

# Our Incredible Calling of “Follow Me!”

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In a previous sermon, we explored the fact that you cannot push a chain. It just does not work. The chain just folds in on itself and begins to bunch up into a tangled mess of chaos. Then you spend the next couple of hours trying to untangle the chain links from the huge mess. However, when you pull a chain, the chain follows link by link in a single line and just follows you wherever you are walking. Chains work when they are pulled. Chains do not work and function well when they are pushed.

Just like the example of the chain, our Heavenly Father calls us to His Son Jesus and will lead us toward His Kingdom. But we determine our relationship with our Heavenly Father by the way we follow Him. Our Heavenly Father will not push us against our will. He cannot and will not lead and guide someone against their will. The fact is that for one to lead another, the one being led must be willing to follow. A leader cannot lead without followers who are willing to follow.

Throughout the past 6,000 years of mankind’s history, God Our Father has called individuals into a spiritual relationship with Him. The patriarchs of old were called into a special relationship with our Heavenly Father. The apostles and disciples were called into a special relationship with our Heavenly Father through His Son, Jesus the Anointed One. And we today have been called into a special relationship with our Heavenly Father through His Son.

Let us go to very well-known verse in John 6:44. We know this verse by heart. This verse is a bedrock verse in the understanding of our relationship with our Heavenly Father.

**John 6:44** *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.* (KJV)

So, God Our Father draws us to His Son, Jesus. We are to follow Jesus as our teacher and as our Guide through the examples that He has left for us during His life on earth.

Today, brethren, in my sermon entitled “Our Incredible Calling of ‘Follow Me!’”, I want to discuss the subject of our “calling” and the drawing from our Heavenly Father that we have received and are receiving and the implications of that calling in our lives and in the lives of all our predecessors. I would like to explore this important subject through five points.

The first point concerning the subject of our “Calling” is:

## 1. “Follow Me” is the Calling That We All Received

Brethren, there is an article entitled “Discipleship in Jesus’ Day” found in the website [jewishrootsofchristianity.org](http://jewishrootsofchristianity.org). It is an interesting article about the progression of Jewish boys through school and learning about the Torah.

There were three different schools, much like we have three different schools today: elementary school, middle school, and high school.

The first school was Beit Sefer – *the House of the Book* – which was attended by young boys from ages 6 to 10. A local synagogue Torah teacher would begin teaching the children the Torah. From ages 6 to 10, Jewish boys would memorize the Torah.

The second school was Beit Talmud – *the House of the Talmud* – which was attended by boys from ages 10 to 14. The best of the best students from the first school (Beit Sefer) would continue on into Beit Talmud. These students would memorize the rest of the Hebrew scriptures. By 14 years of age, the best of the best students had the entire Hebrew text memorized.

Students would also, at this age, begin learning the Jewish art of questions and answers. Students learned “*remez*” which means “hint” in Hebrew. The Rabbis would call out a passage of Scripture and the student would have to give the Scripture before and after that passage. They lived in the text!

The third school was Beit Midrash – *the House of Learning*. At the end of his study at Beit Talmud, when a Jewish boy was 14 years old, if he was the best of the best, then he would present himself to a well-known respected, powerful rabbi.

He would say, “Rabbi, I want to become your disciple, your talmudim, your student. Please let me in your Beit Midrash, your house of study.”

And so, the rabbi examined and asked lots of questions, to find out if indeed this child was the best of the best. Because each rabbi wanted to teach his thinking, his philosophy, his interpretation of Scripture.

And if the rabbi believed that the student was the best of the best, that he was able to become a rabbi, he would say, לֵךְ אַחֲרָי – *Lekh Acharai* – “Come after me – follow me.” The boy would leave his family, his family compound, his village. He would leave the local synagogue. He would leave everything and follow that rabbi. He would become a talmudim, a disciple, a student. He would devote his life to becoming exactly like that rabbi. He would follow him everywhere.

לֵךְ אַחֲרָי

## Lekh Akharai Come after me! Follow me!

It would be said to such a student – “May you be covered in the dust of your rabbi.” The disciples would follow their rabbi so closely that they would become covered with the dust of their rabbi. A quote from the Talmud includes the phrase “May you follow him so closely that the dust of his sandals covers you.”

