

Follow Me!

Overview

At six o'clock we're having a special event here with a concert. It's a benefit concert and the price to get into our concert is a couple of non-perishable goods. Cans or boxes of food, not fresh stuff, it's got to be held on to for a little bit.

And so Siegfried is going to be at the keyboard. It's going to be a wonderful evening and so tell your friends about it. One can get information about it on our internet site. You can actually order tickets. It is a ticketed event. Tickets are free.

It's our way of knowing how many are coming, who's coming, and how many to prepare for. So we'd like each one of you who thinks they'll be coming that night also to order the concert tickets. It's on the screen before you and I think that maybe that picture will change going forward but it says concert tickets and it's got a big arrow at the top.

A little confusing with all the information there but it's a blue band that says concert tickets and if you were to click on that I believe that'll take you deeper where you need to go and get your tickets. Do help us with that and thank you for it. Today's sermon, message, follow me.

Follow me. It's Matthew chapter 14, chapter 4 verses 18 to 22. And Jesus walking by the Sea of Galilee saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea.

They were fishermen. Then he said to them, follow me and I'll make you fishers of men. They immediately left their nets and they followed him.

Going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them and immediately they left their boat and their father followed them. I'm absolutely blown away by the last sentence in each of those paragraphs that you see before you.

Immediately, immediately on his words, follow me, they dropped everything and followed him. Zebedee, the second family, the second family, he suddenly had no workers. His two sons packed up and left him with the boats and the nets.

What's he gonna do? I promise you he was not upset. Why did these men respond so readily? Follow me. They just dropped everything and went with him because he was not a new person to them.

I doubt that they had met him personally, but they certainly had been appraised of what this man had been doing because he had just come from Capernaum, where he had done many wonderful things and had been preaching there and done some wonderful miracles and word of his ministry had traveled far and wide.

So how they knew exactly who he was upon seeing him, I don't believe that we have everything in terms of what transpired in each of these cases in terms of communication, but we know his major message was, follow me, and they did. Absolutely an incredible thing.

I want this morning to put my feet on both sides of the Bible, New Testament and the Old Testament as well. This story is not unlike another one that's found in the book of 1 Kings. And so I'm looking at chapter 19 and verse 15.

The Lord says to Elijah, go return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. That's Syria. And when you come, when you come, anoint Hazael to be king of Syria.

And Jehu, the son of Nimshi, shall you anoint to be king over Israel. And Elisha, the son of Shaphat, shall you anoint to be the prophet in your stead. I'm replacing you, he's saying.

So it came to pass that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael, Jehu will slay. And him that escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha will slay. Yet I have seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which has not kissed him.

Verse 19 says, so Elijah left the place where he was, and he found this Elisha, the son of Shaphat, plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him. And Elijah passed by him and cast his coat, his mantle, over the shoulders of Elisha. And Elisha left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, let me, I ask you, I pray you, let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I'll follow you.

And Elijah replies, go back again, for what have I done to you? Verse 21, so Elisha returned back and he took the yoke of the oxen, he slew them, he boiled their flesh and the instruments of the oxen, and he gave unto the people and they did eat. Then he arose and went after Elijah and ministered unto him. Basically the same story, basically the same story.

So these fishermen dropping everything and pursuing a noted preacher, teacher, prophet was not an unusual thing. It's something that we can't relate to here in this country or in these times, but it certainly was something significant at the time. In the case of Jesus, he simply came along and said, I'll make you fishers of men, follow me, and they followed.

In the case of Elijah, this is a unique thing. He came along and he put his coat over the shoulders of Elisha, but then continued with his coat. So he kind of dragged it over the shoulders of Elisha.

You and I cannot relate to that, but that is not an uncommon thing. That kind of movement, that kind of issue was something that would be common, especially in spiritual situations, not unlike this one. You see, the coat that he was using was very hairy because we know that Elijah was known as the prophet, the hairy man who wore the hairy coat.

