Followers of faith

2Timothy 3:10—*But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience*, {fully...: or, been a diligent follower of}

Ephesians 5:1—*Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;*

Matthew13:11—*He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.* 15*—For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.*

Mark 4:33—*And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it.* 34—*But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.*

Luke 8:10—*And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.*

John 16:12—*I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now*.

“***He expounded all things to his disciples***” for them to know, follow and be capable of instructing others. Outside hearer’s instead of close fellowship with true disciples of Christ, have a superficial knowledge of Christ.

Hebrews 5:11—*Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.* 12*—For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.* 13*—For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.* 14*—But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

6:9—*But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.* 10*—For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.* 11*—And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:* 12—*That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

15—*And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.*

In fellowship with saints, **sin** is dealt with, **Christ** is the answer, the Holy Ghost is the teacher, everything is made plain,-Ps 25:12,14 “the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him”

Isaiah 6: 8—*Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.* 9*—And he said,* ***Go, and tell*** *this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.*

Go tell them the truth; no matter if they respond or not, that they may be told.

1. Isaiah became the Man God wanted him to be.
   1. A Man of Faith
      1. Like an Enoch\*\*\*\*\* \\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\Gen. 5:24
         1. Noah built the Ark and endured the Judgment Gen.6-8
      2. Like an Abraham\*\*\*\*\* Gen. 18:23-33
         1. Isaac sowed in famine time and reaped 100-fold; Gen.26:1,12
      3. Like a Moses\*\*\*\*\* Ex. 3:10
      4. Like a Joshua\*\*\*\*\* Joshua 1:1-15
      5. Like a David\*\*\*\*\* (believed God to be in Israel) I Sam. 17:40-58
         1. David was sent by his father into the battle I Sam.17:17,29
         2. David was not afraid I Sam. 17:11,32
      6. Like a Paul\*\*\*\*\*
         1. A Battle Strong leader of Warriors-Soldiers II Tim. 3:10; 4:7-8
         2. A Wise Master Builder I Cor.3:1-10
      7. Like a Peter\*\*\*\*\* Acts 2:14-41
      8. Like Jesus\*\*\*\*\* The LORD JESUS CHRIST the Powerful **Saviour**/Servant Mat. 20:28; Mark 10:45; Acts 26:16

Isaiah 30:8—***Now go****,* ***write it*** *before them in a table, and* ***note it*** *in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever:* Isaiah 30:15*— For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.*

1. Depend only on the Lord
   1. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Saviour “shall ye be saved”
      1. Return to the Saviour as Lord “In returning”
         1. From doing it yourself without the help of the Lord
         2. From struggling and striving without Faith
      2. Rest in the Lord “In rest”
   2. The Lord is our only strength “shall be your strength”
      1. His quietness is ours “in quietness”
      2. His confidence is ours “in confidence”
2. Independence is only with the Lord “ye would not”

Isaiah 30:15*— For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.*

1. Depend only on the Lord
   1. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Saviour “shall ye be saved”
      1. Return to the Saviour as Lord “In returning”
         1. From doing it yourself without the help of the Lord
         2. From struggling and striving without Faith
         3. In returning-Return to the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel.
      2. Rest in the Lord “In rest”
         1. Rest in an entire submission of your soul to God
         2. Your flesh won’t rest, Rest is for your mind and Soul through Faith
   2. The Lord is our only strength and ability “shall be your strength”
      1. His quietness is ours “in quietness”
         1. Able to quiet your mind with peace and stay still Is.26:3
         2. Able to go forth and make peace James 3:17-18
      2. His confidence is ours “in confidence”
         1. Be confident what He has begun He will finish Phil.1:6
         2. Be confident what you keep He will reward Heb.10:32
2. Independence is only with the Lord “ye would not”
   1. The Lord Gods gracious directions are given and when followed they always work to perfection---
      1. Perfect Peace Isaiah 9:6-7,12; **Isaiah 26:3**; 27:5; 32:17,18; 33:7; 38:17; 39:8; 41:3; 45:7; 48:18,22; 52:7; 53:5; 54:10,13; 55:12; 57:2,19,21; 59:8; 60:17; 66:12
      2. Perfect Heart Isaiah 38:3
      3. Perfect Priests, Teachers and Prophets Isaiah 42:19
   2. God gave them, to know how to secure themselves and make themselves safe.
   3. God gave them to know how to compose themselves repent and return to the Lord and make themselves go straightforward.
   4. God gave them the knowledge to not take their own way.

Isaiah 40:21 Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?

Isaiah 26:16 LORD, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them. {prayer: Heb. secret speech}

whispered prayer," Margin, "a secret sighing" to God for help

Hosea 5:15 I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.