But for most Jewish boys, when the rabbis quizzed them, they did NOT say, “Lekh Acharai – Come, follow me.” But instead, they said, “Ah, my son, you do know Torah and you know Torah well. But you are not able to be my talmudim, my disciple, my student.”

So, the rabbi would say, “Go, home to your village. Make babies. Pray that they become rabbis. Go home and learn the family business - fishing, farming, carpentry, because you won’t be studying to be a rabbi.”

So, brethren, the overwhelming majority of the Jewish men in Judea at the time of Jesus never heard those precious words -- Lekh Acharai – “Come after me – follow me.” That overwhelming majority of the Jewish men included the disciples that Jesus called at the beginning of His ministry.

In Matthew 4 we read about Jesus’ calling of His first disciples. All four of the disciples (Peter, Andrew, James, and John) were fisherman. They had been told long ago that they would never be rabbis and would not continue their studies under a rabbi. All that changed with their encounter with Jesus.

**Matthew 4:18** *And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.*

19) *And he saith unto them, Follow me [לֵךְ אַחֲרָי – Lekh Acharai – Come after me – follow me], and I will make you fishers of men.*

20) *And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.*

21) *And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.*

22) *And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.* (KJV)

The Salkinson-Ginsburg Hebrew New Testament translates “Follow me” in verse 19 as לֶךְ אַחֲרַי – Lekh Acharai – Come after me – follow me, the same precious words that rabbis said to the few chosen students to follow them. This Hebrew phrase is a direct for word translation of the Greek “Δεῦτε ὀπίσω μοι” – Deute hopiso moi – *Come after me*.

Peter and Andrew knew what that phrase meant and what it truly entailed. Just as students of the rabbis did. Peter and Andrew straightway or immediately left their nets and followed their teacher, Jesus. They immediately left everything behind. In verse 22, James and John immediately left the ship and their father and followed Jesus.

In Mark 2 we read about the calling of Levi. Levi was a tax collector, which was an occupation totally despised by the Jews in Judea. So Levi was a despised man in the sight of the Jews.

**Mark 2:13** *And he went forth again by the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.*

14) *And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.* (Luke 5:27) (KJV)

The Greek words for *Follow me* in verse 14 are “Ἀκολουθεῖ μοι” – Akolouthei moi – Strong’s #190 – meaning “to follow me, or to join me as my disciple.” Again, in the Salkinson-Ginsburg Hebrew translation of the New Testament, those Greek words are translated into Hebrew as “לֶךְ אַחֲרַי” – Lekh acharai – *come after me*. And what did Levi do? He immediately rose and followed Jesus. Levi knew exactly what “Lekh acharai” meant.

In John 1 we read about the calling by Jesus of Philip and Nathanael into discipleship.

**John 1:43** *The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me [Lekh acharai – come after me – follow me].*

44) *Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.*

45) *Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*

46) *And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see*

47) *Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.*

48) *Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.*

49) Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

50) Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.

51) And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. (KJV)

Brethren, all the disciples received the calling of “Lekh Acharai”, and we have received that same calling today. But that calling has implications and ramifications, which leads us to the second point.

The second point concerning the subject of our “Calling” is:

## 2. “Lekh Acharai – Come After Me – Follow Me” Means to Give Up Everything

Again, when a student of the rabbi heard these words “Lekh Acharai – Come After Me – Follow Me”, they knew that, in order to follow the rabbi from that point on, they would have to give up everything they had.

In Mark 8 Jesus used this well-known phrase to emphasize the sacrifice that it would take to follow Him and to be His disciple.

**Mark 8:34** *And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me [Lekh acharai – come after me – follow me].*

35) *For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. (KJV)*

The Greek words for *follow me* in verse 19 are “Ακολουθει μοι” – Akolouthei moi – “Come after me”. In the Salkinson-Ginsburg Hebrew translation of the New Testament, those Greek words are translated into Hebrew as “לֵךְ אַחֲרָי” – Lekh acharai – “come after me – follow me”.

The understanding of the knowledge of the implications which come from hearing the phrase “Lekh acharai” – “come after me – follow me” makes many of the scriptures in the Bible come alive in meaning. Look at Luke 9.

**Luke 9:59** *and he said unto another, Follow me [Lekh acharai – come after me – follow me]. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.*

60) *Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.*

61) *And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.*

62) *And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. (KJV)*

Brethren, upon receiving the calling of “Follow me”, we must be willing to immediately give up everything. There is no turning back.

