

Am I Ready to Follow Christ

God never promised us a rose garden but he did promise us that he would be with us always. Our ancestors put trust in this promise. Jesus, the one whom we follow, carried his cross, died a painful death and three days later had risen from the dead. The church conquers all trials because the one we follow has overcome. This is the centrality of our belief.

The first forty years of our congregation Zion had no regular pastor. The people relied on infrequent visitations of pastors yet this did not discourage them from forming a gathering of the German people in the valley. The focus wasn't on what they needed but ...the desire to follow Christ.

In 1827 when the Sunday School of Zion was organized it was to help the members to learn more about what it meant to be and to stimulate... the desire to follow Christ.

When the German language was abandoned in 1834 and worship and record keeping had begun in English, the church could have divided but accepting the change they understood it was not important the language but...the desire to follow Christ

1862 the damages done to our church while a General Hospital following the battles of South Mountain and Antietam could have taken away all hope but the focus was not on the damage... but the desire to follow Christ.

The financial crisis of 1931, could have robbed the church of all optimism for a bright future but the focus wasn't on the crisis ...but the desire to follow Christ.

38 young people entered into ministerial work from Zion; an impressive number for any church, because they learned here at Zion...the desire to follow Christ.

We can believe confidently that our ancestors desired to follow Christ because after 275 years Zion is still in existence. The church saw purpose and in the best way it knew how strived and continues today to meet the God given purpose...follow Christ.

2000 years ago Jesus spoke with authority the words "Follow me." He still speaks to us with the same command. Is this directive important for us today? Have you ever probed the meaning of this phrase? It can transform in how you live your Christian life.

In November of 2014, a troubled person wrote in to Evangelist Billy Graham inquiring about following Christ and thousands of others who read his response were encouraged. The 96 year old explained to the writer:

"First, it means to be committed to Him as our Savior and Lord. This mean we want Him to be the Master of our lives instead of trying to run them ourselves. **Have you turned over the control of your life to Him?** By following Jesus we learn to desire the life that he offers. We accept Him as he claims to be and that He is the source of the wisdom and knowledge that we are seeking.

Following Christ also means we seek to obey Him every day. He knows what is best for us and has told us how he wants us to live in His Word, the Bible. **Is it a part of your life every day and are you allowing its truth to shape your mind and heart?** We experience His presence and hear His voice through practices like prayer, worship and reading the Bible. These practices allow us to be intentionally with our teacher so that we may learn to follow Him.

Finally, following Christ means seeing others through his eyes, Graham concluded. "Christ loved the world so much that he was willing to give his life for our salvation. **Is His Holy Spirit filling you with His love, and are you seeking to touch others for Christ?**

Are these steps ones you are willing to take?