The Foolishness of Preaching

1Cor. 1:21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

1. **Preaching the Gospel is a Joy when you’re wisely winning souls.**

Pr 11:30—*The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.*

* 1. “Save them that believe”
     1. Salvation is always a gift through Faith.

Eph 2:8—*For* ***by grace*** *are ye saved* ***through faith****; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

Romans 4:16—*Therefore* ***it is of faith, that it might be by grace****; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,* Romans 5:2*—By whom also* ***we have access by faith into this grace*** *wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

1Timothy 1:14—*And the* ***grace*** *of our Lord was exceeding abundant* ***with faith*** *and love which is in Christ Jesus.*

* + 1. Salvation is always a Gift of Joy

**John 4:10—***Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest* ***the gift of God****, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.* **14***—But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him* ***a well of water springing up into everlasting life****.*

**Isaiah 12:3**—*Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.* Ps 21:1—*The king shall* ***joy*** *in thy strength, O LORD; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!* Ps 51:12—*Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit*.Ps 132:16—*I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.* Hab 3:18—*Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.*

* + 1. Preaching Salvation is always an awe-inspiring task
       1. “the world by wisdom knew not God”
       2. **God by His Wisdom chose “**the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe”

1. **Preaching the Gospel is our Responsibility not a Job** 
   1. **Proclaim the truth with Authority**

**Isaiah 8:13—***Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.*

* 1. **Preach so that they hear the Word and believe**

**1. Proclaim, to speak out publicly with a loud voice.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Isa. 8.19 | Familiar spirits peep and mutter |
| Deu. 5.22 | The LORD spake with a great voice |
| Mic. 6.9 | The LORD's voice crieth |
| Pro. 1.20 | Wisdom crieth without, uttereth her voice in the streets |
| 1 Ki. 13.2 | He cried against the altar in the word of the LORD |
| Isa. 13.2 | Exalt the voice unto them |
| Isa. 40.3,6,9 | The voice said, Cry...lift up thy voice |
| Isa. 58.1 | Cry aloud, lift up thy voice like a trumpet |
| Jer. 4.15,16 | A voice declareth...give out their voice |
| Jer. 31.6 | The watchmen shall cry |
| Amos 3.4-8 | The lion roars, God speaks and men prophesy |
| Jon. 1.2, 3.2 | Cry against it...preach unto it |
| John 7.37 | Jesus stood and cried |
| John 12.44 | Jesus cried |
| Acts 2.14 | Peter lifted up his voice |
| Acts 23.6 | Paul cried out in the council |
| Rom. 9.27 | Esaias also crieth concerning Israel |
| Rev. 5.2 | An angel proclaiming with a loud voice |

“Following Jesus”

Text: Matthew 4:19; John 21:18,19

Matthew 4:19—*And he saith unto them,* ***Follow me****, and I will make you fishers of men.*

John 21:18,19–Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. *This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him,* ***Follow me****.*

THOUGHT: Christ has made us a promise, “I will make you fishers of men” and that promise was given with a condition, “If we follow.”

INTRODUCTION

There are no quick fixes in the work of God, but long term processes instead. People can get emotionally stirred and even get caught up in the ‘spirit of the moment’, but successful soul winning requires a season of sowing, followed by the labor of reaping.

We can enter into His promise of **successful soul winning** only as we follow Christ thereby 1)Knowing His Word, 2)Receiving his power, and 3)maintaining our faith and confidence steadfastly in Him. This is true because following Jesus results in becoming like Jesus.

1. PROMISE: Made a Successful Soul Winner.
2. CONDITION: Follow Me.
3. Know His Word
4. Receive His Power
5. Trust His Word
6. He Reveals his Promise through His Word

Christ travelled throughout Galilee (Matt. 4:23) and Palestine not only healing, but **preaching** and **teaching**. Christ’s disciples, in **following** their master, were enlightened to the truths of the kingdom of Heaven and God’s will. They were given:

1. A Will to Submit To – CHRIST’S WILL
2. A Law to Obey – CHRIST’S LAW
3. A Promise to Have Faith For – CHRIST’S PROMISE
4. He Relays his Promise with Power

Mt 4:23 ¶ And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

Lu 9:1 ¶ Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.

Lu 10:1 ¶ After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

* All the tools a ‘fisher of men’ will need to be successful are obtained from Christ. He not only gives us his will, but he give us His power!
* This power was demonstrated by Christ in his healing all manner of sickeness and diseases.
* This power was delivered to the disciples in Christ’s sending them forth. His commission to them was with both **authority** and **power**.