A famous encounter of Jesus with a potential disciple includes the term *Lekh acharai* – “come after me” – “follow me”. Mark 10 includes the interaction of Jesus and the young rich man and Jesus’ calling to Him to be His disciple.

**Mark 10:17** *And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?*

18) *And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.*

19) *Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.*

20) *And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.*

21) *Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me [*Lekh acharai* – come after me – follow me].*

22) *And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.” (Luke 18:22) (KJV)*

Here is an example of a young man who had great wealth, who knew the implications of what “*Lekh acharai*” meant. Again, it meant much more than just following a teacher or leader. He knew that it meant giving up everything that he had in order to follow Jesus. Jesus even plainly told him that he would have to give up his riches. But the young rich man did not accept the calling from Jesus. He was not willing to pay the price of discipleship and the price for accepting the calling from Jesus. He went away very sad. And Jesus was very sad too, because, as we read in verse 21, Jesus loved him. Jesus was sad that the young rich man decided to pass on the invitation to become His disciple.

There is a huge cost in accepting the invitation from our Heavenly Father to follow His Son, Jesus. Jesus discussed this subject with His disciples in Matthew 10.

**Matthew 10:34** *Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.*

35) *For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.*

36) *And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.*

37) *He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.*

38) *And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.*  
39) *He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.* (Luke 9:23) (KJV)

Again, the implications of following Jesus are to deny oneself and to give up everything in order to be His disciple. Many of us today have had to give up families, friends, and loved ones in order to follow our Heavenly Father and Jesus.

The third point concerning the subject of our “Calling” is:

### **3. We must become covered in the dust from the sandals of Jesus**

As we explored earlier, a disciple would follow their rabbi so closely that they would become covered with the dust of their rabbi. A quote from the Talmud includes the phrase

*May you follow him so closely that the dust of his sandals covers you.*

Please turn with me to John 12. Again, Jesus is our Teacher and our Master. As His disciples, we are to follow him so closely that we are to be covered with the dust of His sandals.

Jesus alludes to this fact for us to be His disciples in John 12

**John 12:26** *If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.* (KJV)

Jesus told His disciples that in following Jesus, His disciples would be where He is. That means following Him closely to wherever Jesus was, His disciples would be right there, following His footsteps and being covered with the dust of His sandals.

Brethren, how closely are we following in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ? Are we covered in His dust? Can people see by the way we act, by the way we talk, by the way we treat others, by the way we show compassion to others, and by the way that we show mercy to others that we are covered in the dust from the sandals of Jesus?

In 1 Peter 2. The Apostle Peter tells us that following in the footsteps of Jesus will bring suffering in our lives. This suffering is part of our calling from our Heavenly Father.

**1 Peter 2:21** *For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:*

22) *Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:*

23) *Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:*

24) *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*

25) *For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. (KJV)*

Brethren, are we prepared to suffer for our commitment to worshipping our Heavenly Father and to following our Lord Jesus Christ?

In Isaiah 53 we read the famous prophecy of the coming of Jesus as a human to die for our sins. This portion of scripture contains some very pertinent and important descriptions of the future Anointed One who would come into the world.

**Isaiah 53:1** *Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? 2) For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.*

*3) He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

*4) Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*

*5) But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

*6) All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD [Yehovah] hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. (KJV)*

As a side note, verse 6 shows that Yehovah was God Our Father and not Jesus because our Heavenly Father [Yehovah] laid our iniquities on Jesus. Jesus did not lay our iniquities on Himself.

Brethren, have we ever thought of Jesus, the very Son of the Most High Mighty One, as being a man of sorrows and familiar with grief? If the very Son of our Heavenly Father was,

*“a man of sorrows, intimately familiar with suffering,” (ISV)*

as the International Standard Version translates it, why are we surprised that we have suffering in our lives when we are following closely in Jesus' footsteps?

The Apostle Peter addresses this concept very plainly.

**1 Peter 4:12** *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:*

*13) But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. (KJV)*



So, brethren, when we face fiery trials and tests, when we are suffering wrongly, when we are enduring sickness and disease and discomfort, when we are enduring seemingly endless hardships and pain in our lives, let us not be surprised! We should expect this in our lives as we walk in Jesus' footsteps, because He Himself endured suffering walking those footsteps. And we are to be covered in His dust!