I met a fellow the other day at Staples. I said, what's your name? He said, your name's Harry. I said, you don't look like Harry to me. The guy was as bald as a ball peen hammer, but we got along nicely. I'm going to pause here and tell you that story. I told my wife, I said, I can't believe what happened. I'm standing in Staples and I've got this big box and I'm fumbling with it. I'm returning something that came from Amazon. It was the wrong thing.

And so you go to Staples and they'll help you return it to Amazon. But there's a big lineup in front of me, people with parcels, and I'm struggling with this thing and it's not light. And so there's people behind me, people in front of me, and there's a shelf right here with all kinds of goods that Staples is trying to sell you.

So I got clever and I propped the corner of the box onto the shelf. Then I turned to the man behind me and I said, you know why that shelf is there, don't you? And he said, I'm catching on. I said, they put that shelf there for old geezers like you and me. So I said, we can kind of prop it up until we get in there. He said, that works for me. And I said, well, we could be here for a little while, couldn't we? And he said, yeah.

I said, old guys reign, you know that, don't you? He said, oh, I'd like to believe that. I said, well, I had a cake offered to me recently and I said, I had to blow 80 candles out on it. He said, I don't do the 80 candle thing until February. I said, well, get ready for nothing. I said, you won't feel any better when you have blown out the candles than before. And he stood there looking at me bewildered. He's wondering who this guy is? I said, you know, what's really important? I said, when you blow out the last candle, where are you going? And he stood there like stymied. I said, I know where I'm going. He said, you do? I said, absolutely.

I said, I've made my reservations. He said, you've what? I said, I've made my reservations in heaven. Have you done that? And his eyes filled with tears. I'm thinking, I'm talking to a 79 year old whose mother or grandmother, a Sunday school teacher, had an impact on his life. And simply saying, I've made my reservations has put him under conviction. And I can't tell you where the story goes because suddenly somebody's calling him and he's saying, sir, sir, do you want to bring your parcel? I was having so much fun being the evangelist.

So I went and I put my parcel through, turned around to speak to him and he was gone. I don't know if he ran for his life or he was swifter at the counter than me. I'm just telling you right now, people are anxious to know the Lord. And when you just say a little word like that, I said, I've made my reservations. His eyes filled with tears. His eyes filled with tears.

There are people all over the place. They're everywhere. They're around you in the grocery stores, wherever you go.

They're hearing about hundreds of thousands of young people and older people alike. They say that the attendance of young people in churches in Canada is rising like a rocket. All over the United States, there are churches that are going to two Sunday morning services because the young people are coming in there. At University, I saw a video the other day of hundreds of young people. It was supposed to be a regular gathering. I don't know what transpired, but all of a sudden God was in that place.

They all came forward in the university campus. They dropped on their floor in their gymnasium and lifted their hands, started calling on God. These were salvation moments in people's lives. Don't miss an opportunity. Where was I? I was talking about Elijah and Elisha and how dragging this hairy coat over the young man's shoulders was a message. You see, the young man, Elisha, somehow knew who Elijah was. Maybe just the coat itself was a giveaway. We don't know. But when that coat was dragged across his shoulders, that coat was a symbol of the mantle that was upon him.

Remember, when Elijah was leaving, what did he toss behind? He tossed that coat because when they got to the river Jordan sometime later, at least six years after this moment in the field where Elisha is being called, Elisha followed Elijah for a full six years. And when they were coming to that end of that journey where they traveled together, the young man being mentored by the older fellow, when they got to the river Jordan, it was uncrossable, and the old man took his coat, his mantle. It says he rolled it kind of like a towel.

This is what us guys used to do in high school. You don't want ladies to know about this, but in the shower, we'd roll up and start whacking the other fellow with it. And so we'd have fights with our towels. And so what Elijah did is he rolled it up like a towel and hit the shore of the Jordan. And the Jordan parted and they crossed over on dry land. And when Elisha saw the chariot of the Lord of fire come and take Elijah away, he had the coat in his hand.

And what did he do? He performed the same miracle in that river. There's something about the mantle that's passed on. There's something about mentorship. There's something about pouring your life into another life. But that's not the whole message this morning that I want to share with you. But the fact that Elisha and Elijah walked together, the fact that Jesus and 12 walked together, it was a transformational moment for Elijah, because Israel, see, had wandered far from the Lord.

