

Richmond Hill Baptist Church
September 11, 2011, Follow Me (Fall Kick Off Sunday)

Prelude & Prayer Time

Call to Worship: *Blessed Be Your Name*

Welcome: Welcome to Richmond Hill. It is good to see you. Thanks for joining us on our Fall Kick Off Sunday. If you are a guest please fill out a Connect Card. Let's greet one another.

Slide Show: Summer Highlights – Thanks everyone!

Sing: *How Can I Keep From Singing, You Are Holy, I Exalt Thee*

Children's Corner: Back 2 School Party, Keenan Found

Announcements:

1. Sunday Morning Connect Classes will resume next Sunday.
2. *Not a Fan* church wide series will begin next Sunday, September 18.
3. Kids' Back 2 School Party next Sunday, North Glenmore Park
4. Stay for Lunch
5. Opportunities for the Ladies (Linda, Marisa, Cheryl, Tanis, & Flory)
6. Opportunities for the Guys: (Brian & Shane)
Breakfast, September 21, Breakfast
21 Laws of Leadership by John Maxwell, September 28, Canterra Tower
Men's Retreat: October 14-15, Rafter Six Ranch, Dan Gaynor
Go to the tables following the service for more information.

Offering & Offertory: *From the Inside Out*

Sermon: **Follow Me**

In the month of May, 1988, I went backpacking by myself. I had just returned to Colorado from attending my first year of university in Abilene, Texas. After a year of school in west Texas I was ready for some time in the Mountains. Generally I would go with a partner but my friend Lee could not come this time. My parents let me go to a rugged region in the Sangre de Cristos that we knew well called Comanche Lake.

My parents made sure that I had all the necessary equipment to survive many years in the woods on my own. In fact this was the pack that I used at the time. I assure you that it was plenty heavy. With my gear in head I headed out into the wilderness for some solitude and time with God.

Because it was May there was still a lot of snow especially on the north slopes. The snow drifts were deep and the warmer temperatures made the sun exposed drifts difficult to traverse especially with the weight of my pack. You gotta love that feeling when you are walking on the hard crusty snow and then drop through the soft slushy snow that is waist to chest deep.

Did I fail to mention that the trail was lost in the cover of snow? That did not stop me. I knew right where to go. It took me all day to get into the alpine region called Comanche Lake. I spent the next day praying, reading my Bible, napping (not necessarily in that order), and enjoying God's creation.

The following day I heard some voices and realized two guys were coming up my trail following my footsteps. Uncertain of their location, struggling to breathe and sick from the altitude they asked me if I was a forest ranger. I said no and explained to them that I was back from college for a little get a way in the mountains. We introduced ourselves and I discovered that they were college students from Baylor University in and Texas A&M. I also discovered that they were committed followers of Christ.

I helped them set up their tent and we enjoyed supper and the evening fire. Overnight it snowed 25 centimeters, nearly a foot. When we got up the next morning they were overwhelmed with the new snow and worried because our trail off the mountain was covered up in snow. I will never forget when they asked me, "Do you mind leading us off the mountain?" We will buy you breakfast in town. We packed up our gear and I said, "Follow me!"

Follow me. In the [Luke 9:23](#) we read these words:

Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

This is the most important invitation that you will ever consider: the invitation to follow Christ.

In light of this invitation I have four questions for you.

Four Questions

1. Where am I?

You physical location at this moment is 7251 Sierra Morena Blvd.

Where are you spiritually?

Do you have a spiritual point of reference? I like maps: the show me where I am where I need to go. The Bible is our map and Jesus is our guide into eternity.

Have you taken God up on his offer to follow Him?
Are you following closely? Are you lagging behind? Are you off track?
Are you on another spiritual path? Are you spiritually lost?
Are you exploring God's invitation and considering what it means to follow Christ.
Where am I spiritually?

2. Who or I what am I following?

Who are you following?
Who or what are you being influenced by? Friends, media, and fear can lead you astray.
What are following? A dream! A career path!
Does your career path supersede following Christ?
Are you on the path of greed? Is the dollar sign your guide?
Are you on the path of lust following your eyes?
Are you directionless just wandering to and fro?
Are you following Christ?

