

## Follow Me

Leader's Guide

Leader's Guide

# Follow Me

*Jesus invites us to breakfast and beyond.*

*Jesus conquered death and rose from the dead!  
It's the most joyous news ever announced.  
After his resurrection, he stayed around to  
have breakfast with his most faithful followers.  
Through his encounter with them, we find  
encouragement and challenge.*



Scripture: John 21:1–25

Based On: "No Wonder They Crucified Him," sermon series by Daniel Meyer, [PreachingToday.com](http://PreachingToday.com).



## Follow Me

Leader's Guide

### Part 1 Identify the Issue

**Note to leader:** *At the beginning of the class, provide each person with the Participant's Guide included at the end of this study.*

Imagine the mystery and delight of not just hearing, but seeing the story of Jesus for the first time, almost as an eyewitness.

That's what happened to a tribe in the jungles of East Asia when missionaries showed them the *Jesus* film. Not only had these people never heard of Jesus, they had never seen a motion picture. Then, all at once, on one unforgettable evening, they saw it all—the gospel in their own language, visible and real.

Imagine again how it felt to see this good man Jesus, who healed the sick and was adored by children, held without trial and beaten by jeering soldiers. As they watched this, the people came unglued. They stood up and began to shout at the cruel men on the screen, demanding that this outrage stop.

When nothing happened, they attacked the missionary running the projector. Perhaps he was responsible for this injustice! He was forced to stop the film and explain that the story wasn't over yet, that there was more. So they settled back onto the ground, holding their emotions in tenuous check.

Then came the crucifixion. Again, the people could not hold back. They began to weep and wail with such loud grief that once again the film had to be stopped. The missionary again tried to calm them, explaining that the story still wasn't over, that there was more. So they composed themselves and sat down to see what happened next.

Then came the resurrection. Pandemonium broke out this time, but for a different reason. The gathering had spontaneously erupted into a party. The noise now was of jubilation, and it was deafening. The people were dancing and slapping each other on the back. Christ is risen, indeed!

Again the missionary had to shut off the projector. But this time he didn't tell them to calm down and wait for what was next. All that was supposed to happen—in the story and in their lives—was happening. (Ben Patterson, "Resurrection and Pandemonium," [LeadershipJournal.net](http://LeadershipJournal.net), 4-13-04)

#### Discussion Questions:

[Q] Has the Resurrection story become boring and routine to you? Why or why not?

[Q] How did the disciples change as a result of the Resurrection?



## Follow Me

Leader's Guide

**[Q]** After the Resurrection, Christ appeared to many of his disciples. Tell us about any of those experiences you know of.

**[Q]** What difference has the Resurrection made in your life?

## Part 2 Discover the Eternal Principles

### Teaching Point One: Jesus invites us to breakfast.

Read John 21:1–14.

Jesus said, “Come and have breakfast” (v. 12). He had conquered death and risen from the grave. He was planning to build a kingdom. But Jesus called the people through whom he’d alter history in the centuries ahead to come to breakfast.

In many ways, it was nothing new for Jesus. Before his death and resurrection, he’d often described the kingdom of God as a banquet table. He’d laid out a meal for at least 5,000 people on one occasion. He annoyed the pinch-faced Pharisees with his penchant for partying it up with a questionable cast of characters. On the night before his death, he’d gathered his disciples around him and thrown one final feast—telling them that they should keep on getting together to eat and drink and share like this, and that when they did so, they should remember him, because he would be there in their midst.

There are several important messages in this for us. One of them is simply that God enjoys seeing people fed. God likes to feed people physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually, and spiritually—and he forms the Christian community for that purpose.

At the start, the Christian church was all about that. Read Acts 2:42–47 for a description of the original church.

**[Q]** Name the things in Acts 2:42–47 that the early believers practiced.

**[Q]** How often did they get together (v. 46)?

**[Q]** What does their behavior show about how they felt about Christ and each other?

**[Q]** What was the result of their behavior (v. 47)?



## Follow Me

Leader's Guide

**[Q]** Which of the following do you enjoy most? Which do you find difficult?

- Teaching (the Word of God, godly teachers)
- Fellowship with other believers
- Breaking of bread
- Prayer
- Selling possessions to meet needs

### Teaching Point Two: Jesus gets to the core of our souls.

“Come and have breakfast,” Jesus said that morning. And Simon Peter, doubting Thomas, Nathanael, the two sons of Zebedee (James and John), and two others came. The Bible says that they’d been out all night fishing and had caught nothing.

And then those disciples had heard a voice in the darkness speaking to them from the shoreline. It told them to make a change. “Throw your net on the [other] side of the boat, and you will find [what you’re looking for].” For some reason—maybe desperation, maybe inspiration—they obeyed the voice, and bam! The net filled with so many fish that it nearly broke. Amazed by the grace they’d received, hungry for some genuine food after a very long night, those seven men came.

