

2025 CC Charlotte Men's Conference - Session 1

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[0 : 0 0] You can turn to our theme verse, 1 Corinthians 11.1. Paul says, be you followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

When I began thinking about the idea of like, Lord, it'd be fun to do like a men's conference or a men's day. I was thinking about it in terms of just watching my own life, watching guys around me, that we very much, who we follow, what we follow, man, it determines who we are.

It defines who we are. The proof of that is when you meet someone, what's the first thing that you ask another guy? What is it? What do you do? What do you do?

Why? Because I want to know who you are. That defines who you are. If you said to me, well, you know, I clean out septic tanks for a living. Well, that's cool. You know, praise God. But if you said to me, well, I'm a nuclear physicist.

Okay. You know, there's a different person then presented to me because who you are defines, is very much defined by who you follow, what you're into. We see the same thing today.

[1 : 0 9] Everyone wants you to follow them. Everything in the world today says, follow me, follow me, follow me. Like, follow, subscribe. You know, who do you follow on social media? You know, we follow sports teams.

There's nothing wrong with these things. But you know, you see someone, then you know who they follow. Their car's that color, and they wear those clothes, and that's what their life revolves around. But who we follow very much defines who we are.

So what are we following? Why are we following it? And where do we follow? All right. So 1 Corinthians 11. 1, Paul says, be you followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. The word there, follower, it specifically means an imitator.

One who imitates. An imitator or one who seeks to be more like another than himself. So the idea is you're following someone because you want to be like that person. You want to be like the thing that you're following.

Paul also, in this verse, he kind of loads it up here when you're like, well, what's he talking about? Be you followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Well, Paul's saying he's following.

[2 : 1 2] Then he's also saying he's leading as well. Those who follow, well, by definition, someone who follows, they must be led. I mean, someone's leading, but we're also told here, Paul's saying, hey, well, I'm also leading.

So follow me. And those are the three things we're going to look at today. This session, the next one, and the last one. We're going to look at following. Those who follow, what is it to be a follower? Because who we follow determines who we are.

And then those who follow, well, they also lead. Man, you may be the best follower. I am following Jesus well, but are you leading well? And then lastly, as Paul says, follow me, even as I also follow.

Christ. Who are we following? It's that person that we follow. So Paul, I don't think what he's saying here is, hey, guys, look around you, look around the room and pick the best guy and do what he does.

Follow him. Because in 1 Corinthians 11, Paul says he's all worried about the fact, writing to the Corinthians, who had a hot mess of a church, praise the Lord that they did, because we get a lot of information of what to do and what not to do, because Paul had to address that.

[3 : 19] He says, it's been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. You know, we live in a world of anonymity. You can post anything online.

Nobody knows who you are. Paul's calling out Chloe's house here. They're not even the ones who did anything wrong. He's name dropping like, hey, they told on you. I was like, oh, thanks, Paul. No, but he says, hey, you know this house.

They have a good reputation, and they're the ones telling me this. Now this, I say, that every one of you says, I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollos, I'm of Cephas, and I'm of Christ. Is Christ divided?

Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? There's these divisions. Like, well, I only go to conferences with that speaker. I only listen to that guy. Well, you know what? I follow Jesus.

So Paul's like, no, Christ isn't divided. We're all together in this. Why are we here? Because we're all following together. But I don't think what Paul is saying is saying, be like me. Not at all.

[4 : 16] I think what he's saying is, hey, don't imitate me. Imitate my imitating, right? Don't follow me. Follow my following. So Paul's saying, don't be like me, but imitate how that I'm imitating Christ, right?

Follow, don't follow me, but follow my following. That's what we're all here today to do, to look to one another and say, hey, follow me. That seems kind of like a big thing to say. Kind of seems a little over the top.

Say, hey, brother, follow me as I follow Christ. Whoa, hey, I mean, can you say that to one another? But we should be. No, no, no. Don't imitate me. Follow me.

Follow my following. Hey, are you going to Jesus too? Well, come on. Let's go do this together. Jesus says in Matthew chapter 10, verse 24, he said, What is he talking about here?

Well, the disciple cannot be above his master. So if you were, or the teacher, if you're looking to learn something from someone, you're not going to attain more than what they can give you, right?

[5 : 31] If I'm going to teach someone, I don't know, I can't play guitar very well. So if I was to teach you to play guitar, you're not going to go above what I can teach you because I have nothing else to give you.

That's our high watermark. The person we follow. Who we follow defines who we are and whose we are. He says, if they call the master of the house, Beelzebub, how much more shall they of their household be called that?

If that's who you're attached to, you're not going to be able to claim anything else. That's what he's saying here. So Paul is telling us, hey, to be followers as I am. So I guess we have to ask ourselves, what's the characteristics of a follower?