In the New Living Translation, the Apostle Paul addresses imitating Christ and enduring severe suffering that it brings.

**1Thessalonians 1:1** *This letter is from Paul, Silas, and Timothy. We are writing to the church in Thessalonica, to you who belong to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. May God give you grace and peace.*

2) *We always thank God [ὁ Θεός – ho theos – God Our Father] for all of you and pray for you constantly.*

3) *As we pray to our God and Father about you, we think of your faithful work, your loving deeds, and the enduring hope you have because of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

4) *We know, dear brothers and sisters, that God [ὁ Θεός – ho theos – God Our Father] loves you and has chosen you to be his own people.*

5) *For when we brought you the Good News, it was not only with words but also with power, for the Holy Spirit gave you full assurance that what we said was true. And you know of our concern for you from the way we lived when we were with you.*

6) *So you received the message with joy from the Holy Spirit in spite of the severe suffering it brought you. In this way, you imitated both us and the Lord [being covered by the dust of Jesus] [the Lord here is ὁ Κύριος – the Lord – Jesus Christ].*

7) *As a result, you have become an example to all the believers in Greece—throughout both Macedonia and Achaia. (NLT)*

Brethren, a question to ask ourselves is: Are we following in the footsteps of Jesus so closely that we are covered in His dust?

The fourth point concerning the subject of our “Calling” is:

#### **4. This calling of Lekh Acharai was given to the patriarchs of the Old Testament**

The Hebrew verb from which the word “לך – Lekh” or “Come” is conjugated is the Hebrew infinitive “הלך” – halakh – to come, to go, to walk Strong's #1980. This verb “halakh” is found everywhere in the Old Testament. And it is usually found in the introductions of Yehovah to the patriarchs whom Yehovah called to serve Him.



## halakh

# to come, to go, to walk

Enoch, the seventh generation from Adam, was a righteous man. Not much is written about Enoch except that he “walked” with our Heavenly Father.

**Genesis 5:21** *And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah:*

22) *And Enoch walked with God [“הָאֱלֹהִים” – HaElohim – God Our Father] after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:*

23) *And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years:*

24) *And Enoch walked with God [הָאֱלֹהִים – HaElohim – the God – God Our Father]: and he was not; for God took him. (KJV)*

The Hebrew verb for *walk* in verses 21 and 24 is *halakh* – “to come, to go, to walk”. So, Enoch came after or followed Yehovah, God Our Father, during his life and, and Enoch was a righteous servant of our Heavenly Father.

In Genesis we see another faithful servant of Yehovah, Noah. Yehovah called Noah and used him mightily to continue the human lineage after the Flood.

**Genesis 6:8** *But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD [Yehovah].*

9) *These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God [הָאֱלֹהִים – HaElohim – the God – God Our Father]. (KJV)*

Again, the Hebrew verb for *walk* in verse 9 is *halakh* – “to come, to go, to walk”. So, Noah came after, or followed, Yehovah, God Our Father.

Another patriarch that God Our Father called out of the world and with whom He entered into a special relationship with, was Abraham. The very introduction of Yehovah to Abraham started with an invitation and command.

**Genesis 12:1** *Now the LORD [Yehovah] had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: (KJV)*

The Hebrew verb for “Get thee out” in verse 9 is the imperative form of the verb הָלַךְ – *halakh* – “to come, to go, to walk” and is written as “לֵךְ” – *Lekh* – *Come*. So, Yehovah is commanding Abram to come out of his country and to leave everything behind, exactly like our invitation today in which we must leave everything behind.

The relationship between Yehovah and Abram deepens as time goes on. In Genesis 17, Yehovah again invites and commands Abram to walk before Him.

**Genesis 17:1** *And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. (KJV)*

The verb *walk* in this verse is the imperative form of the same verb *halakh* – “to come, to go, or to walk”. This verb form still has the ending “לֵךְ” – *Lekh* – “to come”.

In Exodus 3, Yehovah was calling Moses and inviting him to do a mighty work. This invitation comes very quickly after Yehovah introduces Himself to Moses.

**Exodus 3:10** *Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt. (KJV)*

The word *come* in verse 10 is again the imperative singular form of the verb “halakh” which is “לֵךְ” – *Lekh* meaning “Come!”

