

The Time Is Now:
Follow Me
June 25, 2017

I **SLIDE** Follow Me

A) **1 Kings 19:20-21 (NIV)** ²⁰ Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. "Let me kiss my father and mother good-by," he said, "and then I will come with you." "Go back," Elijah replied. "What have I done to you?" ²¹ So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his attendant.

- 1) Elijah has been renewed
- 2) He has new spiritual strength; he has new vision
- 3) He has a call on his life and part of that call is to present Elisha with the call on Elisha's life
- 4) As we said last week, Elisha's desire to say good-by to his parents was not an excuse
- 5) He was honoring his parents before leaving to follow his spiritual father
- 6) When calls us, He does not force us (but remember Jonah)

B) **SLIDE** Saying good-by

- 1) Elisha was going forward by going back
- 2) He understood the call on his life and knew that to answer that call meant saying good-by to his parents and to his present life
- 3) Elisha slaughtered his oxen
 - a) This was not a sacrifice but an act of praise
 - b) He did not slaughter all the oxen - only his pair
 - c) The slaughtering of his oxen signified the relinquishing of his earthly inheritance for his spiritual inheritance
 - d) In other words, he was not going into the family business; he was going into God's business

- 4) Elisha threw a party
 - a) I remember the banquet Makayla's family held for her before she left for Nicaragua
 - b) It was a celebration, a parting, a time for good-byes, and a time of thanks and praise
 - c) The call on Elisha's life was not a sad event
 - d) He was not losing his future; he was gaining it
 - e) He wanted to share this with his family, his friends, and his workers
 - f) We should feel this way when we answer God's call

II **SLIDE** Our call

A) The mantle

- 1) **Acts 1:4-5,8; 2:4 (NIV)** ⁴ On one occasion, while [Jesus] was eating with them, he gave them this command: "**Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.**" ⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." ⁸ ... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." **Acts 2:4 (NIV)** All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.
- 2) God has told us that this is our time
- 3) The mantle of the Holy Spirit has been placed on all of us
- 4) We need that mantle if we preach, teach a class, watch the nursery, prepare a fellowship meal, greet people at the door -
- 5) We need the Holy Spirit to do anything and everything for the Lord
- 6) That mantle has been given to each of us
- 7) Pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit

B) **SLIDE** Our Response

- 1) **Luke 9:23 (NIV)** ²³ Then [Jesus] said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."
- 2) Our response is to be the same as Elisha's
- 3) Many people met Jesus, but only a few followed Him
- 4) Today, many are content with meeting Jesus, but they do not want to come after Him
- 5) They expect Jesus to follow them
- 6) However, we are to come AFTER Him, which means that He is always to go before us

C) **SLIDE** To do that, Jesus gave us three commands

- 1) First, deny ourselves
- 2) This is what Elisha did when he killed his oxen & burned his plow
- 3) Deny
 - a) Renounce self
 - b) Subjugate all works, interests, and enjoyments
 - c) Subjugate: put under control
 - d) So, to deny ourselves means to put our works, interests, enjoyments under Christ's control
- 4) This sounds like slavery until we remember Who Jesus is
- 5) When we deny ourselves, we are acknowledging that Jesus will lead us into the abundant life
- 6) **Matthew 16:25 (NIV)** [Jesus said,] For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.

D) **SLIDE** Second, take up our crosses DAILY

- 1) Take up: raise up; to elevate; to carry
- 2) Cross: symbol of shame to the world, of passion to God
- 3) The cross speaks of humiliation, antagonism, and persecution
- 4) Elisha will encounter this; we will encounter this
- 5) We are to lift up our devotion to Jesus

- 6) We are to be willing to face the scorn, humiliation, persecution, antagonism, ridicule, of the world
- 7) We do not hide our faith or devotion or love; we lift it above everything else in our lives
- 8) Following Jesus, serving Him comes before all else
- 9) His Word is Truth and we lift up that Word
- 10) Taking up our crosses means we are to be visible
- 11) After all, we are to be the lights of the world
- 12) This is a daily decision

E) **SLIDE** Third, follow Him

- 1) We are to come after Jesus
- 2) We are to follow in His footsteps
- 3) We are not to follow new interpretations or church doctrine or popular views or what tickles our ears
- 4) We are to follow Jesus, which means we are to follow His Word

F) **SLIDE** We must accept all

- 1) We cannot deny ourselves but refuse to take up our crosses
- 2) We cannot take up our crosses without denying ourselves
- 3) We cannot follow Jesus without walking the way of the cross, which requires us to deny ourselves
- 4) The end of a matter is better than the beginning

III **SLIDE** Communion

A) Acknowledgment of Jesus

- 1) He denied Himself
- 2) He took up His Cross
- 3) He followed the Father

B) Our participation is our agreeing to do the same so we can come after Him