What does a follower do? You know, they follow. Good job. Good job. What does a follower do? Well, a follower, the first thing, they have to be willing to be led.

If you're following, it means you're being led. That's a very hard thing for us guys. If I said to you guys, let's go follow. Let's go follow Jesus. You'd be like, yes, let's go follow. You know, if someone said, come on, follow me into the gates of hell.

[6 : 32] Follow me into the battle. We'd be like, yes, I'm going to follow. But if someone said to you, hey, are you willing to be led? Are you willing to be led around? Are you willing to be told where to go and what to do? I don't want to be led. I don't know if I really want to be led.

But a follower is willing to be led. A follower, by definition, you don't really follow something you don't know. You're familiar with the leader. You're familiar with it. You don't follow a sports team.

You don't know. There comes a point where there's this familiarity because you've been following. A follower trusts direction to another. That one's hard for us, guys.

I don't mind following. Just leave me where I want you to go. That's fine. We'll follow. But a trust direction to another. GPS says turn.

I turn. Sometimes I listen to my wife and I turn too soon. So whose direction am I trusting? But a trust direction to another. A follower, by definition, is behind.

[7 : 35] You know, with Jesus, we have the amazing blessing that Jesus is ever present with us. We have his presence to lead us, to guide us. But we also have him in relationship where he said, I'll never leave you or forsake you.

That he is with us. And but he's still ahead of us, right? He's still leading. I think sometimes we can kind of get right up where we're like side by side with Jesus.

Because that's how we are in relationship. Man, Jesus is there. He's always there for me. And so, you know, we can get in a place in our lives where it's like, oh, well, I know. I know. That doesn't really honor the Lord, brother.

That thing you're watching, that thing you're doing. Have you thought, I know. But you know what? Me and Jesus, we're good. We're good. Yeah, he's right here. No, he's the one who leads. He's the one who goes ahead.

He's the one who should be deciding. And lastly, a follower, our definition of just characteristics of a follower. A follower is in step. Now, this is the one that's hard for me.

[8 : 33] All right, Jesus, I'm behind you. You're leading. You tell me the direction. I'm willing to be led. But being in step. Because if he's following, you kind of look ahead and you're like, oh, man, I see where he's going.

You know, oh, I want to get there. This pace is so slow. And I find myself like behind pushing, pushing. If we could just move this pace up. But it doesn't change the speed by which I get there.

I don't affect Jesus's pace. All I do is wear myself out. But a follower is in step. Someone who's walking behind the one that's the leader. Right? If you've ever been in the grocery store with your kid and they're pushing the cart when they're little and they're not in step with you.

Bam! You get it into your heels. Paul in Philippians chapter three. We know the section. It's where he says, Yeah, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, my Lord, for whom I've suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung.

If it was Sunday morning, I would have said rubbish or garbage, but it's men. I count them but dung that I may win Christ and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness, which is of God by faith.

[9 : 45] Paul's like, look at all that I have. It's worth going after. But then he says, he goes further down, he says this in verse 12. He says, What do you mean, Paul?

You don't have everything in Christ? You don't have all that? Oh, it's all his. But he's just not laid hold of it all. It's all there for him. But he hasn't grabbed onto all of it. Not as though I'd already attained.

Not as though I already had grabbed onto all of this. Either we're already perfect. I'm not complete yet. I'm not resurrected yet. But I follow after. If that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ.

Yes, Jesus has all of me and he's given me all of himself. But man, I've not laid hold of all of it yet. In my life, I've not laid hold of everything that Jesus has for me. What does Paul say?

Well, I need to be a stronger leader. I need to be a stronger leader of the faith. No, he says I need to be a better follower. If I want more of Jesus, if I want to lay hold of more of what God has put in front of me, because he's given us everything.

[10 : 46] But am I willing to do what it takes to lay hold of it, which is to follow? And I think what Paul is recognizing here is, just as we said in the beginning, not that we're sufficient of ourselves.

Paul realizes there's nothing within himself that in any way defines who he is. He's looking outside of himself for something. He's not saying, I've got enough.

I'm good. But he's realizing, hey, that I was created to be defined by something outside of myself. That's why the world follows. Jesus will liken us to sheep and we're going to look at that eventually.

But we're all looking for someone to follow. The world desperately is. Nobody has defined themselves within themselves. It's very obvious. We all follow someone else's style.

We all follow someone else's likes or dislikes that the world puts in front of us. We go, yeah, that's a good idea. Hey, that new restaurant opened up over there. Have you checked it out? Oh, no, I'll go try it out. Well, we're essentially following when we do that.