This invitation using the imperative verb form “לֵךְ” – *Lekh* meaning “Come!” of the Hebrew infinitive “halakh” is prevalent in the Old Testament. It is an invitation used again and again by our Heavenly Father throughout the Old Testament.

The patriarchs of old were all invited to enter into a special relationship with God our Father and were commanded to accomplish certain tasks in their obedience and service to our Heavenly Father.

The patriarchs and the Israelites were all invited and commanded to follow Yehovah, our Heavenly Father, and have a relationship with Him, just as we are invited today to have a relationship with God Our Father through following His Son, Jesus the Anointed One.

In Deuteronomy 8 our Heavenly Father gave commands and warnings to the Israelites concerning following Him.

**Deuteronomy 8:6** *Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD [Yehovah] thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him. (KJV)*

Again, the word *walk* in verse 6 is the infinitive form of the verb *halakh* meaning “to come, to go, to walk and to follow”. So, our Heavenly Father is telling the Israelites that they are to keep His commandments and to follow in His ways. The Israelites were to follow Yehovah just as the students were to follow their rabbis.

Later in this chapter, Yehovah warned the Israelites not “to follow” after other gods but to stay true to Him.

**Deuteronomy 8:19** *And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. (KJV)*

Again, the word *walk* in verse 19 is a conjugated form of the verb *halakh* meaning “to come, to go, to walk and to follow”. The Old Testament is filled with scores of verses like Deuteronomy 8:19 warning Israel not to “follow” after other gods which would lead to punishment and their ultimate demise.

In 1 Kings 18:20, we read a portion of the famous encounter on Mount Carmel between Elijah and the prophets of Baal.

**1 Kings 18:20** *So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.*

*21) And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.*

*22) Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. (KJV)*

Again, the word *follow* in verse 21 is the plural imperative or command form of the verb “הִלַּךְ” – *halakh* meaning “to come, to go, to walk” and “to follow”.

Brethren, verse 21 is the all-encompassing and important decision that we all face in our lives. It is the decision that all “called out” ones in the past, all the patriarchs of old, all the prophets, all the righteous and faithful men and women of the Bible had to make every day of their lives. It is the decision that all of us today as “called out” ones of our Heavenly Father must make each and every day of our lives. Will we follow our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus, or will we follow some other god in our lives, whether it be wealth, family, material goods, job, an easy life, or anything that we place above our Heavenly Father and our faithful obedience and worship of Him?

The fifth point concerning the subject of our “Calling” is:

## **5. This calling of Lekh Acharai – “Follow me!” is a continuing calling**

The continuing calling and drawing of our Heavenly Father to Him through Jesus Christ is a profound and important concept.

I think in the past, many of us, including myself, have viewed the calling from our Heavenly Father as a one-time event. Many of us picture our Heavenly Father way off in the distance standing in the Kingdom urging us toward Him, guiding us and leading us from there.

I do not believe that that picture is correct. I believe that our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ are right there with us, leading us, urging us onward, helping us, encouraging us to continue to fight the fight, to continue the walk, to continue the journey toward the Kingdom together with us.

Yehovah led the Israelites from the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire.

**Exodus 13:17** *And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt:*

*18) But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt.*

*Continuing in verse 21*

*21) And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:*

*22) He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people. (KJV)*

In Numbers 9, we will read how Yehovah led the Israelites during the 40 years in the wilderness.

**Numbers 9:20** *And so it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the LORD they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the LORD they journeyed.*

*21) And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed.*

*22) Or whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed. (KJV)*

So, brethren, whenever the pillar of cloud or fire moved, the Israelites packed up their belongings and followed it, and whenever the pillar of cloud or fire stopped, the Israelites stopped and camped. That was their life for 40 years.

Our Heavenly Father leads us today in a very similar way. He leads us toward the Kingdom by moving and then waiting to see if we will follow Him. Our Heavenly Father accomplishes this in many ways, through knowledge about Him that He reveals to us, through tests of our character to refine us more and more into His image, through opportunities to serve one another and show mercy to one another.

I firmly believe that God Our Father has revealed and is revealing more and more about Himself. He imparted that knowledge to us. He moved, and He is waiting to see if we move with Him. Or will we let the pillar of cloud move away until it is out of view? I believe that our Heavenly Father moves a little bit, and then sees if we will move with Him, no matter the sacrifice or the trials that come. And then, when we move to Him, He then moves a little further.

