



**Follow
Matthew 9:9-12
Message from Pastor Martin Hawley
May 14, 2017**

The Bottom Line: The question is not, “How far along are you in the journey?” But, “Are you following?”

Introduction:

As a believer, there have been times when I thought the Christian life could have been called, “Jesus says.”

- Jesus says pray.
- Jesus says don’t look over there.
- Jesus says be nice.
- Jesus says to get up early and read your Bible.

It’s easy and sad to lose sight of the relational nature of the Christian faith. The relationship with the living Savior is the driving force behind following Jesus.

When we lose the relationship, we find ourselves playing “Jesus says.”

When we play “Jesus says,” we pursue a list of things to do.

When we pursue a list of things to do, we lose our joy, our victory over temptation, and our spiritual balance.

It is like pursuing the rules and principles of marriage, rather than the person you are married to. You could be doing everything right ... but have no real relationship.

The irony is ...

The reason Jesus came was to lay the groundwork for a new kind of relationship with God.

Jesus changed the spiritual paradigm: how we relate, think, and approach God.

Jesus pointed to this new spiritual paradigm in today’s Bible story that covers His invitation to Matthew (Matthew 9:9-12).

There are three things we learn about Jesus’ invitation to follow:

1. His invitation is extended to sinners – spiritually sick people.
2. His invitation is an invitation to relationship.
3. His invitation forces me to focus on where I am, rather than where you are not.

The question is not, “How far along are you in the journey? But rather, “Are you following?”

Matthew had no idea what hung in the balance of his decision to follow Christ. Neither do I, and neither do you.

Conclusion:

We are all following something or somebody, but rarely do we stop to think about who or what.

In my line of work, I get to see where those pursuits take people.

I have come to this conclusion: **Following Christ will cost you something. Refusing to follow Him will cost you a lot more.**

I have talked to people about all kinds of regrets, and I have yet to meet or hear about the person who said, “I followed Christ most of my life. What a waste!”

NEXT STEPS:

- Memorize: Matthew 9:12-13.**
- Pastor, today I have decided to follow Jesus.**
- Come back next week for Part 2 of Simple: Believe.**