[11 : 44] In Genesis, the very beginning, when God created man, the Lord formed man out of the dust of the ground in Genesis 2. And he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

And man became a living soul. Man had life because of something from outside of himself. He didn't have life within himself. He didn't define himself and determine himself. Even his identity.

God named him Adam. Who named Eve? Adam did. Adam named Eve. Guys, your wives, their identity very much is bound up in who you see them as.

But God breathed into him and he became a living soul. And the Lord God took the man and he put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man.

So here God creates man. Man didn't determine his own destiny. Man didn't determine who he was going to be. God gives man a place in Genesis 2 verse 8.

[12 : 43] And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden. And there he put the man whom he formed. God gave him his place. He didn't determine that. He gave him a purpose. As we read there in verse 15, the Lord God took the man, put him in the garden of Eden to dress and keep it.

He gave him a place. He said, hey, here's your purpose there. Dress it and keep it. Then he gave him a priority. We saw in verse 16, the Lord God commanded the man saying, of every tree of the garden, you may freely eat.

He commanded him saying, he said, Adam, this is your command. The priority is my word. The priority is what I say. And lastly, he gave him a partner. He took the rib, Genesis 2:22, which the Lord God had taken from the man.

And he made a woman and brought her unto the man. God gave Adam a place, a purpose, a priority, a partner. Adam didn't determine these things. Adam just was there.

And God said, here they all are. Now, what was Adam's part in this? Well, just like Paul said, he had to go and lay hold of them. You know, when he saw Eve, he wanted to lay hold of her. It's a man's conference. Okay. But, but he had to go and take those things.

[13:53] He had to do them. He had to participate. It was all there for him, but he had to follow what God had placed before him. Adam was being led by the one who gave him origin, life, and identity.

And Adam followed that. But Adam has a perfect life, a perfect wife, an amazing career at this point. You know, he comes home, comes from the office. Honey, it was a great day at the office.

You know, it was good. How'd it go? You have any good conversation? No, I didn't have any good conversations with anyone. No, okay. You know, how was your day? It was good. It was good. It was really good. How many people were there in the world? Two, two people, right?

God didn't create Adam, Eve, and a girlfriend for Eve to talk to. No, it was just the two of them. And that was enough. That was the relationship. God said, Hey, you have everything this one needs, and you have everything that this one needs.

needs. Our wives need us to be everything that God has required of us, because that's the person that God has given them. It's not, well, thankfully she has someone to talk to.

[14:55] Eve didn't have anyone to talk to. She just had Adam. So he has this perfect life, a perfect wife, and an amazing career, and everything's just going great. Well, what goes wrong? Genesis 2:25 says, And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

There was no hindrance. There was no barrier. There was nothing between them. They had nothing to hide. Everything was open. This was an amazing relationship that they had. But what went wrong?

Adam will stop following God, and by stopping following God, he's going to stop leading his wife. Because why? Let's pick up, turn to Genesis chapter 3.

And we'll pick up in verse 1 in Genesis. We'll see what Adam did. We're going to look at three. We've looked at what is a follower, characteristics of a follower.

And we're going to look at someone who followed, and how it defined who they are, how it affected his life, his marriage, his home, his family, and his world.

[15:59] And then we're going to end by looking at what it is to follow well. But Adam here, in Genesis chapter 3, verse 1, it says, Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.

And he said unto the woman, Yea, has God said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And so what is this serpent doing? He's causing Eve to question God's word. No, he's not. That will come later.

Right now, he's causing Eve to question God's character. He's saying God is a restricting God. God wants to restrict you. Because Eve answers correctly and says, Well, no, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden.

But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God said you shall not eat of it. So she's answering correctly up till that point. Satan comes, and he's presenting God. He's presenting God's truth in a light that says, God wants to restrict your life.

God's word will restrict your life. And Eve said, No, no, no, no. We can eat of any tree. We just can't eat of the tree that's in the midst of the garden. God has said, now Eve's the one, to attribute to God something he has not said.

[17 : 07] You shall not eat of it. True. Neither shall you touch it. False. Lest you die. Partly true. And I think when Eve said, You shall not touch it, Satan said, Gotcha.

Because what's she going to do? She's going to reach out and she's going to grab hold of it. Because he's going to tell her, well, we'll keep reading. And the serpent said to the woman, You shall not surely die, for God does know that in the day you eat thereof, your eyes will be opened.

You shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. Look at the word there that appears twice, know. Satan's lie tempted Eve, and Eve's desire to know more than was good for her.

Eve's like, I feel like I, I feel like I know less than half the people in the world. You know? I mean, 50% of the world seems to know more than me. Adam was there when Eve was created.

Adam received the instructions from God. He's passed that on to Eve. Eve's desire was to know more than was good for her. But Satan says to her, Oh, no, no. In the day you eat of it, you will not die.

