

200607 Grace and Peace
Part 1 in the series “Follow”

What do you remember from the message?

What were some things that resonated with you?

Was there anything you wrestled with?

Do you agree that everyone follows someone or something? Why or why not?

In what ways do we follow others? [i.e. Following someone on social media, or following someone to a physical destination, or following someone’s career development, or following someone as a model or example.

When Jesus invited us to follow him, in which sense did he mean?

READ: Matthew 7:13-23

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”

How do you know if you’re on the broad path or the narrow path?

What did Jesus mean by the term “wolves in sheep’s clothing?”

Since we are supposed to know true prophets from false prophets by their “fruit”, what kind of fruit should one be looking for?

READ: Galatians 5:19-23

“When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!” Galatians 5:19–23 (NLT)

Where are you on your “peace-meter” - *ten* being very much at peace, and *one* meaning you’re not experiencing peace at all. How about your joy meter? Your patience meter? What about your self-control meter?

What is the point Paul is trying to make in these verses?

The early followers of Jesus lived through horrific injustice and persecution. When you read their letters in the New Testament, would you say there was more evidence of the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace...) or more evidence of the fruit of the flesh (hostility, anger, division...)?

READ: John 10:1-21

“I tell you the truth, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber! But the one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice. They won’t follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don’t know his voice.”

Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn’t understand what he meant, so he explained it to them: “I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them. Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and

go freely and will find good pastures. The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don't belong to him and he isn't their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. The hired hand runs away because he's working only for the money and doesn't really care about the sheep.

"I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep. I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd.

"The Father loves me because I sacrifice my life so I may take it back again. No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded."

When he said these things, the people were again divided in their opinions about him. Some said, "He's demon possessed and out of his mind. Why listen to a man like that?" Others said, "This doesn't sound like a man possessed by a demon! Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" John 10:1-21 (NLT)

In this illustration, Jesus refers to himself as three different entities. What are they?

Describe the voice of the Shepherd

What might the voice of "the stranger" sound like?

Some people believed Jesus was "demon possessed" and "out of his mind." What does that tell you about the capacity of human beings to be deceived?

Would you rather be filled with love, joy, and peace? or with hostility, anger, and division?

How can you be filled with love, joy, and peace?

Describe your devotional life.