

Are You a True Follower of Christ? Really?

✖ As I was preparing a sermon for Palm Sunday, I was struck to the core by John 12. Jesus made a triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The Bible says a great multitude took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, crying out, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! The King of Israel!” (John 12:13).

Yet only a few verses later many no longer believed.

What happened? What shifted? What caused this multitude to go from celebrating Jesus and acknowledging Him as King of Israel to turning their back on Him and days later calling for His crucifixion? Simply put, He told them the truth—and they couldn’t handle the truth. You might say they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved (2 Thess. 2:10).

But let me ask you a serious question: Are you a lover of the truth? Are you a true follower of Christ? Really?

If we want a **spiritual awakening**, if we want **revival** in this land, we have to be lovers of the truth. That means no compromise with darkness. That means no shrinking back when things get hard. That means we must pursue and **speak the truth in love** no matter the personal cost. That’s what Jesus did. Are we going to follow Christ or are we going to befriend the world and become enemies of God? (James 4:4).

I’m not talking about being pushy or obnoxious with the gospel. Jesus was never pushy or obnoxious. But Jesus did offer some hard truths in love. In John 12:25-26 Jesus said, “He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will

be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.”

Jesus said we should follow Him. At the moment He said that, where was He going? The cross. Are you willing to crucify your flesh to follow Christ by yielding to the work of the **Holy Spirit** in your heart? This is what Father, Son and Holy Ghost expect. Jesus was very clear that following Him would not be easy on the flesh. Right after he fed 5,000 men and thousands more women and children with a few fishes and loaves of bread, Jesus said something similar to His remarks in Jerusalem:

“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father’s, and of the holy angels” (Luke 9:23-26).

Let me ask you the same question again: Are you a true follower of Christ? Really? We love to see miracles, signs and wonders—and well we should. We praise the name of Jesus for the blessings in our lives—and well we should. But how many will take the humble road and pick up their cross daily to follow Jesus when they face persecution, a broken down car, a delayed promotion, or some other unpleasantness? Picking up your cross may mean speaking out. It may mean keeping your mouth shut. But it always means striving to walk in love and forgiveness. It always means relying on God’s grace to obey His Word. Jesus is the Word.

Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani is a true follower of Christ. Imprisoned for nearly 1,000 days in poor conditions in Iran, abused physically and emotionally, and separated from his wife and two young children, Nadarkhani nevertheless refuses to recant his faith in Christ and accept Islam.

Most of us will never have to face this choice. But we make small choices every day that demonstrate whether or not we are true followers of Christ or just giving lip service to His gospel. Of course, no one is perfect. We're all moving from faith to faith and glory to glory. But are we pressing on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of us, laying aside everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles us? Holiness is the mandate we strive toward. God just wants a willing heart that's quick to repent when we move in the works of the flesh instead of the fruit of the Spirit. None of us are perfect. No condemnation. The goal is to mature, and that takes a decision to really, truly follow Christ.

I'm calling on you to make a decision. Will you be part of the masses or part of the remnant? Will you be one who loves the praises of God or the praises of man? (John 12:43) Jesus made a decision for us. He gave His life for us. Shouldn't we be willing to give this life for Him? We did nothing to deserve eternal life. We deserve eternal hell fire. But Jesus came here as humble servant to show us the way. He is the Way, but He is also the Truth. Can you handle the truth? Will you love the truth? Will you be a true follower of Christ? God's grace is sufficient. Amen.

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