

## “FOLLOW ME!”

Sermonette by Robert Schmid

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If I would ask you the question: Why are you here today on a Saturday keeping the Sabbath holy, I am sure I would get a variety of answers.

Some of you would say: I keep the Sabbath because it is the fourth commandment. Some would simply say because God said so, and some of our younger people would say: I am here because my parents said so.

I like to share with you why I am here keeping the Sabbath holy, and what lesson I learned in the process of coming to this conclusion.

It was about 20 years ago, my family and I were attending a local, evangelical Community Church, where I became a lay pastor, actively engaged in many of their outreach activities. We attended there for about 7 years, but at the same time I was reading the Plain Truth magazine and had learned about the Sunday vs. Saturday controversy. I studied many books at the time trying to sort out the pros and cons of Sabbath keeping, including the booklets from Herbert W. Armstrong.

I had many conversations with mostly Sunday keepers, who obviously presented the case from their point of view, and after years of struggling, the issue began to take on critical mass, so to speak, and I was desperate to come to a conclusion, one way or the other, on this issue.

Well, late in 1975, after many books, arguments and much study, I became, well frankly I just got tired, sick and tired of the confusion, unable to come to a conclusion, unable to conclusively prove it one way or the other. In my desperation I cried out to God to help me to resolve this issue; and I said to God that I would live with and accept whatever consequences came with Sabbath keeping, if He would just convict me one way or the other.

And so, God in His love and mercy gave me the answer.

I remember it well, back in 1975, when God convicted me that the answer is not to be found in the writings of men but in one book, and one book only, His Word - the Bible. Well, that was a hard pill to swallow, after all, these books gave me power, they made me feel important, because they put the decision in my hands. I was able to decide which is right and which is wrong.

Please understand, especially you young people. I am not saying you shouldn't read any books. I am saying that the writings of man can not give you spiritual understanding, can not give you an understanding of God and His purpose for your life.

And so I took God up on His recommendation and God mercifully pointed me to Matt. 4:19 where he said two simple words to Simon Peter and to Andrew, who like me, were just floundering around, and He said to them, as He does to us today: “*FOLLOW ME!*”

"Follow me," Jesus Christ said. And so began a journey where my guide to know what to do became the Word of God, became Jesus Christ.

What a relieve, not having to make decisions anymore as to what is right or wrong. "*Lean not unto your own understanding*" God said, and so I was able to simply follow God's commandment, listen to Jesus Christ and the example He gave, and the Sabbath question resolved itself immediately. "*Follow me*" Christ said and Christ of course kept every 7th day, Saturday, holy.

This admonition to simply follow God, was already given to Adam, when God (through His Word) said to Adam: "*You may freely eat of every tree in the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat.*"

You see friends, I was eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. I was listening to the arguments and reasoning's of men and scholars, instead of following Jesus Christ.

It was Albert Schweitzer who said: "Example is not the main thing in influencing people - it is the only thing."

Christ, first of all came to be our savior to be sure, but secondly he came to be our example. An example we can follow in ALL things.

But, you know, man in his vanity never gives up. Even after he accepts Christ, man wants to decide for himself *in what* he wants to follow Jesus Christ. Man wants to pick and choose. And so the question is: To what degree do you allow Jesus Christ to be your example? To what degree do you take Him at His Word? Are you like Abraham who said: "*Here I am Lord*" when God (through His Word) told him to sacrifice his son Isaac. Or, are you like Jonah, who went into the opposite direction when God told him to go to Nineveh?

We all question God to one degree or another, don't we!

Now, I have given you a rather obvious example, of how God had to bring me to the point where I said: "Yes Lord, Saturday the seventh day is *your* Sabbath."

Now let me show you an example where it is less obvious, and where we today may still be making judgments, where we may still be questioning God, where we may still eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Please turn to the gospel of John the 13th chapter.

I want to show you where humility, or rather what I call *false* humility, can cause us to be disobedient, can cause us to reject God, because some things that God offers to us, some things that God says to us, are just too good to be true, at least in our judgment.

Chapter 13 in the gospel of John describes Christ's last Passover with His disciples, where He institutes the new Passover. And here he gives us a very important example, that we are to follow when in verse 5, He poured water into a basin, and begun to wash the disciples feet. Now, when He came to Simon Peter, verse 6; Peter said to Him: "*Lord do YOU wash my feet?*"

Now let's stop here for a moment and ask ourselves: Is this a reasonable question, or is Peter way off, questioning God? Well, put yourself in Peter's position. Peter already acknowledged Jesus Christ as *Lord*, and as *God*. Peter witnessed Christ healing the sick, he saw him raise the dead, and forgive sin. Yes, Peter knew that it was God Himself that just knelt down before him to wash his feet. And so Peter, instead of saying: "*Here I am Lord*," makes a judgment and allows false humility to question God and say to Christ: "*You shall never wash my feet*" (verse 8).

Can you imagine? Here is God trying to teach his disciples a lesson by His example, and Peter and possibly you and I are telling God: NO WAY! In our minds we say to Christ, remember, you are God and I am Peter, you are not supposed to wash my feet, I am to wash your feet! Is it unreasonable for Peter to make this judgment? After all he is just showing respect, just showing humility towards God isn't he? Or, is it in fact false humility which can lead to disobedience.

Let's look at Christ's answer to Peter's judgmental attitude, and friends that's precisely what Peter displayed, a judgmental attitude towards God. Christ said in verse 7: "*What I am doing, you do not know now, but afterward you will understand*".

Now here are some tremendous lessons to be learned, two very important points: First of all Christ said, what I do and what I say, you do not *now* have to understand. All you and I have to do is say: "*Here I am Lord*." You want me to go to Nineveh, I go to Nineveh! You want to wash my feet, here are my feet, Lord! You see, it is not necessary for us to understand what Christ is saying, or doing to us *now*, all we have to say is: **Yes Lord!**

But Christ does not leave us hanging there and so he makes another important and comforting point when He tells Peter: "*But afterward you will understand*". It's obvious, God wants our obedience, He wants us to trust Him completely without question, without judgments and He promises that if we do, we will then understand *afterward*.

But Satan has taught man just the opposite. Satan wants to complicate and confuse the issues.

Satan says, question and judge everything.  
Christ says, believe and accept everything.

Satan's teaching is directed at men's vanity.  
Christ's teaching is directed at men's humility.

Ask yourself this question: Would you allow God to kneel before you and wash your feet, without an objection?

God through His Word the Bible makes some incredible promises to you and me. He promises that we can become a part of His Family, the Family of God, to be His sons and daughters. He assures us that we will be the first fruits, the bride of Christ, sharing His glory and power in a loving relationship that is so close, so one, so perfect that we today can not comprehend it. And so Christ simply says: "*Follow me!*" "*Believe me!*" "*You will not understand now, but later you will.*"

Brethren, don't let false humility rob you of the meaning of some of the most profound, some of the most wonderful promises made to you and me in the Word of God.

2nd Peter 1:4 puts it this way: *"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature."*

Satan wants us to be removed from God as far as possible, he constantly puts up barriers between us and God.

God in contrast wants us to be as close to him as is possible. When Christ prayed for you and me in the 17th Chapter of John, he prayed that we would be one with him as he is one with the Father. Brethren, don't let Satan put anything between you and your God. God is closer than you can imagine and he still says the same two simple words: ***"Follow me!"***