
The Road Signs Of A True Follower Of Jesus ***Acts 2:42-47***

Intro: In 1992, we were reassigned to 6th Infantry Division Anchorage, Alaska. So, in Aug 1992 we took off from Great Lakes Ill to drive to Alaska. The distance from Dawson Creek BC to Fairbanks Alaska – where the Alcan Highway ends is between 1,520 and 1,488 miles but it is about the same to Anchorage. From where we left there in Great Lakes to Dawson Creek was 2,000 miles. So we were on a 3,500 mile journey, most of which, nearly 2,000 miles, were in areas of North America where the idea of wilderness takes on an entirely new meaning.

They say that the Alcan is paved...that word paved in BC and Alaska is a relative term, meaning you aren't actually driving on the permafrost or Muskeg that the land surface is made of. Breaking down or having some other "road" problem is not a good idea either but a real possibility since there are often potholes left over from the winter freeze that are deep enough and large enough that if you hit one it will easily rip a wheel or suspension right out from under your vehicle.

You better know your location at all times since everything along the Alcan is referred to my "Mile Posts" rather than addresses since other than in the 8 or 9 small towns along the 1,500 mile part of the trip on the actual Alcan there may be no human. Need gas? You stop at every gas station you see since from Dawson Creek – where the Alcon begins – to the next town is only 47 miles, but the next town after that is 236 more miles down with nothing in between but, well, trees, muskeg and moose. After that town you have a nice leisurely 330 miles until your next town (Watson Lake), by the way you better find a hotel room here since the next town is 272 miles away. And this goes on like this for 1,500 miles. The only way to know for sure where you are is to watch the signs along the journey.

The same is true as we travel in this journey called following Jesus; if we don't watch the signs we will become lost or even worse breakdown along the road and, like many of the vehicles

that tried to make the trip to Alaska via the Alcan, end up in one of those small towns along the way with their wheels ripped out from under them; completely useless and setting in a junk yard.

Today we are going to begin our journey of following in Jesus' steps by looking at ***The Signs of a True Disciple***. In our text today Dr. Luke captures in that first church there in Jerusalem the **Signs Of A True Follower Of Jesus Christ**.

[Read Acts 2:42-47/Pray/Dismiss Jr. Church]

What we are talking about here is discipleship; and the question you might ask is why is preaching on discipleship important? First of all it is important because most of us don't really know what discipleship is – some of you would say that discipleship is when someone gets saved; they are a disciple. If that is what you think you are only partly correct. Discipleship can only begin with a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ...but it is much more than that.

Then there is the more important reason and that is because even though we may "think" we are followers of Jesus Christ our lives don't show it. Let me illustrate with video [**show Oprea Church Video**]

Now, If you watched that video and thought:
"There's nothing wrong with what she said; I think she might be on to something." Then you need to be here for this entire series because you probably haven't even taken the first step in following Jesus, you can't be saved and have a view like that

If you watched that video and thought:
"That isn't her real feelings that teaching must have been taken out of context." Then you need this entire series because if clam to be born again you need to be disciple because your following the wrong Jesus.

If you watched that video and it made you mad and your thinking:

"I'll never watch her show again." Then you need to be here for this entire series to learn just how Jesus would deal with such an attack on Christianity and the church He died to build.

If, you watched that video and thought, *"That doesn't mean anything to me, I don't watch that kind of junk, I don't care a wit about things like that."* Then you just might be the worst of all, it is thinking like that, that resulted in prayer being removed from the schools, abortion on demand becoming the law of the land and many other anti-Christian views being installed in the fabric of our culture today. You need to know what the enemy is doing to be able to defeat him.

So, if you're hear today and think you're a ***True Follower of Jesus Christ*** lets see if the signs are there. I have purposefully chosen to use the *Warning* sign shape for these signs because this series – ***The Journey –'Following In Jesus' Steps'*** – is to help us to know where we are as we follow Christ.

