

Beginners Guide to Predicting your Future pt. 3: “Followers”

-Review:

-Last 2 weeks have been focused a reality: **“Direction Determines Destination”**

-we talked about the nature of Realities,,, they cannot be broken

-we either benefit from reality, or we are hurt by it

-Illustration: Lighter and fake thumb

-We talked about how **most personal problems cannot be fixed but they can be avoided**

-Billy Losing his toes to a lawn mower....

-BILLY WILL ADJUST AND ADAPT but billy’s problem cannot be fixed,, ,it needed to be avoided

-In Matthew 7 Jesus tells us that his teaching is a path for us to walk, and walking that path brings blessing, failing to do so brings hurt.

-the path Jesus offers is in fact reality,,, we either benefit from living in line with reality or suffer by ignoring it.

-Last week we added to our principle reality: **Direction, not Intention Determines Destination.**

-we warned that diversions from the path become destinations

-We learned that “We can only Wind Up where the Road we are on Ends Up.

-Intro Today:

-Today I want to talk to about what it really means to “Follow Jesus”.

-Maybe some of you have not actually Committed yourself to Following Jesus,,,,, I **want to invite you to consider that decision today.**

-what we talk about today will cause some of us to question if we have **actually been following Jesus** up until now

-“Was I following Jesus or just chasing the Perks I thought he would give me?”

-Many of us will come to a point where we internally Double Down on that decision to Follow Jesus.

-We are not negating the value of what has happened until now,,, we are just getting a clearer picture of what we were actually committing to...

-Illustration : Have you ever been in a car and had to depend on the Direction of another person?

-Maybe you are following the car in front of you and you know basically where you are going but they seemed more confident so you let them lead the way.....

-but now as you drive, you really begin to question them.....

-you are tempted to go a different way,, but it will be awkward when you both arrive....

-you try to think of a ways to get in the front without them noticing you are taking over

-Maybe you have had this scenario as a passenger in your own car.

-your spouse asserts that they know the way, but as you go it looks questionable

-you try asking questions but they say they got it.....

-Babe are you sure you don't want me to look it up on my phone....

-not necessary,,,,, I know where I am going,,, but you are not so sure

-Following the Direction of another is in many ways liberating, but you have to **trust**, and **submit** to the direction and preference of the one you are following.

-have you ever been driving and the person next to you is questioning everything?

-why are taking this way?!?!?

-dont you think that other way will be faster????

(dont know about faster, but it might be quieter :)

-If you are following the direction of someone you trust completely, it can be very relaxing.... *(you don't have to worry about the details.... They got it...)*

-but you have to be able to trust their direction

-Refer to the list of Jesus directions from Gospels:

-Jesus are you sure I need to forgive like _____ says,, this situation is different

-Jesus are you sure praying for these stupid people and loving them is really the way to where I want to be?,,, I think posting about them on facebook is

-Jesus are you sure that being generous is how I will get to where I need to be? I think it is in keeping more for myself

-We are going to look at a story where some people trusted the direction of Jesus and others didn't.

-John 6:1-3 Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), 2 and a great crowd of people followed him **because they saw the signs he had performed** by healing the sick. 3 Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. 4 The Jewish Passover Festival was near. 5 When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" 6 He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

-There is a crowd of thousands who were "followers of Jesus"

- as Jesus moved from town to town people just stuck with the group
- by the time Jesus crosses the Sea there are thousands
- it takes them a while but they catch up.....**

-Jesus is teaching the 12 on a mountainside and sees these thousands of “Followers” approaching

- they are in the middle of nowhere, starving from walking all day
- Jesus DOES A MIRACLE,,, A SIGN,,, He multiplies the lunch of a little boy and feeds THOUSANDS

-This group has now witnessed countless healings and they have now see him **literally MULTIPLY FOOD like MAGIC**

- Jesus sends the Disciples to the other side of Lake in a Boat
- He disperses the crowd
- Then Jesus crosses over the Lake himself (another miracle)

-The next day the crowd comes back looking for Jesus

-by “pure coincidence” it is around mealtime....

-John 6:24-25 Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus.