[18 : 10] Well, Eve has just said, the day that I touch, if I touch the fruit, I'll die. So when he convinces her to reach out and grab a hold of that fruit and she does not die, then she says, Oh, all right. God's word must not be true because I didn't die.

So now when I eat it, of course I'm not going to die. Satan knew he had her when she added to God's word. Guys, where's Adam? Where is he? We're going to find out that the wording, as we get into verse six, makes it sound like it's possible he's standing right there.

I hope not. Like he could have literally been right there. Like, whoa. Yeah. Okay. Listen, guys, if we're not the voice speaking into our wives' lives, other voices will.

If we're not willing to lead her, she'll be led another direction. And that's not saying that, well, Eve, she doesn't know what she's doing, where she's going. Not at all. God's order is for God's protection. It's for God's protection upon our homes, our wives, our lives, and all of humanity.

If we don't listen to our wives, someone else will. Might be a serpent. They'll listen to her. And this is not listening. Mm. Mm. Mm-hmm. Yeah. Mm.

[19 : 16] That's not listening. Only two people in existence right now, Adam and Eve, right? And they were everything that God designed for them to be. And when the woman, verse 6, she saw that the tree was good for food, she's like, okay, well, it also looks kind of tasty.

And a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, boom, and she didn't die like she thought she would. So then she did eat and gave also unto her husband with her.

That wording there, with her, could mean he's literally standing there with her. Guys, there's times you need to speak up. Well, it's gonna be awkward if I did that. It's gonna create friction.

Yeah. And there's times you need to stomp the serpent in your home. And he gave also, and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.

At this point, Eve has now usurped man and God. She now becomes initiator and leader in this situation. But who's the real leader? Who's the one who's really leading?

[20 : 17] Who's the one at this point they're following? It's the serpent, Satan. And Adam, and so we know what happens next, right?

They're ashamed, they realize they're naked, which they then realize, hey, we need a barrier. There's something that becomes between them and their relationship. They go and they sow fig leaves, big, large, itchy leaves, and that's the flesh.

It always, in our own efforts, we try to cover our wrongdoing, we try to cover those things we're ashamed of, and the flesh always creates an itch that we just can't scratch. As long as you're wearing that fig leaf, you're just gonna keep on scratching.

And the Lord comes, the voice of the Lord walking in the cool of the day. How can a voice walk unless, like it tells us in John, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Jesus, the Word made flesh, became flesh, and walked. So Jesus comes, the cool of the garden, the cool of the day. He says, Adam, where are you? And Adam says, I hid because I was afraid because I was naked.

[21 : 21] Man, Adam, who told you that? Adam, up to this point, has done very good, right? Man, tell the Lord, be honest. Man, God, I blew it.

I totally blew it. I was where I shouldn't have been. I was doing what I shouldn't have been. I'm sorry. But then don't go, but. It wasn't really my fault because, right? And that's what Adam does.

But it's the woman you gave me. And she says, but it's because the serpent. And so we know what happens. God says to the serpent, curse it are you. Upon your belly shall you crawl and you shall eat of the dust all the days of your life. And the seed of the woman shall crush your head and you shall bruise its heel, right?

Speaking of Jesus, the Messiah, who would come and take the venom, the sting, out of the serpent and in the process, kill him. He turns to the woman and says, hey woman, your desire is going to be to rule over your husband.

You're going to want to continue to be the initiator and the usurper in this relationship. But you're inferior. No, no, but I have a protective order for you. And if you get outside of that, it's going to create havoc.

[22 : 23] And also, you're going to have painful childbirth. But what does he say? He says, but you shall be saved through that childbearing. What does that mean? Well, it means that this process now bringing life into the world, this painful generational process that's going to continue, continue, is ultimately going to end in life as the Messiah will come through this painful process of the woman to save her and all others.

And then God gets to Adam in verse 17. If you want to jump down to verse 17 in Genesis 3. And he says to Adam, Adam, because you hearkened under the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, saying, you shall not eat of it.

Cursed is the ground for your sake. And sorrow, you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Adam, the fruit of sin is non-negotiable. It results in a curse.

I'm sorry, Adam. This is how it is. There's nothing you can do about this. It's non-negotiable. Cursed is the ground. The fruit of sin will always be a curse. The wording here, though, where he says to hearken.

He says, you've hearkened to the voice of your wife. See, you should never listen to your wife. This is a great conference. I'm glad I came. Hearken means to listen with the intent to obey. God will also eventually say to Abraham, hey, Abraham, hearken to your wife.

[23 : 43] Listen to her voice when she's saying we need to get Ishmael out of here. Hearken is to listen with the intent to obey. Not just to hear, but hey, I heard and I obey.

