

Follow Me
So much more than a prayer
Pastor Craig Sweeney | August 16, 2026

Thread: To Follow Jesus is SO much more than a prayer.

What do we learn from their calling?

He called each of them by name.

Restoration — Healing the brokenness.

“...Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. ‘Rabbi,’ he said, ‘we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.’ Jesus replied, ‘I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.’” **John 3:1b-3 NLT**

Jesus personally invites Nicodemus closer.

Difficult teachings of Jesus

“If you refuse to take up your cross and follow me, you are not worthy of being mine.” **Matthew 10:38 NLT**

“...If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but are yourself lost or destroyed? If anyone is ashamed of me and my message, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in his glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels.” **Luke 9:23b-26 NLT**

The Apostles are helping the Church live into these words.

“...Because of that cross, my interest in this world has been crucified, and the world’s interest in me has also died. It doesn’t matter whether we have been circumcised or not. What counts is whether we have been transformed into a new creation. May God’s peace and mercy be upon all who live by this principle; they are the new people of God.”

Galatians 6:14b-16 NLT

I am NOT newly created to “my” best ideas.

“Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God’s right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory. So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and

evil desires. Don’t be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming. You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. Don’t lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds.”

Colossians 3:1-9 NLT

This takes effort on your part.

“Put on your new nature and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. In this new life...”

Colossians 3:10-11a NLT

This takes effort on your part.

This is NEW life

“...Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us. Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other’s faults and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.” **Colossians 3:11b-15 NLT**

Clothe yourselves.

- The Greek word has a twist to it, It Means:
 - To put on a garment
 - Saturated
 - Be filled with the Spirit

The complete picture of this word is: Be clothed with Christ from the inside out.

“Put on your new nature and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him.” **Colossians 3:10 NLT**

Challenge:

- Follow Jesus past the prayer to restoration.
- What do you need? What needs to be taken off?
- What do you need? What needs to be put on?
- Seek the Holy Spirit’s transforming work throughout your week.

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