They weren't attending to the things of God. They were actually getting involved at times with the pagan gods of the tribes around them. And we don't even understand such a thing. How could that be? But it was true. And so it was Elijah, before he called upon Elisha, it was Elijah who had been ministering to some young men who were known as the sons of the prophets. You'll read about the sons of the prophets in 1 Kings and in 2 Kings.

Now, sons is not an indication of bloodline. It's like speaking of he was their mentor. He was their papa.

These were the sons, not by bloodline, but by ministry, they were the sons of the prophets. And this Elijah had these little communal areas in Gilgal and Bethel and down in Jericho. He had these little groups living together in a communal situation.

And it was a place of prayer and reflection where these young men would gather, and they would be reflecting on the prophecies that had come out of Elijah's mouth. And they would be reflecting on these things, and Elijah would visit each of these little schools and pour the word of God into them. And then when he would prophesy somewhere about what the Lord was speaking to Israel, they were the ones who would sit with him, and he would explain further to them so that they would be graduating in a day when they would be ministering in a prophetic manner.

So we don't know that Elisha had attended one of these schools. That's actually possible, and that may be how come Elisha knew Elijah. But some things that Elijah had accomplished before he anointed Elisha. There was a great drought in the land. That was because Elijah had prophesied it. He prayed, and the water stopped.

During that no-rain period, there was a famine. And you remember the story of the widow in Zarephath and how he helped her with a flower and a flask of oil. It was also this Elijah who went, when he heard about a widow's son who died, he went and he raised him from the dead. He called down fire on Mount Carmel and did in the prophets of Baal. He ended the drought with a prayer. He consumed soldiers with a fire, and then he comes to Elisha.

Elisha has heard the great things that this man, Elijah, had done. And so Elijah finds Elisha with, get a load of this, 12 oxen. Now it's not impossible. I've read up on it. It's not impossible to control 12 teams of oxen, but it would be a huge challenge. And it does say that Elisha was managing the 12th team of oxen when Elijah showed up.

Why is that important? Why is that even in there, that he was managing 12 teams of oxen? It's important for this reason. Elisha was destined, if he already wasn't, he was destined to become a very, very wealthy man. He was probably working his father's farm.

Maybe his father had already passed on, and they had these 12 teams of oxen. And I'm thinking he had 12 teams of men. And when Elijah came along, he told all those men, I'm following this man. He killed all the oxen, and he threw a party, and he fed people far and wide from the flesh that came from those oxen. And the fire that he built was a result of the broken down wooden frames. And so, Elisha had quite an event when the coat was put upon his shoulders.

This wasn't just some common prophet. I don't mean to overstate the common, but there were sons of prophets everywhere. But no, this was the prophet. This was the spokesman for God. And the prophet ministered to the sons of the prophets in an effort to, like Jesus, ministered to the 12 to pass on, so that these young prophets would minister to other would-be prophets, and somehow or other, generation after generation of change would take place.

What Jesus did with his 12 has affected you and I, because he told those at the event of the birthing of the church, now go into all the world, preach the gospel, raise up disciples, raise up followers. What I've committed to you, you commit to them. Mentorship and discipleship should be a part of everybody's life. I've had some wonderful opportunities over the years to mentor young people.

There's a young woman now who's right at the top of her game. She's at a university, a Pentecostal university out in British Columbia, and we helped her get her start. When she was graduating from Bible college, I nabbed her at the time, and I hired her. And she was fresh and young. I allowed her in my pulpit, I think, a total of three times. And she did well.

She did well with our young people. Then she moved on, and I moved on as well. And the day came when she sent me an email, and she said, I can't believe this. She was at the university out. She wasn't working at the university, but she was studying at a big university out there. I don't remember the name of it off the top of my head, doesn't matter. And she said, I've got this book on missions. And she said, my favorite preacher is in chapter four. Pastor Dave, you're in my studies about what you've done with missions.

And so we have this relationship. Pastor Kuke has told me about people that he mentored, people that he blessed. And they come to him, and they thank him for what he did for their lives over the years. As I stand and I minister to you today, it's my hope and my prayer that I'm mentoring you. My task is not to do the ministry for you, but to incite you into activity that you also would pass along, that you would somehow find somebody that you could mentor. Have you had an impact on anyone else's life? You think about that.

Have you had an impact on somebody's life? I bet you have. I've got to go to a funeral this Friday night, coming way up in the Ottawa Valley, of a young man that I mentored how many years ago. And he lost his battle with an incurable disease. And his wife has written to me and told me the story of his last hour. Beautiful story. I wept last night as I read her story about how the Lord worked in his life in recent years.

He was pastoring a little Methodist church, what I would call a cottage church up in there. Cottage church. No village around, nothing. Just at four corners, out in the middle of nowhere, is a wooden framed little, I call it a cottage church. And every Sunday, even though he was suffering immeasurable pain, every Sunday he would stand and minister to them. He never went to Bible college. His teaching was what he gathered in the local church. He made a difference in a lot of lives. So, Elisha had this fellow who was mentoring him and pouring into him.

And that's what Jesus did also. Elijah was hoping that Elisha would adapt to the calling that he was indicating to him. This is your calling in the Lord. And ministering to him on a regular basis, probably encouraging him also to prophesy by times. And so, there came a day when Elijah was gone and somebody was asking, is there a prophet in the land? And the response was, yes, there's a man. His name is Elisha, son of Shaphat. He's here. He used to pour water on the hands of Elijah. We don't get the gravity of that.

I've had the privilege in so many countries of sitting and having food with the locals. I'm not talking about in a hotel or in somebody's lovely home, but out in the bush area. I remember sitting down in India and it was time to eat. And so, the ladies went out and they cut down banana leaves. And I sat on a piece of grass, but there was a shelter. It was a hot day.

I sat down on a little patch of grass and a banana leaf was laid on the ground before me as I sat cross-legged. And then a lady came and she poured water over the leaf. And then somebody else came and they poured milk over the leaf, preparing it.

And then someone came with a pitcher of water and I knew what to do. See the picture on the screen before you? I held up my hand. She poured water in my hands. And you rub, you rub. No, there was no soap, nothing like that. But the rubbing does something. It gets rid of the germs and the uglies. The rest of the germs you can enjoy. It'll be good for you.

But this is how. And so, it's the ministry of a servant to pour the water. And so, when somebody said, is there a prophet? Yes. You remember Elijah, the man that wore the weird hairy coat? The man who lived with him. The man who poured water over his hands. The man who cooked his food, did his laundry, did everything.

And you'd never find Elijah alone without Elisha. You see, Elisha, as he was being mentored by Elijah, sort of paid for his own way by ministering to the needs of Elijah. He was known as the man who poured water over the hands. He was a true, true servant. This is the calling of a disciple to be a servant. Servitude.

If you're not a good follower, you'll never be a good leader. I used to teach my staff those kind of words years ago. I used to say, if you can't follow me, nobody's going to follow you. I'm the boss. You're going to do as I say. If you do it, we're going to be successful. If you do that, we'll all ace it. And we'll all be known as being people of diligence. And I never lost one of them.

They went on to wonderful opportunities. And still mentoring a couple of them. One called me last week. It doesn't matter who he is. He pastors a church up country. And he went through a very difficult time. I mentored Ross. I spent time with him. I prayed with him. I took him to a little conference. And in that conference, he had a confrontation with the Holy Spirit. He's pastoring a church.

He had to phone me just recently and said, thank you, Pastor David. He was my Elisha. And then there's Daniel. It was you that was, is it you that told me recently you ran into Daniel Dabrowski in Florida, I think? Dean ran into Daniel because they're good friends. So Daniel, he was my young disciple. He was my Elisha. Born of Polish descent. His language was rough. When I hired him, he begged me.

He says, nobody will have me. Will you have me, Pastor Dave? He said, I won't let you down. This guy took off like a rocket from Cape Canaveral. He's done so wonderfully. And I mentored him until he left Canada to go and pastor a church down in Maryland, I believe it is, in the Assemblies of God church. There's something, David, are you bragging? No, I'm the only guy that I really know all that well.

