

# Reasons to Follow Pt. 1

Pastor James Foley – Sunday, September 4, 2022

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## COMMUNION

- 1) The Wafer Symbolizes the **BODY** of Christ – Broken for Us
- 2) The Juice Symbolizes the **BLOOD** of Christ – Shed for Us All

### 1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (NIV)

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

## SPECIAL GUEST

**FYI** – This morning we are joined by a special guest: Pastor Bill Unger. Pastor Unger pastored this assembly prior to my arrival in 2008. Pastor Bill, would you like to greet the assembly at this time? Thank you for your attendance and your service to the Body of Christ!

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## INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining us! Whether you are here in person or joining via the livestream you are most welcome! Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take notes as you desire. We have much to cover in a short space of time.

## OPENING REMARKS PT. 1

**NOTE 1** – Children are far more perceptive than they lead us to believe. Though they often like to pretend they do not hear us when we talk to them (i.e., much like husbands from what I am told), they do not miss a trick and their minds are always working. It is a little unnerving to have a miniature person watching you 24–7/365!

**NOTE 2** – Their perception is often revealed in the questions they pose. How many of you have or have had children that shock you with the things they ask? Raising a child and navigating their 1,001 questions per day can be quite a task! You think you understand a topic until you have to explain it to a three-year old. Only then is your mastery or deficiency revealed.

**KEY** – This past week our little one asked the following question(s) based upon the recent baptismal service....

**Q1. “Daddy, why did you put people under water?”**

**A.** “Because Daddy is a Pastor and I baptize people.”

**Q2. “Daddy, what is baptism?” [BECAUSE THEY HAD IT COMING!]**

**A.** “Baptism is something people do when they choose to follow Jesus.”

**Q3. “Why do people follow Jesus?”**

**Q4. “Why do YOU follow Jesus, Daddy?”**

**KEY** – I found that I was not able to quickly answer these questions (i.e., at least in a way that our three-year old could readily understand). But can I tell you something? This question has stuck with me in recent days, stirring my heart...

**Q. Why have I chosen to follow Christ?**

## OPENING REMARKS PT. 2

Before we move on in this service and I provide you with several of my responses, I would ask you to contend with the question at hand. Why have you chosen to follow Christ? Why have you committed yourself to Him, to His ways, and to His service? Take a moment to respond within your own heart (i.e., completing the handout which gives you space for 5 responses).

**Q. Why have I chosen to follow Christ?** [May my remarks help to inform and impact your own faith in Him]...

## REASON #1

**#1** – Christ invites me to “walk on the water” with Him.

### Q. What do I mean by this?

**A.** Jesus Christ enables me to transcend earthly circumstance, situation and limitation as I look to Him by faith. I do not have to live continually overrun and overwhelmed by the crushing weight of forces beyond my control, but can rise above them in victory. Is this not what we see in the following account?

#### **Matthew 14:22b–29 (NIV, Emphasis Mine)**

22 . . . Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. 23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, 24 and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

25 Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear. 27 But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” 28 “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.” 29 “Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, **walked on the water** and came toward Jesus.

**NOTE 1** – Much like in the case of Peter, Jesus’ power and presence can elevate me to a place above the influence of the storms of life. Not that storms do not come, per se. They do! Yet the manner in which I navigate them can look quite different (e.g., Peter in this moment v. the moments to come). When my heart remains steadfast on Christ and I am persuaded that I am secure in His love, I find victory in life and living...

#### **Romans 8:35, 37–39**

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? . . . 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

#### **2 Corinthians 4:16–18**

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

**KEY** – You cannot keep such a person down! Rather, adversity becomes a catalyst for growth and maturation...

#### **Romans 5:3b–5a**

3 . . . We . . . glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not put us to shame [**FYI – CONSIDER IN REVERSE**].

**QUOTE** – “Outlook determines outcome. If we see only the problems, we will be defeated; but if we see the possibilities in the problems [i.e., what God can do as we look to Him], we can have victory.” –Warren Wiersbe

## REASON #2

**#2** – Christ is still able to save.

**NOTE 1** – As has been established...

- 1) I Am Called to Be More than a Conqueror in Christ
- 2) I Have Been Invited to Walk on the Waters with Christ
- 3) I Do Not Have to Live Under the Weight of Circumstance

**NOTE 2** – Yet sometimes I fall short of my calling in Christ. Sometimes I “sink” and become overwhelmed and overrun by the storms life brings. Why? Because my spiritual gaze shifts from Jesus—the author and the perfecter of my faith—to the fury of the wind and the waves of circumstance.