There's only one voice that is meant to be followed. Only one voice that we are to listen to and hearken to and to obey. The problem was not that Adam listened to something that was familiar, something that was trusted, and something that was loved.

That wasn't the problem. You know, there are many things in our lives that are very familiar, are very trusted. The face of it, we recognize. The form of it, we recognize. We spend a lot of time with it.

It's very familiar to us. But it's also deadly for Adam because of where it was leading. The voice was a familiar voice.

The body was a familiar body. But the words led to death. The problem was not that Adam was familiar, loving, and trusting of Eve.

[24 : 42] That's not the problem. The problem was that he hearkened to the wrong voice. And it wasn't that it was Eve's voice, right? It was the voice that was speaking through Eve. Follow me as I follow Christ.

We don't follow the person. We're following what's behind that. What voice is it that's speaking? For Adam, he's like, hey, I love my wife. Remember, Eve was deceived.

Adam, though, willfully chose. And like I said, man, if he was standing there and watching this whole thing and just letting her go and then said, yeah, I'll take some of that too. Jesus in Matthew 10, he says, think, beginning of verse 34, he says, think not that I am come to send peace on the earth.

I am come not to send peace but a sword. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. And he that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.

And put anyone in there you want. He continues on with son, daughter, whoever, is not worthy of me. And he that takes not his cross and follows after me is not worthy of me.

[25 : 45] He that finds his life shall lose it. And he that loses his life for my sake shall find it. That within our own homes, guys, in our own homes can be a battleground. But what are we fighting for?

Because I need to be the boss. Because I want to do it my way. No, what we're fighting for is to make sure that the voice that is speaking into our home is not one that's going to lead to death. Verse 19, the Lord says, in the sweat of your face shall you eat bread till you return unto the ground.

For out of it you are taken, for dust you are, and to dust you shall return. Romans 5, 12 says, wherefore is by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin and so death passed upon all men for all have sinned.

By one man, by Adam, because his race. He became spiritually separated from God. All of his progeny then became spiritually separated from God. By one man, death passed upon all for all have sinned.

See, who Adam chose to follow it affected his entire family and also affected the entire world. What's a big deal who I'm following?

[26 : 51] It doesn't affect anyone. It's in my own private spare time over here. Just following who I want to. Scrolling how I want to. It's not affecting anyone. You know, it's remarkable to me the amount of people that say to you like, well, that doesn't affect me.

I watch that, but it doesn't affect me. I listen to that. That's the stupidest thing ever. Everything affects us. We drive in the car. We're going down the highway. We don't know this person. They cut us off. And all of a sudden we've assigned motives.

We've cursed them to the 10th generation. We're like, oh, and we're affected and you pull up and it's the pastor's wife. Like, oh, hey. Sure, it was a ministry purpose, right? Everything in life affects us.

Everything's affecting us. Well, it doesn't affect me. Yes, it does. It affects us. Why? Who we follow determines who we are and who we follow is always determined by who we hearken to.

Who we follow is always determined by who we hearken to. Who do we listen to with the intent to obey? That is always the person we will follow. Adam followed the wrong voice.

[27 : 54] I'm sure it came from Eve, but it wasn't her words and it led to death for himself and his family. Adam allowed himself to be led like a sheep to the slaughter.

Who we are defines who we are. I mean, who we follow defines who we are. For Adam, it definitely did. Think, okay, we looked at some characteristics of what it is to follow. We've looked at Adam who followed pretty poorly and we're all here under the effects of that.

So how do we follow well? How do we know if we're following well? How do we know if it's going to end well? Turn over to John chapter 10. In John chapter 10, we get a picture of Jesus.

He gives himself to us, this picture. In 10:27, he says, my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. And what does he do? He says, I give unto them eternal life.

Well, where does following Jesus end? Wow, that ends in life. And they shall never perish. Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. He does something eternal. He does something secure.

[29 : 04] He does something lasting. John 10, 11, he says, I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. You know, we live in a world that says sacrifice is loss.

To sacrifice something is just loss. There's no gain in that. But God sees sacrifice as an opportunity for great gain. Because God always looks at not the cost of the sacrifice. He looks at what was gained by the sacrifice.

The world says, don't ever sacrifice anything for anyone. I was watching recently an account of the people who like go, that climb Mount Everest.

Right? You think, wow, what an adventure. Don't ever climb Mount Everest. Don't do it. They're the most selfish, horrible people. It's a line of people heading to the summit and people die left and right and fall by the wayside, but you can't stop and help them because you might die.

And so they just push past these people. They push them out of the way and they just leave them. It is the most self-centered, dangerous pursuit. Well, I have to gain.

[30 : 08] I got to get to that summit. I'm sorry. You can sacrifice for my gain. The world says that sacrifice is loss where God says, no, it's opportunity for great gain. Jesus, his sacrifice.

