

PRAY

Today I want to stand back and look at an overview of Matthews gospel and to ask **what does it mean to be a follower of Jesus today?**

If you like I am going to be asking **what did it mean for the 12 to be followers of Jesus? And what does it mean to be a follower of Jesus today?**

Step 1 = Jesus Called the twelve

And in Matthews gospel this comes in *Matthew 4.18-20 on Page 968*
¹⁸ As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ ‘Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will send you out to fish for people.’ ²⁰ At once they left their nets and followed him.

Following Jesus always starts with Jesus saying to us *COME follow me*
And right from the start
Jesus was clear that part of the purpose of following him
Was so that we could join his team and work with him *to fish for people*

Mark adds a bit more detail
Because when Jesus calls the 12 in **Mark 3** Mark records
¹⁴ He appointed twelve^[a] that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach ¹⁵ and to have authority to drive out demons.

And nothing has changed
we are here today because we are followers of Jesus
we are called to BE with Jesus – so that we become like him
we are called to DO what Jesus would do = to serve our neighbours
we are called to SAY what Jesus would say—to share the stories of Jesus

So Lets **COME** follow Jesus

2 THE TRAINING COURSE

Continuing in Matthews gospel –we come to the **TRAINING COURSE**
Jesus teaches his followers to live the Way of Jesus
in the sermon on the mount - in Matthew 5, 6, 7

Please turn with me to *Matthew 5.19 page 969*
¹⁹ Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practises and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

I am still learning about the sermon on the mount
And I think the word **practices** might be very important
Because this is how the sermon finishes as well

So over two pages on *Page 972 in Matthew 7.24-27*
We have the story of the wise man built his house upon the rock
²⁴ ‘Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

So being a follower of Jesus is about practising
is like practising the piano OR like Training for a sport
Its not something we expect to get 100% correct straight away
But by repeating our scales again and again
Or like going running almost every evening
By practising - Slowly we train ourselves to be more like Jesus

To BE more like Jesus in our character in Love and Joy and Peace
To DO what Jesus would do in our actions in giving, prayer and fasting

So Lets Practice the Way of Jesus
Lets Practice so we become more Christ like

and then the second part of the TRAINING COURSE

Jesus shows his followers to HEAL the sick

And this comes in Matthew 8, 9

And the best way to see this is to look at the headings

And they say

Jesus heals a man with Leprosy

The faith of the centurion

Jesus heals many

And then near the bottom of page 973

Jesus restored two demon possessed men

Jesus forgives and heals a paralysed man

Over the page near the bottom

Jesus raises a dead girl and heals a sick woman

Jesus heals the blind and mute

Jesus clearly healed a lot of people

And at all of these healings his disciples were with him

And they knew from the beginning when he called them

**that he was going to send them out to proclaim the kingdom of God
and to heal the sick**

so guess what happens next.....

guess what happens at the end of the teaching input

or Jesus modeling what he wants them to do....

You are right

1 Jesus Called the 12 to COME follow me

2 TRAINING COURSE – How to live the Way of Jesus

3 Jesus sent the 12 to GO and make disciples

So continuing through Matthews gospel

We come to *Matthew 10.7-8*

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: ...

⁷ As you go, proclaim this message: “The kingdom of heaven has come near.”

*⁸ Heal those who are ill, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy,^[a]
drive out demons.*

So to put it simply

What Jesus had been modelling in the training course

The 12 were now to do the same

They were to heal the sick

And to proclaim the kingdom of God has begun

3 Jesus sent the 12 to GO and make disciples

4 What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus today?

You will be relieved to hear we are going to jump to Matthew 28.18-
So this is after the resurrection and before the ascension
And this is how Matthews gospel finishes

Matthew 28.18 page 1001

*Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth
has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore*

go and make disciples of all nations,

*baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy
Spirit, ²⁰*

and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'

Once again Jesus sent the 12 to GO and make disciples

And this time Jesus says

teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

And what had Jesus taught them

The heal the sick and to proclaim the Kingdom of God has begun

So what does it mean to be a follower of Jesus today?

It means

to BE with Jesus - so that we become more Christ like

to DO what Jesus did – which includes to heal the sick

to SAY what Jesus would say = the Kingdom of God has begun

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And so again today as we do on every 2nd and 4th Sundays

After you have received communion

I want to encourage you to come to receive prayer for yourself

Or for anyone you know who is ill

God is the same yesterday today and for ever

And the same Holy Spirit who lived in Jesus lives in us today

So everything that Jesus did God can still do through us

And Jesus said *He is with us always to the very end of the age*

So if you are poorly or if you know anyone who is poorly

Please come to me over there

Or the other members of the prayer team over there

And we will be pleased to pray for them to be healed

Of course you may go straight back to your seat

But that means you don't know anyone who is ill

Let's pray