

# **“The Case for Following Jesus”**

## **By Parrish Lee**

### **Sunday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

*Matthew 7:13-14 ...narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

I have to confess, when I first started preparing this message, I wanted to talk about Joash, who only did right when a certain priest was around (2 Kings 11:2). I wanted to talk about presenting your body a living sacrifice before the Lord (Romans 12:1-2). But, after much prayer and seeking God...

#### **Part I: Many Things to Follow**

I want to talk a little about following today. One definition of the word follow means to come after or behind something. One definition means to reach for something, and yet one more definition means to come alongside of something. Having said that, I want to mention that there are so many things in this world that we could follow: we could follow society's ideals—whether they be science, art, sport, politic; or we could follow more personable subjects like our ancestry, someone else's ancestry, or even someone else's ideals; or we could follow ourselves (most people are quite good at that), or any combination of them all. But He whom I suggest in this little talk today is that we follow none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, there are reasons that people follow things, generally along the lines of, “I want to go where they go, that's why I follow them,” and that, of course, has to do with a destination, or, “I want to get what they get, that's why I follow them,” and that, of course, has to do with a reward of some sort, and even, “Their way is better than my way, that's why I follow them.”

The Lord had a statement for any that would follow Him:

John 14:6 ...*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.*

And so our Lord tells us of the destination, and that which could lead to a reward.

#### **Part 2: Why Follow Jesus?**

But, Brother Parrish, you might say, how do I know He really cares about me? How do I know He cares about what I want? How do I know He cares about how I feel? And, plus, I'm not perfect; sometimes I have a little too much of me going on. Sometimes I feel a little rebellious, a little lustful, a little lazy, and sometimes I don't feel like following anybody. How do I know He won't get fed up and kick me to the curb? I want me some guarantees in this. That's when we have to say thank God for His Word, for the scripture says we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15). But we wouldn't be the first to ask what do we get out of this deal.

*Mark 10:28-30 ...he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses and brethren...*

Peter laid it out there: OK, Lord, we have left everything behind, and now we follow You. The Lord heard their hearts' cry told him, "I know everything you've sacrificed and turned away from, and you will receive so much more of what I have got to give you, with persecution, AND ETERNAL LIFE. This is why He came in the flesh; not for the animals and plants, not to prove He was smarter than everyone, not to see he look on people's faces when he would do a miracle, but for you and me, our mothers and our fathers, our brothers and sisters, our sons and daughters, friends and enemies, for he sick and the lame, and the rich and the poor. **For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life** (John 3:16). I'm telling you He is some kind of good. Think of some of the good things He has done for us; count them out, I tell you; it will make you want to shout, and just think what it would be like if He didn't come through... If it had not been for the Lord on my side, where would I be; where would I be?

Sidebar: Some people keep complaining about their situation, completely ignoring and refusing the fact that God brought them all the way to today, and the sky is the limit—what God wants to do with you—and their complains go from: I never finished my education, I never married who I wanted, I never got the job that I wanted, the promotion that I wanted, the house, the car I wanted (there is so much I want to say about that)—the Bible says that *this* is the day which the LORD hath made ; we will rejoice and be glad in it (Psalms 118:24). God has given us so many more reasons to rejoice than to complain, that we *have* to say, this is the day. Not yesterday is the day—yes, he wants you to remember where He's brought you from, and, yes, He wants you to be thankful for every blessing He has poured on us like rain, but He wants us to live in today. All those things we didn't get? That's yesterday. He wants us to have vision, and, yes, He wants us to have hope, and, yes, He wants us to look forward to what He's promised us—but he wants us to live in today. He wants you to rejoice today; He wants you to praise today; He wants us to look to Him, to believe in Him, to repent to Him, and to love Him, today. Others might say, that's all well and good, but, when I get my degree, or when I get a little older, when I feel good, when I get things right, when the church starts treating me right, then I'll do that rejoicing before the Lord. That's our tomorrow—that's why He said *this* is the day which the Lord has made because He wants us to rejoice in today. "Well, hey, Brother Parrish, I don't know about all of that. From the way you talk, I would think I can get everything I want." Only in Jesus, saints, I can get the things I want *in the Lord*. Thank God we don't get everything we want. If we got everything we want, we would make a mess out of all of it, but thank God we get everything we need. I'll tell you another thing to be glad about: We don't get everything we deserve. I can bear witness to that song that says, if it had not been for Jesus on my side, where would I be?

But, let's get back to why follow Jesus.

*Luke 12:31-32*      **...it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.**

His good pleasure to give you the Kingdom... and what's in that Kingdom? Need some peace? It's in there. What about comfort? It's in there. A healing? It's in there. What about a way out of no way? It's in there. It's better than that tomato paste on TV where they said taste it, it's in there.

*Psalms 34:8* *O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.*

### Part 3: Where Has God Called Us To?

And made us to sit in heavenly places. Some of us don't even know that's where He's called us to sit, and if we don't know where He's called us to be, we most likely won't be sitting where He's called us to be—especially if we're talking about heavenly places. Were you ever supposed to be somewhere and have someone ask you, "Where were you? I saved a seat for you." Well, God has saved a seat for us in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. Hallelujah! No, He's not talking about being arrogant; He's not talking about being prideful... We know a few of the things that are in heaven: The angels (the good ones, anyway), they're in heaven, peace, joy unspeakable, love unfeigned, comfort from the Lord, and greatest of them all: ***the presence of the Lord!*** That's where God has called us to sit, in Christ Jesus. So we don't want not to be there.

*1 Peter 2:9 ...ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people...*

'Chosen' here means favorite, or elect. 'Royal' here means kingly, or like that of a king. 'Peculiar' here means apart from something, against something, obtained, purchased, saved from something and for something. To make this personal, point to yourself, and say, "I am a chosen generation; I am a royal priesthood; I am a holy nation; I am a peculiar people; I have to show forth praises of Him who hath called me out of darkness into His marvelous light."

*1 Corinthians 2:9-10 ... Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him...*