He says, I'm the good shepherd. I give my life for the sheep. It was not just to alleviate us from the death of Adam. It wasn't just so that Adam's death no longer would affect us, but it was to lead us through death and into life.

And Isaiah 53 speaks to us, the sheep, and he says, all we like sheep have gone astray, Isaiah says. We've turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed. He was afflicted. Yet he opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb. So he opened not his mouth.

Romans 5, 17, where we had read that death, by one man, death came upon the world. Jesus, just like Adam, was a sheep going to the slaughter, but Jesus was willingly led.

[31 : 09] He went of his own accord. For, by one man's offense, death reigned by one, Adam, much more. They which receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

His sacrifice was to lead us through death and into life. Now, that's our good shepherd. We'll look more at him later at another session. What I want to look at is, who are those sheep that we just read about?

The sheep that hear his voice. Let's pick up in John chapter 10, verse 1. Truly, truly, I say unto you, he that enters by the door into the sheepfold, or enters not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbs up some other way, the same as a thief and a robber.

But he that enters in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. You have two different type of sheepfolds as you go through this section. We're not going to go through the whole thing. You have, Jesus is here saying that he is, he that enters not by the door, but later he's going to say, I am the door of the sheepfold.

What's he talking about? Well, there's one type of sheepfold where you and all of your other shepherd brethren would get together and you'd bring all your sheep together and they'd be collectively in this fold. Well, the next day you get up and you're going to call your sheep and they're going to know your voice and they're going to follow you and they're going to leave the flock of sheep.

[32 : 24] I don't know why we don't call them herds or not birds, but anyway, the flock of sheep, your flock is going to follow you because it's going to know your voice. Then there's another type of sheepfold where it's kind of more remote.

You're off in the wilderness and it's a smaller enclosure. You bring your sheep in there, just your flock, then you lay down across the door as a shepherd to protect them. And Jesus is giving us the picture of both. Right here, he's saying he that enters in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

So the only one who's able to come in because the porter opens to him. I always picture the porter as the Holy Spirit, the one who opens the door to Jesus, right? So he can call his sheep out. Verse 3, to him the porter opens and the sheep hear his voice.

So your collective flock of sheep, the ones that belong to that shepherd hear his voice and he calls his own sheep by name and he leads them out. So the sheep that will follow this shepherd, first, they hear his voice.

They have to hear it. How do we hear his voice? How are you going to hear his voice? Well, you got to be at a place where he's calling to you. He calls his sheep, they hear his voice and he calls his own sheep by name.

[33 : 31] Not only do they hear his voice, it's not just why I heard the shepherd talking, but they hear his call. Many are called, but few are chosen. Not only are they called, they are known.

He calls his own sheep by name. They belong to him. There's a possession here. The sheep who follow. Sheep who follow, they hear his voice, they're called, they're known and kind of obviously they're led and he leads them out.

He says there at the end of verse three. Well, if he's leading sheep that are known, that are called, that have heard his voice, well, where is he leading them? Well, I think the reality is there must be a destination, right?

So if we want to follow this good shepherd, how can I be a sheep that follows? How can I know I'm following well? Well, I'm going to hear his voice. I'm going to be called. I'm going to have relationship because I'm going to know him.

He's going to lead my life. If your life's not being led by Jesus, hit the brakes and maybe figure out what's going on. If Jesus is your shepherd, he's going to lead your life.

[34 : 37] Maybe there's a struggle that you know he's saying go this way and you're always going that way. But if there's just an absence of his voice, of relationship, and you're just sitting there, take stock.

Maybe you're listening to the wrong voice. But they have a destination. What is that destination? Right? Psalm 23, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside the still water. He restores my soul. Then I can't remember the next part. Something about for righteousness sake. Leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yes. There's a destination that he has for us. Nobody follows by accident. We follow who we hearken to and we follow what we know. Verse 4, And when he puts forth his own sheep, he goes before them and the sheep follow him for they know his voice.

So if you're one of those sheep that's heard his voice are called, are known, are being led to a destination. You're one of those sheep. Here's the process. He puts forth his sheep. And if he's putting them forth, he's putting them forth with a purpose.

[35 : 43] Now this is a scary moment in the life of a sheep. The idea is he's standing there and he's calling them and they're kind of coming out. Come on, Joe. Come on, Bob. Come on, you. And all the sheep are coming out.

There's a moment there where as a sheep we have to wait to be led. Where we're standing there, we're out of the fold and the big wide world is ahead of us. And what we don't do is go, well, let's go! And we just take off. And we look for the biggest, fattest, strongest sheep or the coolest one or the one that's got the most awesome fleece and say, we'll follow him.

