

Follow the Leader**1. Christ is Our Leader 2. We are His Followers 3. He Makes Us Leaders***Come, Follow Me – Follow the Leader*

- Child, play FTL? How works? Child front; line behind; as moves/motions, imitate – FTL. Fun when child. But even as adult, you have leaders follow. Pres of company leads with goal bringing success business; if all well & employees FTL, business succeeds. Green/gold in GB new leader, coach; hoping new ldrshp for Packers lead Super Bowl – if players FTL. In country, elect leaders; hope ldrshp bring prosperity to comities. Good/bad leaders; but all need leaders. Maybe you think leaders you've followed in life: parents, pr/tr, coach, boss, colleague, friend – leaders. Think: when you FTL.
- This past wk, two prs with small group from StJ attended conf in Chicago on Luth ldrshp. Ldrshp main focus of conf. What take be great leader? What mean follow leader? What are blessings of following good leader? Those questions explored this wk. Now today in Gospel, J: FTL. **Vs. 18-19a**. I know: talking P&A, later J&J. But when **CFM**, also talking us; inviting, FTL – not in game for children, but in faith as Xian. **CFM**. FTL.

Christ is Our Leader

- 1st, Xp our leader. Sociologists who study ldrshp have diff ways defining ldrshp, identifying what makes good leader. But here's simple def I find helpful – to be leader means (3): you know who are, where going, invite people come along. Xp our leader. Knows who is. JC: Son God, lamb God takes away sin world, Anointed Mes, Cruc Sav, firstborn dead, judge liv/dead, 2nd pers Trin, from eternity, and Xp is our leader. Knows who is; we know too.
- Also where going. **Vs. 13-16**. J knows where going, why there; what mission: J came bring light those living in darkness – of sin, despair, rebellion vs Creator. This world enveloped in darkness; you know true. Hatred, murder, adultery, dishonesty, pride, greed, defiance of God, carelessness for Word – this is thick darkness that surrounds us. But don't just looks around; look within – darkness here, too – unspeakable sins in my heart, yours as well. In our sinful nature, we contribute this darkness. We need a light. **Vs. 16**.
- Think: lighthouse (J, Bible, GPS, safety). That's what Xp came be: our light. This light shows us sin, takes away sin. This light endured darkness of cross in our place, pay our punishment. And remem: as J hung on cross, darkness covered land – for light life, giving his life, to give us eternal life. Then on Easter dawn, as light was breaking over horizon, light of world breaking forth from tomb. J risen – means our sins burned away like fog at morning sunrise. Paul: **“You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light” (Eph 5:8)**. Xp is light; our leader. FTL.

We are His Followers

- 2nd, we're his followers. Remem: leader knows who is, where going, and invites others come along. Well, **vs. 18a, 19a, 20, 21a, 21c, 22**. I'm always impressed: left like that, dropped everything, left business/fam. **CFM** – did! J called these discs follow in faith; he sent Spirit, worked faith in hearts. J done same for us too; he's called us follow in faith; he's sent Spirit work faith our hearts. So we're his followers – means Xians; we believe J is our Savior; we FTL.
- But being follower of J is hard! Sometimes it hurts! Take JB: **vs. 12a**. JB followed J; landed him jail. And you'd better believe you'll face persecutn too; you'll have crosses bear too, when follow J. **“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny thmslvs and take up their cross and follow me” (Mt 16:24)**. Understand means? Saying when you follow J, your life, from worldly persp, gets worse; less pleasant, more uncomf. Yes of course, we: peace sins forgiven, prom eternal life in hvn. But from worldly persp, being follower of J is hard. You're suffer for it, with crosses, pain; part of being Xian. I'm convinced it's worth it; I think you do too. But better know what getting into when FTL.

He Makes Us Leaders

- Finally, 3rd, as we follow J, as FTL, J makes us leaders; turns us into leaders. **Vs. 19.** When you follow J, he puts you work. You have job do! That job: lead people to J. What means be Xian leader: to fish for people. This is straight up outreach/evangelism. J wants us share gospel with others so they become Xians, go hvn. When we do that, that's being Xian leader; that's leading people to J.
- We cannot have attitude: pr's job bring in new people; or, they know where front door is on Sun AM; or, I'll let someone else do that. No, **vs. 19.** J to you! And so today, here/now I challenge you: invite someone ch. Have friendly conv re J with someone you know; invite ch. Tell: you'll pick up; sit with; your pr meet at home if want. But actually invite someone ch. Know FRAN (friends, relatives, & neighbors)? Closest circle of influence. Invite someone ch; make habit of it. J tells us do this.
- I know not easy. I still get butterflies in stomach when take postcard, neighbors; afraid think: Luth pr again, trying get us into his ch. But I just spent 3 days at ldrshp conf in Chicago hearing stories re how simple invitation to ch can change someone's life, can fill J-size hole in their heart with comfort only gospel can give. I feel we have complacency among us here at StJ; feel it among membership, in myself. We need get up, get work. J: **vs. 19.** I challenge you do that. Be leader; lead someone to J.
- And remem, what are 3 parts being leader? 1) know who are – baptized bel in J, wrapped in robes Xp's rightsns; J's blood covers your sins; Satan has no accusation vs you; child of God, child of light – know who are. 2) Know where going – going hvn. **“Bec I live, also will live.” “In my Father's house, many rooms...”** Know where going. 3) Invite others come along with you. Be leader; lead people to J; be person HS uses to connect someone to Xp. God will use you to do that, if only you'll be leader. And J makes you leader. **Vs. 19.** If you're follower, then also leader at same time. So get up, lead! Be leader in your ch, community, family! Get some evangelism done; share gospel! This how ch works; what ch looks like!
- Looks like game of FTL. Xp our leader; we followers; he makes us leaders. We can do that!

Matthew 4:12-23

¹² When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³ Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali— ¹⁴ to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah: ¹⁵ “Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles — ¹⁶ 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.”

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

¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” ²⁰ At once they left their nets and followed him.

²¹ 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, ²² and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

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