Kinds Of Followers Of Christ

Intro: The Bible depicts many followers of Christ. In this lesson I want us to notice the different kinds of followers and apply them to today.

I. THE AFAR-OFF
   A. Mat. 26:58 "But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end."
   B. At one time this is the way Peter followed.
      1. He did not want to follow Christ closely.
      2. He did not want to follow Christ at all.
      3. This is the way many are today.
   C. This afar off following led Peter to deny Christ.
      1. Mat. 26:69-75 "Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. 70But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. 71And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. 72And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. 73And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. 74Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. 75And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly."
      2. If Peter had remained close, no doubt he would not have denied Christ.
   D. The safe way to live is to draw near to God.
      1. Jam. 4:7-8 “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.”
      2. So that we can know Him; John 17:3 “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

II. THE BREAD SEEKERS
   A. John 6:26 “Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.”
   B. Their feigned hunger was to secure the bread that perished.
      1. John 6:35 “And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”
      2. Their interest was strictly material, their motive were wholly ulterior.
   C. A lady one said, “Well, I thought when we became members of the church of Christ, they would help us.”
   D. The Christian spirit.
         a. Acts 20:35 “I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”
         b. Eph. 4:28 “Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.”
2. Serving rather than being served.
   a. Mat. 20:26-28 “But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; 27And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: 28Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”
   b. Mat. 23:11-12 “But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.”

III. The Glory Seekers
   A. 3 John 9 “I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.”
   B. Diotrephes belongs to this classification.
      1. He was willing to work in the church if he could have the preeminence.
      2. This is true of many
         a. They have a “big shot” complex.
         b. They are selfish, self-centered and think the whole world revolves around them.
   C. Most of the problems, major and minor, in church work have this as the basis.
      1. The troublemakers feel that they are not getting enough honor and attention.
      2. They have such a high regard for self that it is easy for their greatness to be offended.
      3. Every work must be their idea or they are against it.
   D. They need to learn humility.
      1. Mat. 5:3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
      2. Mat. 18:3-4 “And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. 4Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”
      3. Eph. 5:21 “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”
      4. Phil. 2:3-4 “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

IV. The Critical
   A. John 12:3-8 “Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. 3Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, which should betray him, 4Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? 5This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. 6Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. 7For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.”
   B. Judas criticized Mary’s anointing of Jesus.
      1. It caused a murmuring among the disciples; Mark 14:4-5 “And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? 5For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.”
      2. No matter how unfounded an adverse criticism may be, there are others who will join in and echo it.
      3. One sinner destroyeth much good.
   C. Judas said he was opposed to the anointing because he wanted to give the price of the ointment to the poor.
      1. Judas lied.
         a. Judas did not care for the poor.
b. Judas was a thief; see John 12:6 “This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.”

2. A man’s real reason for criticizing a thing may be very different from what he says.
   a. Chances are he will not state the real reason.
   b. The critic is often guided by impure motives.

V. THE FUSSY
   A. Phil. 4:2 “I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.”
   B. The relationship between Euodias and Syntyche was so bad it called for public mention.
   C. Two people cannot walk with the third person without all three walking together. So when two people are not walking together, then at least one of them is not walking with Christ.
   D. War and Peace.
      1. War, whether carnal or spiritual is costly; Gal. 5:15 “But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.”
      2. Peace in the church is a necessity, not a luxury.
         a. Mat. 5:9 “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.”
         b. Rom. 14:19 “Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.”
         c. Rom. 12:18 “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”

VI. THE FEARFUL
   A. Mark 4:36-41 “And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. 37 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. 38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? 39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”
   B. Fear is the product of little faith; see Mat. 8:26 “And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.”
   C. Where there is strong faith there is no fear.
      1. No fear for the necessities of life; Mat. 6:25-33
      2. No fear of man; Heb. 13:6 “So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”
      3. No fear of persecution; Mat. 10:28 “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”
      4. No fear of death; Psa. 23:4 “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”

VII. THE SACRIFICIAL
   A. 2 Cor. 8:1-5 “Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; 2How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. 3For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; 4Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. 5And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.”
B. Here is an example, the churches of Macedonia, of people giving more than they were able.
1. The key is, “they first gave their own selves to the Lord.”
2. This is very unusual.

C. The Christian life is a life of sacrifice.
1. Rom. 12:1-2 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, \textit{which is} your reasonable service. \textit{And be} not conformed to this world: \textit{but be} ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, \textit{that ye} may prove what \textit{is} that good, and acceptable, and perfect, \textit{will of God}.”
2. Heb. 13:15-16 “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. \textit{But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased}.”
3. 1 Pet. 2:5 “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

VIII. THE FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

A. 2 Tim. 4:6-8 “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. \textit{I have} fought a good fight, \textit{I have} finished my course, \textit{I have kept the faith}: \textit{Henceforth there} is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, \textit{which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing}.”

B. Paul is an example.
1. He entered the fight to triumph.
   a. 1 Tim. 1:18 “This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;”
   b. Eph. 6:10-18 “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. \textit{Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. \textit{For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. \textit{Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. \textit{Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; \textit{And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; \textit{Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. \textit{And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: \textit{Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;}}}}}}
2. He entered the race to win.
   a. 1 Cor. 9:24-26 “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. \textit{And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. \textit{I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:}}”
   b. Heb. 12:1-2 “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, \textit{Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God}.”
3. He embraced the faith to keep it; 1 Tim. 6:12 “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”
C. **Perseverance is essential to eternal salvation.**

1. Mat. 10:22 “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.”

2. Rev. 2:10 “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

Conclusion: What type of follower are you?