Let's go after that sheep. There's a moment where you have to wait. Sheep who follow, they're put forth with a purpose. God has a purpose for each of us. There's a purpose for why he has us follow. There's a purpose he's called us forth now at such a time as this.

And part of that purpose is to look at one another and all those around us and say, hey, follow me. Be an imitator of the way that I'm imitating Christ. Well, you have to wait to be led.

And there's that moment. God calls you out. Now what? It can feel like an interminable moment as the shepherd comes around in front and says, all right, we're going to go this way. That way, Lord?

[36 : 45] I thought we were going that way. The sheep who follow, they're put forth with purpose. He goes before them and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They're familiar with the word of a shepherd.

Are you familiar with the shepherd's word? Verse five, sheep who follow, they know who not to follow.

They know when they're not supposed to follow. I'm not following that one because I know where it's going to lead. In verse eight, if we kept going, it would say, all that ever came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.

It wasn't that they were deaf to them. It's just they didn't hearken to them. He said, oh, no, no, no, no. That's not my shepherd. They know who not to follow. Not only do they know who not to follow, they know how to avoid danger.

Not only will they not follow him, man, they will flee from him. Right? You know, I don't really follow that voice, but I kind of like to just listen to it. You know, that's not really me. That's not really my thing, but you know, it doesn't hurt just to listen to it.

[37 : 54] Man, there's a time to flee. There's a time when Adam should have grabbed Eve and said, we are getting out of here. Right? Guys, you need to know what's going on in your homes. You need to know, why was Eve by the tree?

There's all the trees in the garden. I don't think Satan came to her on the edge of the garden and said, hey, come with me. Let me show you this tree over here. I think she's hanging around it, you know, kind of like doing her chores and looking over, look at that tree.

It's still there. Beautiful tree. Wonder why I can't touch that tree. How close can I get before I touch it and die? Right? We need to know how to avoid danger. We need to know how to grab our families, our kids, our friends, our brothers, and say, come on, we're going to get out of here.

This is not a good place for us right now. They will flee from him. John 10.10, the thief comes not but for to steal, to kill, and to destroy. To steal your peace, to kill your joy, and destroy your hope.

Sheep who follow, they know how to, they know who not to follow, they know how to avoid danger, and they pay no attention to unfamiliar words. A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of the stranger.

[38 : 59] They'll pay no attention to unfamiliar words, because they already have the familiar word to pay attention to. What voice do we want to listen to? Well, the second half of John 10.10, I am come that they might have life, that they might have it more abundantly.

Jesus, when he asked the disciples, he said, will you go away also? Peter turns to him and said, Lord, whom shall we go? You have the words of life. That's the voice I want to listen to. That's the one I want to follow.

How do we follow this good shepherd? How do we know if we're following well? How do I know if I'm one of those sheep? I think to be led by the good shepherd, there's relationship.

There has to be relationship. He knows us. He knows his sheep. Do we know him? There's recognition. It's not, this is not the most abnormal thing ever to be like, how do you even use this thing?

You put it under your pillow, man, there's recognition. There's surrender. To be led, to be a man who's led, to go out in the world and say, I'm a led man.

[40 : 05] I'm a follower. You're crazy. Yep. No, I'm just surrendered. I'm just surrendered to the one who's leading. I'm surrendered to this shepherd who gives me eternal life.

There's exclusivity, right? I'm not going to listen to other voices. I'm not going to pay attention to other voices. I'm not going to let them in. I'm exclusively about this one thing. You know, Paul, when he said, be you followers of me as I am of Christ.

You know, you can do that all over the place. You know, that means if I'm exclusive, okay, I got to get rid of the sports and the TV and the fishing and the hobbies. Not at all. Man, be a follower of Jesus.

Be a follower of him. Follow him as you partake of those things, right? Be a fisherman as you follow Christ.

Be someone who's a sports nut as you follow Christ. That's the part that's important. Be who follows of me as I follow Christ. You can do all those things. That's the exclusivity.

[41 : 07] And then there's movement, right? As a sheep, they're not just sitting there. Jesus says, hey, he's putting them forth. He's leading them for a purpose. There's movement. In other words, there's a walk. There's got to be a walk. Sheep who don't walk, they're dead.

That's a dead sheep. Jesus' sheep are always walking. John 6, 63, it is the spirit that quickens, the flesh, it profits nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.

Man, how are we going to follow? How are we going to have relationship and recognition and surrender and exclusivity and how's there going to be a movement and walk? I've got a good idea how to do that. I've got a good idea. You know, in this, I can say, follow me as I follow Christ.

imitate this, this part of our lives. Man, are you in the word? Well, not as much as I should be. Who cares? Be in it. Oswald Chambers would say, ransack this old book from cover to cover in the most practical way you know how.

