

## Follow the Leader

## 1. Christ Is Our Leader

## 2. We Are His Followers

## 3. He Makes Us Leaders

Come, Follow Me – Follow the Leader

- When child, ever play FTL? Remem how wrks? Child front; line behind ldr; as walks/motns, all imitate – FTL. Fun when child. But even as adults, you have ldrs follow. Pres/comp leads comp w/goal bringing success busnss; if evthng goes well & employs FTL, busnss'll succeed. Coach/team leads team w/goal bringing victory to program; if tmmnts wrk hard & wrk tog & FTL, team'll win. In country, elect ldrs w/hope ldrshp bring safety/prosprty to comnties. Good/bad ldrs; but all need ldrs. Think re ppl in yr life, ldrs to you: parents, tchr, Pr, coach, boss, colleague, fam/friend – ldrs. When have you FTL?
- This past wk, grp yr fellow SJ membs attndd conf in Chic on Luth ldrshp. What take be good ldr? What mean follw ldr? What are blssngs/follwng good ldr? How train good ldrs? These: some/qstns explored at conf. Now today in Gos, J in essnc: FTL. **Vs. 18-19a**. I know: talking to first discs. But when J: **CFM**, also talking to us, inviting us to FTL.

Christ Is Our Leader

- 1<sup>st</sup> things 1<sup>st</sup>, Xp: our ldr. Soclgsts who stdy ldrshp have diff ways definng ldrshp. But here's simp defntn I find hlpfl – to be ldr, 1) you know who are; 2) know whr going; 3) invite othrs come alng. Xp: our ldr. Knows who is: Son/God; lmb/God sin/wrld (last Sun); Anntd One, Mes/Xp (2 Suns); bright light/salvtn for Jews, also Gntls (3 Suns). Xp: our ldr. Knows who is; we know too.
- Also whr going. **Vs. 13-16**. J knows: where going & why going there; what mission is. J came bring lght those living in drknss – of sin & despair. This wrld: envlpd in drkess; you know true. Drknss/sin: hatred, violnc, murdr, adltry, dishnst, greed, prd, evthng oppst bright gdnss/God. And that drknss: not just out there; in my ht/ys – drknss/sin. Also dkrnss/despair. Ppl that don't have Gos, know Xp, have no light. Life: just empty. And, there are ppl that do know Xp, bel in him, but their life circumstncs've put them in very drk place: lost job; lost prnt; burying chld; going thru divrc; cancer/disease. So for them, life seems hopelss/drk. J came into dark wrld sin/despair to shine bright light/Gos, brillnc/love. **Vs. 16**. J: that light!
- Think: lighthouse (fam, J, Bible, GPS, safety). That's what J came be: our light. This light: shows sin, takes awy sin. This light endurd drknss/cross in our place, pay our punshmnt. And remem: as J hung on cross, drknss coverd land – bec light/life, giving his life, to give us etrnl life. Then on Easter dawn, as light was brkng over horizon, light/wrld was brkng forth fr tomb. Xp risen, indd, all! Means our sins burned away like fog at morn sunrise. Jn: "**The drknss is passing & the true light is alrdy shining**" (1 **Jn 2:8**). Xp is light; our ldr. FTL.

We Are His Followers

- 2<sup>nd</sup>, we're his follwrs. Remem, to be ldr: know who you are, where going, and invite others come along with. Well, **vs. 18a, 19a, 20, 21a, 21c, 22**. Just droppd evthng; left busnss/fam. CFM – did! J called these discs to follow in faith, then in mission. And J's done same for us: called us follow faith/mission, sprdng Gos. So we're J's follwrs. A Xian is a follwr/Xp. We FTL.
- But FTL can be really hard! Smtms it hurts! Take JB: **vs. 12a**. JB follwd J; landed jail. And you'd better bel you'll face persctn too; you'll have crosses bear too, when follw J. "**Whvr wants be my disc must deny thmslvs & take up cross & follow me**" (**Mt 16:24**). Undrstnd means? Means when you follow J, yr life, fr wrldly persp, gets worse not better; less pleasnt, more uncomf. Now, of crs: peace sins forgvn & prom etrnl life hvn. But here on earth, you're going suffer for follwng Xp; bear cross; part being Xian. I'm convncd it's worth it; I think you do too. But better know what getting into when FTL.

He Makes Us Leaders

- Finally, as we follow J, as FTL, J makes us ldrs; turns us into ldrs. **Vs. 19**, or, older trnsltn: "fshrs/men." When you follw J, he puts you work. You have job do! That job: lead ppl to J. What means be Xian ldr: fish for ppl. Call it discsph/evnglsm/outrch/fishing – J wants us share Gos w/othrs so they: Xians, hvn.

- That: not just Pr's job! That: Xian's job; your job & mine! I just got back fr this ldrshp conf; wasn't just prs/tchrs; tons lay ppl, reg ch mems just like you. I wish could convey enthussm for evnglsm we felt at this conf. For last few decades, stratgy's been: have great program/event, invite ppl to that; then they'll stay. Now demogrphc/ppl has changed, and so has strategy. Now more than ever, best way to fish/ppl is thru persnl invitn. You establislm reltnshp w/prsn (bond/trust); that opens door for you share your faith & share an invitn. Ppl are hurting, esp young ppl. Social media connects evone; we're more connected now than ever before in history/wrld. But ppl are lonely, feel isolated, hungering for meaningful reltnshp w/God. And God uses ppl like you/me bring fish like them out cold/dark sea into safety of church.
- So, don't rely on Pr to do all fishing. And don't ignore all fish swimmng arnd you. J: **vs. 19**. And so today, here/now I chllng you: invite smone – to church, Bible study, sit w/you; watch service online, text link; out for coffee to talk. Make Gos connection; fish for ppl!
- I'll also say, esp to studnts & young adults (here or watching online): consider min! Consider whthr you cld become fulltime fisherman. Consider studying to become mssnry, staff minstr, tchr, Pr. I did; turned out alright; could tell you all re it. Could you do this? Could you lead wrshp, forgive sins, prch sermons, tch lessons, train stdnts, guide classrms, instret chldrn, baptize chldrn, distrbt Commn, spread Gos as called ldr, as fisher/men? Could you do that? Could you support/pray for those who do? **"Harvest plentfl, wrkrs few"** (Mt 9:37). Ev synod statstc bears that out! **"Ask the Lord/harvest, therefore, to send out wrkrs into his harvest field"** (38) to, as J here, **"fish for ppl."** Could you be a ldr, in your church, in a classrm, in pulpit? I chllng you to be ldr. Lead smone to J.
- Remem 3 parts being ldr? 1) know who are – baptzd bel in J, wrapped in Xp's rghtsns; J's dth/res cover yr sins; you: child of God/light – know who are. 2) Know where going – going hvn. **"Bec I live, you also"** (Jn 14:19). **"In Fr's house, many rooms"** (Jn 14:2). Know where going. 3) Invite others come along w/you. Be leader; lead ppl to J.
- Xp is our ldr. He makes us his follwrs; and makes us ldrs. So lead ppl to J! FTL.

## Matthew 4:12-23

<sup>12</sup> When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee. <sup>13</sup> Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali—<sup>14</sup> to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah: <sup>15</sup> “Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles — <sup>16</sup> the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”

<sup>17</sup> From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

<sup>18</sup> As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. <sup>19</sup> “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” <sup>20</sup> At once they left their nets and followed him.

<sup>21</sup> Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, <sup>22</sup> and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