1. He Relates his Promise with Faith.

In our text, John 21:18,19, Christ gives a startling prophecy to Peter: *When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.*

1. Deny Reliance on Self

* The moral of this prophecy is that Peter was not to rely on his own strength, but was to rely on Christ.

We could loosely restate Christ’s message to Peter as follows, “Peter, You are young and strong now, but later it is not going to be so. You cannot place your confidence in your own strength because, as a matter of fact, it is going to fail you. Follow me, Peter, and I will make you and teach you to be strong when you are weak.”

* Look forward and to the end results of reliance on self: It is fool hearty!

*…when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.*

1. Place Hope in Christ

* We place our hope in a strength that will NEVER lessen when our hope is in Christ and our confidence is in His Word.

1. Maintain Confidence in God’s Word.

* **Faith** in God’s Word is absolutely necessary and the key to successful soul winning.
* **It is not enough just to know His Word, but we must trust in His Word.**
* Keep an eye on His Word. It may seem delayed, but God is working.
* Remain steadfast in the assurance that His word will not return void.

**Isaiah 55:11**—*So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

* We need to have a strong desire to fulfill His Word. God’s will must become our passion and singular goal.

CONCLUSION

He has promised to make those that follow Him effective witnesses. That is, witnesses with a real experience. This experience you will never forget and will win others.

* Gold, Linen, Fine Flour, beautiful, attractive.

1. A Pastor’s first priority is to **Preach the Word** (2 Tim. 4:2).
   1. A Pastor is to shepherd his people by his own example (1 Pet. 5:3).
   2. To shepherd God’s flock you must follow Jesus’ example in serving, rather than being served (Mk. 10:45). Humility must be a distinguishing mark of an under-shepherd of God’s sheep.
   3. Through much Prayer, Preaching becomes the main work of a Pastor.
2. A Pastor-in-training’s first priority is study the Word.
   * 1. A Pastor-in-training should seek every possible opportunity to pray and preach. He should also solicit the criticism and advice of experienced Pastors.
3. The Primary Qualifications for an Elder
   1. They are moral and spiritual (1 Tim. 3:2-7).
   2. (A Pastor is to shepherd his people by his own example - 1 Pet. 5:3). Therefore an Elder pursuing the call of God and the Promises must **diligently** seek after consistent, hard-fought holiness through faith.
4. Since Preaching with demonstration and Power of the Holy Ghost through the Prayer of Faith is the main work of a Pastor, a Pastor-in-training should seek every possible opportunity to Pray and Preach. He should also plead for the criticism and advice of experienced Pastors.
5. **A P**astor should know how to personally instruct, encourage, counsel, comfort, and rebuke his fellow Christians. He should have a track record of personally doing people spiritual good in these ways.
6. The Apostle Paul laid a foundation like a Wise Master Builder (1 Cor. 3:10). In order to build wisely, a Pastor must know **what he’s building**. Therefore a Pastor-in-training must diligently study the Truth (blueprints) for the church which he’s given in his Word.

Romans 15:4—*For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.* 2Timothy 2:15—*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*.

1. A Pastor needs to know how to **humbly** receive and profit from criticism, **gratefully** receive and profit from encouragement, and **wisely** deflect flattery.
2. Young men in training for ministry must be tested in accountability, humility, wisdom, faithfulness and patience.
3. Pastoral ministry requires a superabundance of Patience.
   1. Pastors-in-training should pray for patience.
      1. cultivate patience, and learn from experienced Pastors how to serve the same people day in and day out.
      2. Patience comes with Virtue, knowledge, temperance, Godliness, brotherly kindness and Love.

2Peter 1:5—*And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.*

Romans 5:3*—And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;*

4*—And patience, experience; and experience, hope:*

* 1. There is a cry all over the world for people to show patience.

Mat. 18:26—*The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 29 And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.*

Luke 8:15—*But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.*

* 1. It will take the Lord adding much patience to our faith in the midst of persecution, tribulation and fiery trials for us to meet the need in people’s life.

2Co 6:4 But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

2Co 12:12 Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.

Col 1:11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

1Th 1:3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

2Th 1:4 So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:

2Th 3:5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ. {patient...: or, patience of Christ}

1Ti 6:11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

2Ti 3:10 ¶ But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, {fully...: or, been a diligent follower of}

Tit 2:2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. {sober: or, vigilant}

Heb 6:12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Heb 10:36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

Heb 12:1 ¶ 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,

Jas 1:3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

Jas 1:4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

Jas 5:7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. {Be...: or, Be long patient, or, Suffer with long patience }

Jas 5:10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

Jas 5:11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

2Pe 1:6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

Re 1:9 ¶ I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Re 2:2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

Re 2:3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

Re 2:19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

Re 3:10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.