This is how it often is for people who come to Jesus. Some of us become aware that a mysterious voice has been guiding us on life’s seas—that it has led us to blessing—and now we simply want to get closer to the Source. Others of us come to the breakfast after a long night on our own. We’re not really sure who or what we’ll find, but we know we’re plenty hungry, and whatever’s cooking on this shoreline smells good. Still others of us are like the nameless people in the story. We’re just along for the ride, but that’s okay. At least now we’re here by the fire. We’re in position for what comes next, when suddenly we see that Jesus won’t just do brunch in the usual way. He will not be content with just leaving us fat and happy. He is determined to make us healthy in soul.

Read John 21:15–25.

“When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of John, do you truly love me more than these?’” If you know the prior story of Peter, then you know this was a devastating question. Pardon the pun, but it was a “fillet of soul.” It laid Peter open like one of those fish on the grill, exposing the truth about him.

## Follow Me

Leader's Guide

Peter's primary problem in life was his pride. It was never enough for Peter to be just one of the pack. He had to be better than other people, more valued and noticed. And so, on the night when Jesus revealed that he would soon be betrayed, Peter had spoken up: These guys might forsake you, Jesus, but I never will! I love you more than these guys do.

And then, to save his own skin, Peter had denied Jesus—not just once, but three times.

**[Q]** What is the question Jesus might ask at breakfast today that would cut to your very soul, exposing the particular emptiness you need to face?

**Leader's Note:** *To get the discussion going, you may want to pose these questions: Are you protecting your family so much that you aren't reaching out to others? Are you keeping the vows you made? Do you want to know God and not just about God? Are you honoring your father and mother? Do you walk your talk? Can you stomach the truth?*

Read Hebrews 4:12.

The Word of God made flesh in Jesus Christ is also living and active. He dares to ask us the penetrating questions that cut to our very soul. No wonder they crucified him. And no wonder he wouldn't stay dead. For you see, God keeps coming back to ask us the questions that need to be answered—not to hurt us, but to heal us—as the rest of this story makes clear.

Three times—once to counterbalance each of the three times Peter denied him earlier—Jesus asked: “Peter, do you truly love me more than these” others do? What he really asked, and Peter answered, however, is only clear in the original Greek text, where we can see the word that each of them uses for “love.” The Greeks had a word for unconditional, unending, never-denying love—*agape*. It's the way God loves us. They also had a word for human affection, for the kind of well-intentioned love that may make bold claims one moment and fail bitterly the next—*fileo*.

The first time Jesus asked, he said: “Do you truly *agape* me, Peter?” The fisherman could have replied in his characteristic prideful way. But a humble honesty had begun to fill the once empty place at the core of Peter's soul. “Yes, Lord, you know that I feel *fileo* for you.” Again Jesus tested him, “Simon, son of John, do you truly *agape* me?” “Yes, Lord, you know that I *fileo* you.”

But then Jesus does something amazing. He changes the formula in a stunning way. The third time, Jesus asks: “Do you have *fileo* for me, Peter?” And breathing, I believe, a sigh of relief at this grace, Peter quietly responds, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I have *fileo* for you.” Then Jesus replies by restoring once more the commission that will build the church to the ends of the earth. Jesus says: Then, Peter, as I have done with you, feed my sheep. Feed my people.

And Peter went on to do just that.



## Follow Me

Leader's Guide

**[Q]** How might you need reassurance from Christ for something you have failed him in?

**Leader's Note:** Spend time encouraging each other of Christ's forgiveness and restoration for all those who truly want it.

### Optional Activity:

**Purpose:** To help us face our failures and receive Christ's forgiveness and restoration.

**Activity:** Provide at least five minutes of silence for the group to reflect on any failures they need to confess. Then encourage them to ask Christ's forgiveness and to ask him to begin to show them how to move ahead in the life and mission he has called them to.

## Part 3 Apply Your Findings

In Israel, a person can see the area where Jesus invited his disciples to breakfast. I stood there some years ago. It is an uncluttered shoreline, probably very much like it looked then. I arrived at the end of the day, near sunset. The waters of the Sea of Galilee were calm. I didn't see a single fish or clue that a campfire had ever been there. *What evidence, I thought, is there here that these events ever transpired, or that Jesus still lives?*

It was about then that I heard a sound from a little stone chapel nestled back in a glade, the sound of people singing in Korean: "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see."

**Action Point:** How do you respond to the question Christ asks you: Are you my disciple? Are you taking the steps needed to grow in my likeness, to fulfill my mission through you?

**If your answer is like Peter's, at least you are being honest. It's okay to admit, "I've got a long way to go, Lord. I could use some help from others." That's a great new beginning. Christ will work with that, and we can help, for he still meets and feeds his imperfect people with such amazing grace.**

**"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst to get right with God and others. For they shall be filled."**

—Study by Daniel Meyer, with JoHannah Reardon