25 When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, **when did you get here?**”

-These guys get Gold Stars for being very driven

- they didn’t just follow Jesus on Facebook,,, they followed him across a lake
 - They followed him FROM that side of the lake to where he fed them
 - then Jesus was gone so they hopped on boats and went back to the other side to pick up the trail again
 - this is the second time in 2 days that Jesus escaped by crossing a lake in a boat and both times they found him**

-They show up wanting something and start off making small talk

- “when did you get here”. -“how is the weather”
- “how did you sleep last night? We slept great,,, full bellies,,, carbolicious ... sleep”
- they are easing their way into asking for SOME MORE STUFF*

-Jesus saves some time and cuts to the chase.

-John 6:26-27 Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. 27 Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.

-Jesus says, “you are missing the point”

- the bread was a sign pointing to the fact that I am THE SOURCE of life

-BUT, You are not here for me, you are here for more bread.

-They say “Ok you want to teach us about God,,, that is awesome, we want you to be our teacher. Tell us what God wants from us”

-John 6:28 Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

-We really want to believe,,,,, Maybe You could HELP US with that.

-You know what might help us believe? *Some more bread....*

-John 6:30-31 So they asked him, "What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? 31 Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

-they think they are being so subtle

-Jesus tells them, "HELLO MCFLY". "BUELLER, BUELLER" Come on guys you are not hearing what I am saying.

-The actual Bread you ate, was just a sign that I am the Bread of Life

-so like 2 MORE times they say,,,"Yeah we get it, bread,, you know how you could really teach us that,, give us more bread"

-Then Jesus throws them a curve ball and says some really cryptic stuff.

-my body is bread and my blood is drink,, you actually have to eat my flesh and drink my blood ,, and then you will have real life

-what he is cryptically saying is that Our life must be built on him

-i live my life through faith in his sacrifice,, Jesus' blood was spilled in place of mine

-i live because of his blood

-my life is lived in IMITATION of his,, so his life is the source material for my life,, in that way I am **Nourishing myself ON HIM**

"It is not the stuff I give that sustains you, it is me,, learn to be satisfied by me"

-That was enough for the crowds to leave

-they left because it became clear that Jesus was not "*playing Oprah*"

-you get a free car, you get a free car,,,,,, everyone gets a free car....

-Once they realized that Jesus was not a "stuff distribution center" they stopped following.

-John 6:67-69 You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? **You have the words of eternal life.** 69 We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God."

-after the reaction of huge crowd, Jesus turns to the 12, who had to be deflated and disappointed

-just moments ago they were core leaders in an up and coming organization with thousands of excited members

-then Jesus drove everyone away,, and they are a bunch of nobodies again

-The 12 probably look visibly shaken, so Jesus asks if they want to leave.....

-And Peter's response?::::: "Your words REVEAL REALITY to us."

-you know what is real now and FOREVER ,, into Eternity

-We have trusted you and began building on the Exposed Bedrock of Reality that your Words Offer,,,,,,

-Where else will we Go? -Who else can show us REALITY?

-They don't understand where Jesus is taking them, but they have learned to trust his Direction.

The crowd was following Jesus in pursuit of their own agenda.

-Back to our opening illustration of FOLLOWING in the car,,,

-Jesus is inviting the crowd to Trust him enough to JUST FOLLOW

-But they don't want to follow, they want dictate

-they **want Jesus to drive,,, but they want him to drive where they tell him to go.**

-They don't want a Leader or a Lord, they want a Cosmic Butler.

-They recognized Jesus' power and they came to give Jesus a path to follow.

-how often is THAT truly what we are hoping for from God????

-How often do **"we already have a direction and we are simply seeking one with the power to propel us there.**

-When they saw Jesus multiply that bread, they thought:

-if he can do that with bread,,, Imagine the possibilities

-if we can get him to multiply our Income,,, Our Love LIFE,,, Our Military Strength,,, Our Hair line....

-the possibilities for our lives would be endless

-So often the reason we are tempted give up on Faith, stems from the fact that we don't really understand what it means to Follow.

-we come to the table having a pre-established set of desires

-When the crowd realized Jesus would not do their bidding they left.

-So often crisis in our Faith is really just the fact that we had ideas of what God would or would not do,,,,, that were not based on what God promised.

-we thought God would spare us from tragedy

- we thought that God just wouldn't let that person die
- we thought God just wouldn't let us lose the job or the house
- Wishful thinking causes us to assume that God might spare us the harder parts of life,,, we hope God will keep US from them.
- maybe we don't necessarily stop believing ,,, but we stop seeing the point**
- If he wont do this or that,,, then "what is the point of having a God anyway"**

-When that happens we are like that crowd. We have given Jesus marching orders that he did not follow, so we lose interest.