By using a concordance, by rewriting the Psalms, or by any other immediate practical method. I don't care. Just get in it. I'm not much of a reader. Listen to it. Who cares? You know, I've had so many people, especially since, you know, coming here and pastoring a church, they have so many interesting ideas other than what the Bible says.

[42 : 23] And one of the things that I hear quite a bit is, well, we have enough lecturing. We have enough Bible academics. When did this ever become a lecture? This is spiritual. We just read the words that I speak unto you.

They are life. This isn't academic. This is not head knowledge. If it is, you don't understand preaching and teaching. You have no idea what this is for. Read it. I don't retain anything. I don't care.

Read it. I'm not a good reader. Read it one word at a time. Just read it. Be in it. Moses, at the end of his life, will stand before Israel and he will say to them, set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which you shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law, for it is not a vain thing for you because it is your life.

This is our life. This is not an empty thing. This is not something to be set aside. This is our very life. Who we follow determines who we are.

A follower is willing to be led, is familiar with the leader, trusts direction to another. He's behind and he's in step. Truly, truly, I say unto you, John 5, 24, he that hears my words and believes on him that sent me, he has everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life.

[43 : 40] And every single one of us here who have heard his words and believe them, we own that. Now maybe you have not grasped all of that. I haven't either. Like Paul, what am I going to do? I'm going to follow after. And the best thing I can do, the best way I know to do that is look at all the other sheep that are following Jesus and be like, you know, I've just been following him without looking around.

I thought I was alone. But if we all get together in the flock and you look and you're like, which way are you going? Hey, it's not so bad, is it? Yeah, let's keep going this way. But we continue to follow together. Follow me as I follow Christ.

Be an imitator, not of me, but be an imitator of my imitating. If you guys want to come up, you can. And that's my heart. That's what I hope we can do moving forward as a body.

Yes, our individual bodies, but also collectively as the local body, the Calvary chapels. You know, again, there are different denominations, there's different congregations, it doesn't matter, right?

But there is a uniqueness of knowing the sheep that you're among, loving the sheep you're among, being willing to grab a hold of the fleece of the sheep next to you and say, let's go this way.

[44 : 52] But you're not going to do that unless you know the shepherd, okay? You can't grab a bunch of sheep and say, let's try this. The world does that all the time. The church today does that all the time.

I got a lot of sheep. So, let's try this pasture. Let's try this direction. Better to be a lone sheep following Jesus, following the shepherd. Make sure you know who you're following.

And the only way I know to do that is to know who he is through his word. Don't imitate the follower. Man, imitate their following. So today, let's do that, right?

Spend time together. Talk with one another. I pray that God moves you to a place where you're comfortable with one another where you can say, hey, I don't want to know how well you're doing. But are you following Jesus?

I am. Can I imitate your following? You can. Here's one thing I'm doing that I really am so, so blessed by what God's doing in my life. I read my Bible like once a week, one verse. I am so bad at that.

[45 : 51] But can I tell you how God's been speaking in my life over here? I'm trying in that area. Don't imitate me right there. You probably should read more than once a week. I'm not like confessing anything here, guys. I do read a couple more times than that. But maybe there's an area like, you know what, but I love hanging out with God's people.

And this is how I found it's so encouraging for me or a way to encourage them. Imitate that with me. Let's imitate that. Father, thank you so much. Oh, thank you for sending your son, the one who goes before us, the one who has gone before us, not only in this life, but Lord has gone before us into the heavenlies.

And by the blood of the everlasting covenant, he's gone within the veil. He's the anchor that anchors our souls there. That is not in question. We are not here to wonder and worry about how good the shepherd is.

We're not concerned with if we've chosen the right one to follow. The thing that is in question today is my following. What voice am I listening to? What am I more familiar with than the words of my shepherd?

What is it that pushes its way into my life? It's so comfortable. I recognize its face. I hear its voice. And I'm familiar with that.

[47 : 00] I just want to, I don't want to push back on that. I like that in my life. What part of my career, my entertainment, my hobbies, my relationships, what voice is saying, follow me louder than the voice of the shepherd?

Lord, the only part that I can affect, just as we saw with Adam, one man changed the course of the whole world.

I can only decide for myself. And I can't lead well unless I first know how to follow. How can I turn and say to anybody behind me, anybody around me, follow me if I'm not first following?

I don't know where I'm going. And Lord, here we are, a group of men, Lord. We're not alone as we do this. We're not condemned. Lord, we're just sheep.

But today, Lord, we're turning our eyes. We're fixing them upon you. I thank you that we've heard your voice, Lord. We've heard your word. And Lord, I look forward to all that you're going to do. And in Jesus' name, Amen.