Scripture tells us that Jesus, *"... ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils"* the word 'ordained' there means that He 'APPOINTED' or 'HE MADE', that means that He caused them to come along with His so He could invest time into their lives to teach them how to live the life He wanted them to live. So for about 3 ½ years they observed and was part of every thing He did and taught; they saw Him in His public behavior and in His private moments. They watched His conduct when He was wrongly accused and listened to what He said about it in the quite moments as they discussed the events. They witnessed first hand the relationship He had with His heavenly father not just heard His teaching about the heavenly father.

So when He said, as He was about to depart from this earth and return to His rightful position on the throne in heaven, to those very same disciples, ***"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy***

Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" they knew exactly what He meant. He wanted them to go and pass on all those things they had observed: His life, His beliefs and His doctrine – in other words as His disciples there were to go and reproduce exact replicas of the One they had been observing for 3 ½ years.

We know this because we see in this first church those same characteristics. Peter and the folks had understood completely let's make some disciples; let us make some Christians who live like Jesus finally let's make some little Jesus' – that is what a disciple is to be, a replica of Jesus. Paul told the church of Corinth that they should, **"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ"** (1 Cor. 11:1). He would later say to the church at Philippi, **"Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do..."** In other words he said you have seen how to live like Christ in me now go and do likewise, he then went on to tell them the result of do and living like Christ, **"...and the God of peace shall be with you"** (Phil 4:9). Being a true disciple of Jesus is the true source of lasting peace. So, if you are a Christian and find it hard to live a life characterized by peace then you may not be a true follower of Christ.

So what are the signs of a **True Disciple? A True Disciple has a commitment too...**

Spiritual Growth V. 42a

- A. In the first part of verse 42 it says, *"...they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine..."*
- B. Stedfastly = *'be earnest towards, to persevere, be constantly diligent, to adhere closely to'*
- C. In other words they took their knowledge of the doctrines that were being taught very seriously; Oprah would not have lasted long among these early followers because they not only knew the true doctrine but they were diligent in keeping it from being perverted like Oprah is today.
- D. Doctrine was important to them'

- E. **III:** It was during our 2nd tour in Germany that Sally and I were truly disciplined by someone. I think we grew more in those five years than in any other 5 year period until we arrived at Bible College 10 years later. As we prepared to leave to come back to the states we were concerned, all we had known was the military chapel and men and women of faith that helped us grow without regard to any “denominational” bias; so we were concerned that when we got back to the states that we wouldn’t be able to find a church that would be able to help us to continue to grow.

Finally one man said to me, “I won’t tell you which church to choose but I will tell you this, if they don’t like to talk about doctrine run from it. If a church says it doesn’t talk doctrine it isn’t a church.”

I didn’t understand what he meant until we started looking for a church...oh how true that it is. As a **True Follower of Jesus Christ** we need to be *steadfast in doctrine*.

- F. Our Spiritual growth is tied directly to our doctrine...I can tell a persons Spiritual based upon their doctrine, or lack thereof.

A True Disciple has a commitment to Spiritual Growth, and a commitment to...

Fellowship V. 42b

- A. The next part of that same verse says they not only continued *stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine* but all so in *Fellowship*.
1. What is fellowship?
 2. One thing I can tell you that it's not...FOOD; Too many Baptist spell fellowship FOOD.
 3. The word in Greek is *koinōnia* and means *‘fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, to share which one has in anything, participation, intimacy, distribution*.

4. They had the same fellowship with each other as the disciples had with each other and had with Jesus before His ascension.
5. **ILL:** Ronald Sider says of this Greek word, “For the early Christians, koinonia was not the frilly “fellowship” of church-sponsored, biweekly bowling parties. It was not tea, cookies, and sophisticated small talk in Fellowship Hall after the sermon. It was an almost unconditional sharing of their lives with the other members of Christ’s body.”

The koinonia fellowship is a family fellowship. That sense of fellowship once existed in this church, how do I know this? Because my secretary who grew up in this church refers to too many different people who aren't related to her as uncle this and aunt that for that kind of fellowship to have not existed in the past.

It's gone now...why I can't answer? Maybe because too many of people have lost their commitment to that kind of fellowship – that sense of family. Or maybe they have just gotten so wrapped up in the world that they no longer have time to spend with those in the church...church has become just something you do on Sunday...that isn't fellowship and when a commitment to fellowship within the body of Christ goes then the body is no longer **Truly Following Christ** they are following their own desires.

A True Disciple has a commitment to Spiritual Growth, a commitment to Fellowship, third A True Disciple has a commitment to...

Prayer V. 42c

- A. If there was one thing I had to point too that makes the first church so much different from today's church I would have to say it was their commitment to prayer.
- B. Charles Spurgeon said, “*All the Christian virtues are locked up in the word prayer.*”

He also said, “*As artists give themselves to their models,*

and poets to their classical pursuits, so must we addict ourselves to prayer.”

Martin Luther said of prayer, *“As it is the business of tailors to make clothes and of cobblers to mend shoes, so it is the business of Christians to pray.”*

“Communion with God is one thing; familiarity with God is quite another thing. I don't even like (and this may hurt some of your feelings—but they'll heal) I don't even like to hear God called “you.” You is a colloquial expression. I can call a man you, but I would to call God thou and thee. Now I know these are old Elizabethan words, but I also know that there are some things too precious to cast lightly away, and I think that when we talk to God, we ought to use the pure, respectful pronouns.”A. W. Tozer

- C. We live in a “Dial-a-prayer” world and we have lost our trust in the effectiveness of prayer.
- D. Oh, when a Christian is sick, or is facing a crisis, they are quick to seek out their churches prayer chain. But making a commitment to praying for their church and the members of their church on any regular schedule forget it. How do I know this? In those churches who still have a midweek prayer service it is always the lowest attended service. Look at ours, we average about 100 on Sunday morning but if we have 15 here on Wednesday night for our prayer and Bible Study it is a good attendance, 15% of the Christians in this church have made a real commitment to praying with their church family.

A True Disciple has a commitment to Spiritual Growth, a commitment to Fellowship, a commitment to Prayer, fourth A True Disciple has a commitment to...

Ministry V. 45

- A. The text says they sold their possessions and “parted them to all men.
- B. Committing on this verse regarding the phrase, ‘**As every man had need**’, Albert Barns says, *“This expression limits and fixes the meaning of what is said before. The passage does not mean that they sold all their*

possessions, or that they relinquished their title to all their property, but that they so far regarded all as common as to be willing to part with it if it was needful to supply the needs of the others.

- C. They saw everything they had as not belonging to them but to the Lord and that it only there to use in whatever way He wanted.
 - 1. When a church is full of **True Followers of Jesus** having the resources necessary to carry out the ministry of the church is never a problem
 - 2. The problem comes in when the church is full of Christians who see their possessions as theirs to do with what they want
 - 3. Today's church needs the tithes and offerings of every member in order to carry out ministry to others
- D. But it goes beyond the funding of ministry – the text says that they had *“favour with all the people”* the all people here does not refer to those in the church but to every one around the church as well.
 - 1. Their commitment to ministry spilled out into the streets
 - 2. All over the city people were being ministered to because of their commitment to ministry – of course some sold everything so the others could minister but even the giving is as much a ministry as ministering itself

A True Disciple has a commitment to Spiritual Growth, a commitment to Fellowship, a commitment to Prayer, a commitment to Ministry, fifth, A True Disciple has a commitment to...

Worship V. 47a

- A. Another real standout trait of the first church that makes it so different from today's church is this idea of worship.
 - 1. Today worship is all about the music
 - 2. I hear people all the time say “well I didn't get much out of worship today; the music just didn't move me.”
 - 3. Worship isn't about the music; worship is about dedication

- B. The word ‘praise’ there in verse 47 means ‘to extol, to sing praises in honour to God, to allow, recommend, to promise or vow
- C. A. W. Tozer once said about worship,
“Strange things are happening all around us in Christian circles because we are truly not worshipers. For instance, any untrained, unprepared, unspiritual empty rattletrap of a person can start something “religious” and find plenty of followers who will listen and promote it!