This calling, this invitation from our Heavenly Father through Jesus Christ, occurs again and again and again in our lives, bringing us ever closer to Them and to the Kingdom.

This calling was not a one-time invitation to the disciples. We read previously in Matthew 4 about the calling by Jesus of Peter and Andrew with Jesus' command Follow me [*Lekh acharai – come after me – follow me*]. We read of this command to Peter again by Jesus after His resurrection.

**John 21:17** *He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep,*

*18) Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not.*

*19) This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me [*Lekh acharai – come after me – follow me*].*

*20) Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?*

*21) Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?*

*22) Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me [*Lekh acharai – come after me – follow me*]. (KJV)*

We see here in verses 19 and 22 that Jesus repeats the same calling to Peter that He had given to him three and half years earlier when Peter had been fishing with Andrew, but now the calling was for a different purpose.

We saw in Genesis 17:1 that Yehovah repeated the same calling to Abram that He gave to Abram earlier in Genesis 12:1.

Brethren, to *walk* in the way of our Heavenly Father and to be covered in the dust of our Lord Jesus Christ means to continuously and continually respond to that same invitation hour by hour, day by day, deepening our relationship with Them.

Brethren, when our Heavenly Father moves forward in our journey toward the Kingdom, do we follow Him?

Brethren, our calling is a calling to take up our cross and follow Jesus. Our cross is unique to us. Our cross is different from everyone else's cross. We cannot compare our crosses with one another. Our Heavenly Father is working with each of us on a unique basis with unique trials and tests. In John 21, Peter was attempting to compare his cross to bear with John's cross to bear, and Jesus corrected him for doing so.

Brethren, our calling and invitation of *Lekh Acharai – Come after me – Follow me!* is a continual calling and invitation that we must respond to every day of our lives.

In the sermon today, we have explored our calling – our direct invitation by our Heavenly Father to come to Jesus Christ and to follow in His footsteps. We've explored this "Calling" in five points.

**1. "Follow Me" is the Calling that we all received.**

Just like the apostles and disciples of Jesus, we have all received the calling from our Heavenly Father and an invitation from Jesus to follow Him in His footsteps.

**2. "Lekh Acharai – Come After Me – Follow Me" means to give up everything**

Just like the students of the rabbis in Jesus' time, in order to follow Christ means that we must give up everything. Nothing can be of greater importance in our lives than following our Heavenly Father, His Son Jesus, and the truth that has been revealed to us.

**3. We must become covered in the dust from the sandals of Jesus.**

Brethren, are we following Jesus and the example that He left for us so closely that we are covered in the dust from His sandals? Are we that close to Jesus? Can people tell by the way we act, by the way we talk, and by the way we treat others that we are covered by the dust of Jesus?

**4. This calling of Lekh Acharai was given to the patriarchs of the Old Testament.**

The calling given by our Heavenly Father to the patriarchs of the Old Testament, our predecessors in the faith, was a calling like our own to follow our Heavenly Father in obedience and in faith.

**5. This calling of Lekh Acharai – “Follow me!” is a continuing calling.**

Our calling is a precious gift given to us by our Heavenly Father, who chose to draw us to Jesus. Yet, that calling is not a one-time event. The Father continually is calling us and leading us toward the Kingdom. Our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ are both saying “Come after Me – Follow Me” each and every day. Will we respond? Do we respond? As the Father leads us toward His Kingdom, do we follow Him? Are we like the Israelites who moved when the pillar of cloud moved? Or are we letting that pillar move further and further away from us?

Again, our salvation is not collective. Our salvation is personal and singular to each and every one of us. Our Heavenly Father has tailor-made each of our paths toward His Kingdom, and He will be there with us the entirety of our journey and He continually calls us to follow His Son.

Brethren, let’s strive as never before to be covered in the dust from the sandals of Jesus by following closely in His footsteps and exhibiting and living the characteristics of Jesus each and every day of our lives. In doing so, our lights will shine brightly in an ever dimming and darkening world around us. Let’s always be ready to give up anything and everything in order to continue to follow our Heavenly Father and to walk with Him. Let’s strive to respond every day to our Heavenly Father’s invitation to walk with Him and with Jesus and to obey Him and to learn from Him.

So, brethren, I again leave you with a question – What will you do and how will you respond when you hear the command and calling “Lekh Acharai – Follow Me”?