



Christian Life Fellowship

Becoming fully devoted followers of Christ



Pastor David Koch

Becoming Fully Devoted Followers

August 30, 2009

Introduction:

We continue on our mission of **becoming fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ within the context of the family of God.** Last week we talked about connecting with God by spending time to corporately worship Him. Connecting with God means to surrender to Him, to yield to His will and seek His face. The time we set aside on Sunday is time in our week to gather with other believers to hear from God, to declare His majesty and to reaffirm our devotion to Him. We begin the journey of becoming fully devoted followers of Christ by experiencing His grace.

I. A devoted follower has experienced God's grace.

Ephes. 2:8-9- God saved you through faith as an act of kindness. You had nothing to do with it. Being saved is a gift from God. It's not the result of anything you've done, so no one can brag about it.

Every step in our journey helps us become devoted followers of Christ. Every step of faith, every step of obedience is another opportunity for transformation and growth. The grace of God is extended to everyone everywhere. God doesn't say, "Clean up your life, clean up your act and then I will

work in your life," no, He says, "come as you are." The grace of God is not something we earn or deserve. It is God's gift. Once we have accepted the saving work of Christ, we then make public our desire to become fully devoted to Him through water baptism. There is nothing that we add to our salvation. There is nothing we do to earn it but there are steps of obedience and testimony that we take to let others know of our determination to be devoted followers.

I'm often amazed at people who tell me they are Christians – followers of Jesus, but have not followed Him in water baptism after they have experienced His grace and forgiveness. Sometimes

people put that step of faith off for years. There are people who may not know that is a step of faith and obedience that needs to happen right after salvation.

I read in the book of Acts that people came to Christ, some even at midnight and the very same hour they were baptized. If you are going to be a devoted follower, follow Him all the way in your life. Follow Him from death to life. Follow Him in every way that expresses and shows you belong to Him. He is the leader in your life. Follow Him in ways that demonstrate your being dead to sin and the old patterns of life. Follow Him in ways that demonstrate He is the one ruling on the throne of your life. There are times in our spiritual journey that we don't take the steps we need to. We use excuses, we offer our logical thoughts, we resist those opportunities to stand in His presence and allow ourselves to be transformed, but we do so at our own expense.

II. A devoted follower will be growing.

When we experience God's grace, we have not arrived. After walking with God for many years, Paul writes in his letter to the Philippians and says: **Philip. 3:12-I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection! But I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ Jesus saved me for and wants me to be.** He kept on taking steps of faith and obedience throughout His life. When he did so, he experienced the transforming work of God's Spirit and he also grew.

If you are not growing in your faith, then it might be time to take another step in your spiritual journey. The experience of worship and connecting with God is not something that should only happen here at CLF. If that is the only place where you are connecting to God, you are missing out on a whole lot of times to grow and be transformed. Every single day you can spend time connected with God and you need to do so.

When we connect with God, we feed ourselves and draw nourishment from God's word. These are times when you allow God to talk to you. **1 Peter 2:2 - You must crave pure spiritual milk so that you can grow into the fullness of your salvation. Cry**

out for this nourishment as a baby cries for milk. Anyone here ever see a hungry baby? They will let you know that they are not satisfied until they get the nourishment they desire. The desire to connect with God and have spiritual nourishment must be the same way. It is a matter of life or death and God responds to such desire. Becoming spiritually mature takes a hunger and thirst for being connected to God.

2 Peter 3:18- But grow in the special favor and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be all glory and honor, both now and forevermore. Amen. God has not paid for our sin by allowing Jesus to die on the cross for us, redeeming us, so we could only become a small shoot and not grow to full maturity.

When I planted beans this past May, there were a few that did not make it. They sprouted up through the ground and a few of them curled around and went back into the ground. There were a few that sprouted up and then dried up because they were not planted deep enough in the soil. My purpose for planting those seeds was so that I could enjoy some green beans this summer and I have. The plants that grew up and became mature are the ones who set blossoms and produced fruit.

III. A devoted follower will be fruitful.

That also is God's plan and desire for our lives. God's will is that we grow up and become fully devoted followers, growing into maturity and becoming fruitful. He wants us to reach our full redemptive potential. That includes growing, serving and reproducing. Where's the fruit from the relationship?

John 15:4-5- Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful apart from me. "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing." "Apart from me you can do nothing." That means helpless, lifeless, fruitless and unable to accomplish anything of any value. God doesn't want my life in that place and neither do I.

Connecting to God has to be done daily. You need to find a place where you can get alone quietly and connect with God. You may have to get up earlier than you normally do, you may have to stay up later than you normally do and you may have to spend time on your break at work but connect with God every day.

Spend some time in the Bible – not just reading it, but allowing God to speak to you through the word. Spend some time in prayer, talking with God and remember that prayer is not just a one-way conversation. If you need some tools – get a copy of GOD’S WORD for today, or My Daily Bread – or some other devotional. We have a wonderful library with inspirational books that can be checked out. Any of these can be wonderful seeds for God to speak to us.

I have encountered people through my 35 years in the ministry who truly believed that Sunday was the only time they needed to connect with God and that was at their convenience. When there were bad times in their life, they would be fully devoted.

Conclusion:

So to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ within the context of the family of God begins by connecting with God. We connect with God through worship and prayer and the interaction of His word. I’d like for us to close our service by singing an old hymn that expresses a cry for the Lord to not pass us up in our desiring to connect with him.

Pass me not, O gentle Savior
Hear my humble cry!
While on others You are calling,
Do not pass me by.

Savior, Savior,
Hear my humble cry!
While on others You are calling,
Do not pass me by.

Let me at Your throne of mercy
Find a sweet relief!
Kneeling there in deep contrition
Help my unbelief!

Savior, Savior,
Hear my humble cry
While on others You are calling
Do not pass me by.

When there were good times in their life, you would hardly see them at church on Sunday. It is no wonder when their faith was tried they were offended, when dryness came, they withered. It was because they did not have the connection to the source of spiritual life and truth they needed to endure and be fruitful.

You can’t go it alone. You have to connect with God. You have to connect with God here in the large group but you also need to take responsibility to connect with God on your own. I cannot provide the connection to God that you need. I can encourage you, I can pray for you, I can share God’s word with you and present truth but I cannot make the connection with God for you. That is something you must do personally for yourself.

Something that has troubled me throughout years of ministry is when people expect me to provide them all their spiritual nourishment. We feed those who are babies and sick but those who are mature are able to feed themselves. That nourishment comes from connecting with God.

Trusting only in Your mercy
Would I seek Your face
Heal my wounded broken spirit
Save me by Your grace.

Savior, Savior,
Hear my humble cry
While on others You are calling
Do not pass me by.