3. Where am I going?

When I hear someone say: follow me? Right away I want to know are they trust worthy. Do they know where they are going? Have they been down this path before? Can I keep up and so on?

Is Jesus credible? I think so. History verifies his life, death, and resurrection. He has plumbed the depths of death and he has ascended the heights of glory. He created the heavens and the earth and you and me. He has a map of the universe that no earthly GPS could contain. Jesus has crossed the galaxy and he wants to lead us into eternity!
Where am I going? Is heaven going to be my home?

4. Who is coming with me?

Are you bringing anyone with you? Jesus invitation to follow him is not exclusive. It is for everyone – if anyone would come after me.

Christ wants us to bring invite others to join us in the journey of following him.

When is the last time you shared your most important story about the time when you decided to follow Jesus.

When is the last time you sat down and explained to someone what it means to follow Christ?

When is the last time you invited someone to church or a church related event?

Have you ever taught or facilitated a small group?

Follow Me!

In the Old Testament we have a great example of some who chose to follow God and some who chose not to follow God.

Numbers 32:11-13:

'Because they have not followed me wholeheartedly, not one of the men twenty years old or more who came up out of Egypt will see the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—¹² not one except Caleb and Joshua, for they followed the LORD wholeheartedly.'¹³ The LORD's anger burned against Israel and he made them wander in the desert forty years, until the whole generation of those who had done evil in his sight was gone.

Only Caleb and Joshua chose to follow God. The Israelites who chose not to follow God wandered in the desert for 40 years. The stakes are high. The decision to not follow Christ has consequences for this life and all of eternity.

not a fan.

To help us be better follower of Christ we are going to do a church wide study entitled: not a fan! The idea being that Jesus isn't into fans or admirers he wants followers.

I was at Bishop Pinkham Middle School Wednesday evening for some parent meeting when I came across this sign in the gym.

Bishop Pinkham Sign: **Be a Fan not a Fanatic.**

Bishop Pinkham is looking for fans.
The Calgary Flames are looking for fans.
Lady Gaga is looking for fans.
U2 is looking for fans.

Jesus is looking for followers - who are fully committed and devoted to him.

I have an idea that there are a lot of folks in church today that signed up for a one way ticket for a quick trip to heaven – they are not interested in the a journey with Jesus.

Not a fan is a 6 week DVD cinematic journey designed to help become a better followers of Christ.

Here is a sample of what's to come: **not a fan: DVD 3 minute video trailer.**

not a fan: DECIDE.COMMIT.FOLLOW starts the week of September 18, 2011

Follower's Journal: 42 Day Devotional Guide.

We are looking for 100% participation from grade 7 and up.

Check out the Fall 2011 Discipleship Calendar & Connect Class Overview Sheet. You have 12 options available.

In just a few minutes we are going to ask you to pick one of the 12 options and make a 6 week commitment to be a better follower of Christ. Fill out commitment card and place it on these tables.

Introduce Leaders: see Overview Sheet

Preschool 1 – no teachers.

Children: Alyssa

Youth: Thomas

College & Young Professionals: Caireen, Mandy, Tim

Ambassador: Pat

Outreach/ESL: Imelda, Bob, Kim

Fellowship: Jenny

Discipleship: Zach

Worship: Zach & Daryl

Care Ministry: John C/Barbara McGrann

Men: Brian S, Glenn B

Women: Linda A

Marriage & Parenting: Barry & Jennifer P

Instructions:

1. Sing: I Have Decided to Follow Jesus and the Leaders will come to the Tables
2. Table Time: When the song concludes we invite you to bring your not a fan commitment cards to the table or find out more about our various ministries or sign up for a retreat or upcoming opportunity. (10-15 Minutes)
3. Lunch Time: Set up, make a new friend and enjoy.

Pray: God help me fully commit to follow you.

Response: *I Have Decided to Follow Jesus* – Leaders go to tables.

Tables:

Lunch: