Daily Devotion #66

Follow Jesus

***Matthew 4:19 (NASB)*** *19  “And He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men’."*

Most people have someone in their lives who they respect, a hero of sorts. I can remember when I was a young boy, my brother, our closest friend, and I loved to play basketball on our little concrete pad that my dad had poured. It was rough and uneven, but we made great use out of it. Many days were spent on that court pretending to be our favorite pro basketball player. In fact, when one of us wanted to brag about our shot we would yell out the name of the player when we shot, as if we were that person.

I’ve noticed over the years that the infatuation with people who we enjoy emulating or those people who have had meaning to us never fully goes away. That’s not such a bad thing as long as we keep our desire to be like them in the correct perspective. There is nothing wrong with having role models or people who we respect who have taught us how to be better people.

But often our desire to be better is saturated with trying to be someone we are not. God made us just who we are for His divine purpose. He doesn’t want us to be someone else only who He made us to be. He gave us our personalities and our abilities to be unique to us. Too often however, we try to be our hero, or we follow that person so much we think we will eventually be like that person. For years I thought if I played basketball long enough and practiced hard enough, I would be like Michael Jordan or Larry Bird. Those were the famous guys in my day. But I realized I was never going to be either one of those men.

I’ve also noticed that God’s people often are enamored with other spiritual people in the church. I’m talking about those spiritual people who have made and impact in the lives of others. In fact, many young preachers do all they can to model the spiritual giants they have grown up under. Others try to be like their Sunday School teachers. Even others look at how other church leaders have operated and want their church to be the same as the others. Too often people in the church get their eyes on what they think they should be but give up because they have their eyes on the wrong subject. Many churches grow under great pastors and leaders but end up dying when that pastor leaves for another work.

The problem with being like someone else or some other church is it gets the focus off the One who we should be emulating - Jesus. God made the church so that we would keep our eyes and hearts focused on Jesus, not anything or anyone else. Many times people will say that they love their church because of so-and-so or some group or fellowship or because of the ministries the church has going. But when those people or ministries stop, people lose interest and things die. Why? The answer is the same. They weren’t really following Jesus.

The disciples fulfilled their mission that the Lord called them to because their hearts were set on following Jesus. There is no other explanation for why they did what they did and continued after Jesus was resurrected. They had followed Him initially as their leader because He was amazing, but they continued with the ministry because they had their value placed in Him and fulfilling the mission to which He called them.

Beloved, if we are not careful, ministry can be focused on the wrong person or reason. Church life is not about what we can accomplish or what we do or who we follow unless it is solely Jesus. Without Jesus as the focus, all we do is in vain and it will not last.

Can I reorient us as God’s people to examine why we are part of the church? I pray its only because we want to be like our Lord Jesus.