

Connect the Jots

Follow the Thread

Part 7 – July 13, 2014



Welcome to the place where we count the cost to follow the One who paid the price! Jots are the small and seemingly insignificant specifics in scripture that are significantly fulfilled in Jesus!

Where *won't* you follow Jesus? Where *don't* you follow Jesus?

Like, when He leads you away from where you *think* He should lead you? Like, onto the water.



Peter at least put his foot down and tried.

You *do know* his name means *Rock*.



After He rose, Jesus passed through a locked door to get to Peter and the disciples. **So, how do you follow Jesus through a solid wall?**

Ah, that's the question you must answer!

Know where *Peter* wouldn't follow Jesus? To our 1st jot, the cross, and the specific spot in scripture where Peter *really* put his foot down and tried ... Jesus' *patience*.

... Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and *suffer many things* ... and that he must *be killed* and on the third day be *raised to life*. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" [What won't? "You'll never **be raised to life on the third day!**" Or, "You'll never **suffer many things and be killed!**"] Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." – Matthew 16:21-23 NIV

Why wasn't Peter ready to follow? **Jesus was heading in the wrong direction, from Peter's perspective**, which was awfully limited because he wasn't listening to what Jesus was actually saying.

How will you follow if you won't even listen? Where *won't* you follow Jesus? What's He asked you to do that's just too unreasonable and too risky ... *from your perspective?*

I've warned you many times that Satan will take you further than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay. But, I've never warned you that ...



... same goes for Jesus!

Jesus will take you further than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay. **What do you think, He's a tour guide? No.**

His love is too fierce, His plan is too immense. In fact, **if you knew where He was leading, you wouldn't want to go. That's why we need His Spirit to guide and empower us to follow.**

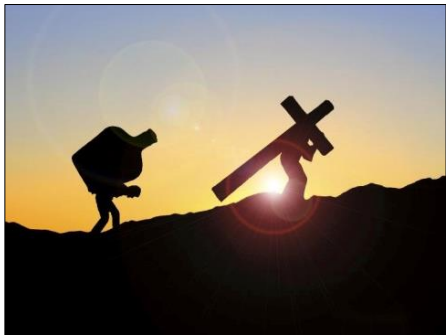
And one more thing: He'll satisfy, gratify, purify, and beautify you far more than you could ever imagine! He just has to crucify you in the process. Did I leave that part out of the passage?

Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." – Matthew 16:23-24 NIV

What do you think *they* thought He was *thinking*?

They don't have the luxury of our 20/20 hindsight with the cross. "Why a cross?!"

He's helping them to see that **the path that leads to life passes through suffering and death.** And, not just *any* death. Death by *crucifixion*! And, He's calling them, and us, to *follow His lead*!



Our 2nd jot is *our cross*, which is *very different* from *His cross*.

He died for your sin. You must die to your sin. But, you're both burdened by your sin!

[Peter quotes the prophet Isaiah (53:4, 11)] He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, [but Peter goes beyond Isaiah] so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. – 1 Peter 2:24 NIV

So, will you follow if Jesus takes you further than you want to go?

Will you remain if Jesus keeps you longer than you want to stay?

Will you give if Jesus asks for more than you want to surrender?

C.S. Lewis' greatest influence, George MacDonald, once wrote ...

"You will be dead, so long as you refuse to die." – George MacDonald

In 1872, MacDonald wrote a children's fantasy novel. The Princess and the Goblin is a moral tale of our security in God's profound love, if only we will trust and follow.



8-year-old Princess Irene finds an attic room where her fairy grandmother appears with a ball of gossamer thread invisibly attached to a promise ring, which she gives to her skeptical grand-daughter.

“But I can’t see it,” says Irene.

“The thread is too fine for you to see it. You can only feel it.” Irene tests it. Sure enough, it works! “Now listen,” says her grandmother, “if you ever find yourself in any danger, put the ring under your pillow, and follow the thread wherever it leads.”

“Oh, how delightful! It’ll lead me to you!” “Yes, but remember, it may seem to you a very roundabout way indeed ... *but you must not doubt the thread. Of one thing you may be sure, that whether you hold your end or not, I am always holding mine.*”

Later, little Irene hears the goblins snarling in her house, so she secures her ring and follows the thread. But, to her dismay it leads her outside, and right toward the goblins’ dark cave!

Still, she trusts and follows. But, the thread leads her through a series of confusing passages to a wall of stones! A dead end. “Well,” she thinks, “at least I have the string to guide me back out.” But, the instant she tries to follow it backwards, it vanishes from her touch.

Her grandmother’s thread can only be felt *forward*.

She bawls for a bit. Then she comes to grips with her only option: to feel her way forward ... *through the wall*. But, **how do you follow through a *solid wall*? Well, you tear it down, stone by stone.**

Though her fingers are soon bleeding, she continues breaking through, when suddenly she hears a familiar voice. Unbeknown to Irene, a good friend was imprisoned in the goblins’ dark cave!

Astounded, he asks, “However did you come here?” Irene replies that her grandmother sent her, “and now I’ve found why!” And as her friend heads out, *Irene heads in!* “Where are you going? That’s where I couldn’t get out.”

“I know,” she says, “but this is the way my thread goes, and I *must* follow it.” And so, the royal child follows and finds that the thread is trustworthy, because the giver, who holds it, is trustworthy.

We only have two options: continue in Christ or stay stuck among the stones.

It may seem to you a very roundabout way indeed. *Follow the thread.*

It’ll likely lead to a dark and solitary place. *Follow the thread.*



Our 3rd jot leads us back to Capernaum, under the sparkling cloak of a starry night, to a dark and solitary place.

After Jesus had dispossessed the demon, mended the mother-in-law, and cured all the ailing of Capernaum ... *He went missing.*

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. [That's what Jesus does in those dark and solitary places. What do you do?] Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!" [To which] Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else ..." – Mark 1:35-38 NIV



"But, why? We should *go back* and bask in yesterday's victory?" "Can't go back. Only forward." Doctor Luke jots down an interesting detail to their interaction.

The ruins of ancient Capernaum

The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. – Luke 4:42a NIV

What do you think the odds are of *that happening?*



Leaving us is a crucial part of leading us, which leaves *us* with our 4th and final jot: the last "So long" at the Last Supper.

"I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment ... I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer ... But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth." – John 16:7-13a NIV

So, how do you follow *Jesus* through a solid wall? Well, **by getting a grip, and moving forward, by His Spirit, and removing it, one stone at a time.** And, don't get discouraged.

What's Jesus' answer to unanswered prayer?

It's not just about *you*; it's about your family, your friends, your neighbors, your *strangers*.

It's such a visionless view if you're only concern is your own little world. When you grab hold of Jesus you become a vital part of something vastly greater and infinitely grander than *yourself*.

So, get a grip and follow that thread wherever it may lead.