**NOTE 3** – Though nothing can force me from the holy place of His presence and power, I can all-too-easily forfeit my position on top of the waves and slip beneath them. Is this not what happened to Peter in Matthew 14? Let’s consider the following once again...

### **Matthew 14:22b–31 (Emphasis Mine)**

22 . . . Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. 23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, 24 and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

25 Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear. 27 But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” 28 “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.” 29 “Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.

30 **But** when he **saw the wind**, he was **afraid** and, beginning to **sink**, cried out, “**Lord, save me!**”

31 Immediately **Jesus reached out** his hand and **caught** him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”

**NOTE 4** – The world and the enemy of my soul are more than happy to pull me down to a place of fear, discouragement and despair, and I often acquiesce all-too-quickly to their designs. It never ceases to amaze me how quickly I lose sight of Christ in the midst of the storm, and how quickly I sink accordingly!

**KEY 1** – Yet even in that place Christ is able to save me and pull me back to Himself...

**KEY 2** – His hand is still ready to pull me to safety if I will simply take hold and not let go...

**QUOTE** – “There is no pit so deep, that God’s love is not deeper still.” –Corrie Ten Boom

### **Isaiah 59:1**

1 Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save,  
nor his ear too dull to hear.

## REASON #3

**#3** – Christ is not only able, but willing, to save.

**NOTE 1** – It would be one thing to serve a Christ who is able to save, deliver, rescue, provide, heal and restore. It is quite another to follow a Christ who has demonstrated a willingness to undertake on the behalf of those who call upon Him in faith.

**NOTE 2** – I revel in the reality that Jesus does not have to be cajoled, convinced or begged to intervene! Rather, He only has to be asked, sought, and to have His door knocked upon. Hear, afresh and anew, the invitation He has graciously extended to each of us...

### **Matthew 7:7–8**

7 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

**NOTE 3** – Please take note of the following account which wonderfully articulates this principle...

### **Matthew 8:1–4 (Emphasis Mine)**

1 When Jesus came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. 2 A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.”

3 Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. “**I am willing**,” he said. “Be clean!” Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. 4 Then Jesus said to him, “See that you don’t tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

**NOTE 4** – Such willingness is evident on page-after-page of the Gospel record. In fact, if you continue on reading the eighth chapter of Matthew alone (i.e., the chapter we are currently in), you will see the willingness of Christ to save, deliver, rescue, heal, restore, and much more...

- vs. 1–3 – Jesus heals the man with leprosy (already established)
- vs. 5–13 – Jesus heals a centurion’s servant (paralyzed and suffering)
- vs. 14–15 – Jesus heals the mother-in-law of Peter (in bed w/ a fever)
- vs. 16–17 – Jesus heals many infirmed and demon-possessed
- vs. 23–26 – Jesus calms a storm for his fear-ridden disciples
- vs. 28–32 – Jesus casts a multitude of demons out of two men

**Q1. To what degree do we understand the ABILITY of Christ to perform on our behalf? Now...**

**Q2. To what degree do we understand the WILLINGNESS of Christ to perform on our behalf?**

**KEY 1** – Let us understand the nature of God to happily tend to our need(s)...

### **Luke 12:32 (Emphasis Mine)**

32 “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been **pleased** to give you the kingdom.

**KEY 2** – What we could have never earned He has freely given. This is called *grace* and its wonderful!

## SUMMATIONS

**NOTE 1** – Sometimes the simplest questions yield the most profound of answers...

**Q1. “Why do I follow Jesus?”**

**Q2. “Why do you follow Him?”**

**NOTE 2** – Consider carefully how you respond! We will continue with these thoughts next Sunday!

Ultimately, I must close with the following...

**Q3. “Have you decided to follow Jesus?”**

**NOTE 2** – Consider carefully how you respond! There are temporal and eternal implications in your response!

## CONCLUSION

**NOTE 1** – Feel free to give either in person or online at [www.NewLifeBarre.org](http://www.NewLifeBarre.org).

**NOTE 2** – Please join us for our weekly Sunday School (9:15am) or Mid-Week Study (6:30pm).

**NOTE 3** – Small-Group Ministries resume in September (Date of the Men’s Breakfast has moved to 9/17).

### **2 Corinthians 13:14**

14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.