

Luke 5:11, "And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him."

If one were to survey the population of the world today, they would find that there is much diversity in an individual's goals and focus in life. I cannot find, or read of a time in world history, when there were so many choices to make on a daily basis. With technology and social media growing at breakneck speeds, a person will ponder for many moments during their day concerning what to do next. And yet in all this, the command of scripture to follow the Lord Jesus Christ is not diminished, because the words of the Lord in Matthew 16:24 are just as true today as they were the day His precious lips spoke them, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

The question that could be asked is, "What does it mean to follow the Lord?" The answer to this question is answered in the lesson found in Luke chapter 5 leading up to our study verse. In this chapter we learn:

(1) Following Jesus means to do what He says! When the Lord came to the lake of Gennesaret (which is the same as the Sea of Tiberias and the Sea of Galilee, Matt 4:18 and John 6:1), it is recorded in verse 3 that He spoke to Simon Peter and "prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land." In the next verse, the Lord told Peter to "let down your nets for a draught." Simon Peter responded by doing as the Lord commanded and was blessed amazingly in/for his obedience. The lesson is as clear as the noon day sun on a cloudless day. When the Lord speaks, we should do as He says. In John 2:5 we read the words of Mary, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

(2) Following Jesus means to confess Him as God and not yourself! When Simon Peter saw the great draught of fishes, he understood that Jesus was not just an ordinary man. Jesus Christ is verily man, and yet He is God at the same time. The Lord manifests His great power in so many ways. In Luke chapter 5, when Peter saw His great power, he clearly grasped that Jesus was greater than him. Verse 8 says, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord", which teaches us much about Peter's opinion of the Lord and his opinion of himself. If we, as children of God, turn from the Lord and walk in our own paths, we are declaring that our ideas and decisions are greater than His commands (see Proverbs 14:12). In doing so, we confess ourselves and not Him. By declaring that we are sinners and following Him, we are telling the world that He is perfect in wisdom and holiness and therefore is a sufficient guide for our lives in this world.

(3) Following Jesus means to put Him first in your life! When Peter, Andrew, James and John "forsook all, and followed him", they left much behind. These men understood that the One who stood before them was worthy of their following and much more. These men had work to do, families at home, and daily activities of interest, but none of those would hinder them from following the Lord. The Lord never called on them to neglect their families or daily responsibilities, but called on them to put Him first in their lives. The Lord said in Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;..."

Brothers and sisters, the times in which we live are in need of men and women who love the Lord and show that love. The Apostle Paul called on the Corinthians to "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1 Cor 16:13). And you may ask, What does this mean? It means to start living like mature adults, put down your toys and do what real spiritual adults do, Follow Jesus Christ our Lord, Savior, Redeemer, Prophet and Priest! Amen!

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