But, If not Jesus then What?

-I love Peter's Response:

-if not you, who are we going to follow?

-Peter knew that follow something was Assumed, the only question was who or what that would be.

-You will run after something in life (*we are born to run*)

-look at your track record

- as a kid it was toys. -then it was video games. -for some it was sports
- then it was boys or girls..... -it was popularity
- for some it became cars...
- some it was sensuality, encounters....

-then somewhere along the way it became finding a MATE....

-then you pursued a family

-then you pursued a job lucrative enough to pay for that family

-many of us it became an ALL OUT Sprint to pursue a body and appearance we love

-for many it became a search for Meaning and Accomplishment in work....

-for some it is running after the nicest home,, or the coolest cars

-for some it is through causes,,, accomplishments ,,,, and recognition

-for some we are running after fulfillment in Friendships and Social lives...

-We just spend our lives running after things

-I am not criticizing or even trying to attach value or lack thereof,,, I just want us to be honest as we look back.

-there are countless things we have **run after**

-there are countless **CENTERS OF GRAVITY** that our lives have **orbited** around

-What you see in Peter's response is that he was honest enough to know that no matter what, he would Orbit Something.

-we are natural born Satellites,,, we will orbit something

-“If we go from you we will also be going to something else”

-this might be hard, this might be demanding, but there is nothing that even comes close to answering the REAL QUESTIONS of life the way Following you Does.

-As it turns out the crowd was never following Jesus to begin with.

-they were following what they wanted

-for a time Jesus happened to be giving out what they were in search of

Jesus offered himself as the Source Eternal of Life

-Jesus says:

-some of what I lead you into is harder for you temporarily, but better for you in Eternity

-you may be called on push through things you don't like NOW in exchange for what you REALLY NEED LATER

-*sometimes my ways will also benefit you here and now,,, in the Finite things*

-but they will always be for your good INFINITELY,,, starting now and lasting on into Eternity.

-Jesus says “dont choose what seems good now but will be worthless Later.

-Peter recognized that what Jesus offered was Eternal.

-it was solid

-it was built on bedrock

—*it wasn't fad, or pop psychology or cultural buzz words*

-A couple weeks ago this **list** of Jesus' Teachings was in the notes of the program.

-this is the Exposed Bedrock of life that Jesus offers us (this and more lol)

-As we Live in Line with This Reality, we are building our House on the Rock. We are FOLLOWING.

-often obedience to these will make our lives immediately better

-it won't require faith,,, it will be obvious

-but often His way, while it is better, will be **harder** than our way, it will require us humbling ourselves,,, forgiving,,, Loving when we would rather cut off.....

-But following Him means Following Even when we would rather not,,,,
-when we do that then ALL of OUR LIFE is built on ROCK,,,, (in line with reality)

-The blessing of living in that way starts now and grows exponentially into eternity.

-Illustration: Building the House on the Foundation vs. Building the house where you want it,,,, and then asking God to put a foundation under it.

-The people who left did so because they had already decided what mattered in life
-they were trying to find a God who would bless their thing, endorse their plan

-when Jesus refused to be their SUPERNATURAL BUTLER they bailed

-God will not follow your lead.

-He will not build a foundation under the life you cobble together doing things your way.

-He is not in the business of miraculously SHORING UP SHACKS

-You can make a mess of your life and turn to Jesus and he will Save your Soul,, he will forgive you and welcome you into eternity,,, but he has not promised to rescue the dilapidated mess of a life you have created in the here and now

-So don't get to that point

-Trusting him enough to Follow His Direction, will build a Life that is GOOD NOW AND LATER. Temporarily and Eternally

Closing:

-Will you put your car behind Jesus' and trust him enough to follow all that he teaches?

-will you go when he goes. -will you wait when he would wait

-will you forgive when he would forgive

-will you give when he would give

-will you say no to yourself when he would have you to

-Will you accept his sense of where you life needs to go and Follow him there?

-You are going to Build a House No Matter What.

-will you build it on Reality,, will you build on the Foundation he gives

-or will you build something on sand and mud that is doomed to fall and then go about Trying to Talk him into putting a foundation under it?

Pray