Beyond that, it may become very evident that he or she had never heard from God in the first place Because we are not truly worshipers, we spend a lot of time in the churches just spinning our wheels; making a noise but not getting anywhere I would rather worship God than do any other thing I know of in all this wide world! —A. W. Tozer in Renewed Day by Day. Christianity Today, Vol. 36, no. 7.

A True Disciple has a commitment to Spiritual Growth, a commitment to Fellowship, a commitment to Prayer, a commitment to Ministry, a commitment to Worship, sixth, A True Disciple has a commitment to...

Evangelism V. 47b

- A. As a result of their ministry they had **“favour with all the people”** and what was the result of their having this favor?
- B. **“the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved”**
- C. The purpose of the Great Commission is to evangelize
 1. If we are **True Followers of Jesus Christ** then we will be about the same mission as He was, which was to **“...seek and to save that which was lost”** (Lk 19:10).
 2. It is clear that those first 11 disciples understood this, why on their very first church service 3,000 souls were saved
 3. In our text today it says that the Lord added to the church daily.

4. This band of Christians was committed to winning the lost – they were committed to evangelism.
- D. We began our Soul Winning training about three weeks ago and six of us meet every Wednesday night before prayer meeting and Bible Study to go through the training.
 1. In addition each team of two try to go out 1 to 3 hours every week to visit our visitors and other prospects seeking whom the Lord might want to draw to Himself by our faithfulness
 2. In just four weeks of training and I think only about 2 weeks of visiting we have won three people to the Lord and I now there are more to come
- E. This is something every **True Follower of Jesus** ought to be at least interested in trying – going through the training at the very least even if they don't go out and visit.
 1. Christians have problems these days because they spend too much time setting on their behind in front of the TV rather than going out doing what the Lord has commanded.
 2. I think there would be fewer marital problems in Christian marriages if the husband and wife would commit to go and visit once or twice a week asking God to let them win a soul or two for their efforts.
- F. If that isn't an option if they would just spend a couple hours a week on their knees praying for those in the church who do go out that the Lord bless their efforts and see souls saved
- G. Maybe even praying for people by name.

A True Disciple has a commitment to Spiritual Growth, a commitment to Fellowship, a commitment to Prayer, a commitment to Ministry, a commitment to Worship, a commitment to Evangelism, and finally, A True Disciple has a commitment to...

Unity V. 43 – 44, 46a

- A. Throughout the entire 7 verses there is one constant theme and that is unity – listen to these phrases:
 1. *“they continued”*

2. *“And all that believed were together, and had all things common”*
 3. *“they, continuing daily with one accord”*
 4. *“breaking bread from house to house”*
 5. *“eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart”*
- B. These people were unified around a common cause – seeing everyone in Jerusalem coming to the Lord.
- C. They were unified in their commitment to...
1. **Spiritual Growth V.42a**
 2. **Prayer – 42b**
 3. **Ministry – 45**
 4. **Fellowship – 46b**
 5. **Worship – 47a**
 6. **Evangelism V. 47b**

Conclusion: These are the signs of a ***True Follower of Jesus Christ***. Are they visible in your life? If not you may not be ***A True Follower of Jesus Christ***. How do you become one? It begins by making a commitment to Him by coming forward and meeting with someone here at the altar telling them that you want to begin following Jesus by acknowledging that you are a sinner and that on your own strength you can never live up to God's standards. If you do that someone here will take God's Word and show you how you can begin the journey today.

If you are here today and you know you started the journey. You can remember a specific time in your past when you acknowledged to the Lord that you are a sinner. You acknowledged that in your own strength you could never be good enough to warrant entry into His Holy heaven and you receive Christ as your savior but not all these signs are present in your life but you know that they should be, then you come this morning and make a new commitment to Christ that you will begin the journey again today.

Maybe you are on the journey, have been on it for some time but you want to unite with this church to continue that journey you come.