesus Promises Salvation to Those Who Believe in Him and His Word

"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming,

and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live." (John 5:24–25, ESV)

Does Jesus' call attract everyone? No, many hear Jesus and walk away.

His summons appeals to those who:

1. Sense that the world is broken and that they are broken and need forgiveness and rescue.
2. Believe the only hope for salvation is that God must act decisively on their behalf.
3. Are willing to risk all they possess and all they are and place their trust in Jesus.

Question: If Jesus were to approach you right now, what is one area of your life where He would say, "You are resisting Me"? What would He name, and are you willing to set it aside, submit to Him, obey Him, and follow Him?

## The Grace of Jesus Gives Us a New Identity and a New Purpose

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10, ESV)

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." (2 Corinthians 5:17–20, ESV)

This series invites us to walk with Jesus together. In the weeks ahead, we'll learn to follow Him faithfully, depend on the Holy Spirit, rediscover our identity in Christ, grow in the Word and in prayer, live in meaningful fellowship, share our faith, and help others follow Jesus too. Each week, we'll receive Scripture and practical steps so that our faith is not only heard but lived.

Does this call attract everyone? No, many hear Jesus and walk away.

His summons appeals to those who:

1. Sense that the world is broken and that they are broken and need forgiveness and rescue.
2. Believe the only hope for salvation is that God must act decisively on their behalf.
3. Are willing to risk all they possess and all they are and place their trust in Jesus.

Question: If Jesus were offering you a completely new beginning - complete forgiveness, a new identity, and a restored relationship with God - what would keep you from being reconciled to Him today? Salvation CANNOT be earned. But don't think there won't be a cost; there will be. Jesus requires you to believe in Him, trust Him, trust His word, talk to Him, depend on Him, love Him and His people, and join His mission to share the Gospel and make disciples. It won't be easy, but it will be worth it. Painful things,

even excruciating trials, can contain wondrous good. And many easy, pleasant things in this life will only destroy you. He has only good in His mind and heart for you. Will you follow Him?

BENEDICTION: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;" (2 Corinthians 5:17–18, ESV)

## **FOLLOW – Where the Journey Begins**

### **Raising the White Flag to Jesus**

1. What did you think of the sermon “FOLLOW – Where the Journey Begins”?

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2. Jesus called His first disciples to follow Him and He will make them fishers of men. Have you accepted His assignment in your life? What does it mean to follow Him?

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3. Jesus does not persuade or argue; He summons His followers. Jesus is the Man who is God, yet some choose to ignore His call. To follow Him, you must be willing to risk **everything**. Have you personally made this decision in your life? What does that look like for you?

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4. There are many powerful examples of what it looks like to surrender to Jesus in the Scriptures. Have you raised the white flag to Him? Do you have any blind spots that are separating you from Jesus? Why is this area causing you to resist His summons?

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5. Do you sense the world (and you) are broken? Do you believe that the only hope for salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ? If so, you understand that God must act decisively on your behalf. If not, what is preventing you from raising the white flag to Him? Will you do that today?

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