And I know about mentoring. I know about ministering to someone to the point where you encourage them and you help them to come along. That's what Jesus did. He chose 12. And he said, what I'm teaching you, you teach others and they will teach others. The expectation was generation after generation. If each of the 12 mentors, 12, now we're up to 144. And then of those 144 ministers to others. And pretty soon we got millions around the world.

Discipleship is God's plan. But there's something dynamic about the discipleship process. Because when there's this multiplication, what's multiplied is the dynamics of the Holy Spirit. So I taught many around altars, how to pray with people. And I would lay hands on them, and they lay hands upon others. There is a flow through, there's a follow through, this dynamic.

And it happened in the life of Elisha. And I believe in the prophets that he taught. So when Elijah was gone, Elisha assumed the responsibility of all the sons of the prophets. So the ministry of Elijah carried on in Elisha. The ministry of both of them carried on in the lives of these prophets. So now Elisha is with Elijah. It's an interesting story. Elisha knows that today he's going to lose Elijah. He knows it's six years have passed, and he knows today is the day.

And so Elijah says, is there anything I can do for you before I go? And he asked largely. He said, yes, I appreciate the anointing in your life, and I'd like a double portion of it. That was a big ask. Ask largely that your joy may be full. Don't ask for, do you know, I sat with someone who raises funds, doesn't matter who they are. I talked to somebody who raises funds for charities. And they go to the big companies. They'll go to the banks. They'll go to IBM.

They'll go to the big oil companies. Somebody's messing with me on my slides. They'll go to the big companies, and here's what they told me. The big companies, the really, really big companies are just ticked off with somebody who dares to make an appointment and comes in and asks for a small amount. They come in there humbly, and they say, well, I don't want to get too carried away. I don't want to look like Miss Piggy.

I just want to just dabble a little, do you? And they said, we haven't got time for those little people. If you haven't, go big or go home. They want to be challenged to something big. Don't ask for 100,000. I've got 10 million sitting here. People have found out from Bart Carty. He's got trillions of dollars ready to give away. And so, go big or go home. The double portion is what the young man said. Did he get a double portion? Read the life of Elisha, the miracles that transpired as a result of the portion that came upon his life. Now, I made up this little map because I want you to see that. This is so interesting.

I put this little saying up here. Stay close and stay hungry. Elijah said, you want a double portion.

If you're there when I leave, at the moment that God comes for me, I think you'll get your double. But if you're not there, it won't happen. So, they're in the town of Gilgal.

They're in the town of Gilgal, probably ministered to some of the young prophets as maybe Elijah was saying goodbye. And Elijah, as they're leaving the town, and Elisha never leaves Elijah's side. As they're leaving town, Elijah stops and he looks at Elisha and he says, you know what? I've got to go on to Bethel. You stay here and maybe we'll catch up later. And Elisha says, not in your life. I'm not going to be without you.

I'm going to be licking up the dust off your sandals. You can't get away from me. So, if you look at the map, they made a journey from Gilgal to Bethel. And there they met the company of young prophets. And there was probably a nice time. Maybe Elijah blessed them, prayed with them. We don't know. And as he's leaving, he says to Elisha, you like these guys, you're all your friends. Why do you stay here with them? He says, no, no, no, no.

I'm going with you. Well then, if you're going with me, I'm going to Jericho. So, they walk now to Jericho. And if you look at the map, you wonder, what's going on here? They just passed a circle. So, when they get to Jericho, Elijah again says, why don't you stay here? This is a nice place. I have to go on to Jordan.

And the young man says, I got to go with you. When you look at that map, you'll realize that entire day, they just walked in a huge circle. What was the prophet Elijah up to? I believe he was testing Elisha. Testing him. Do you really want to go? We're going in circles. We're going in circles. Why are we going in circles? Because you're following me. Follow me. Don't get upset when you're going in circles.

Don't get upset when things don't work exactly as you were hoping there were. Disappointments will come in your Christian life. Opportunities, things where you just thought everything was going to go tickety-boo, and it doesn't go perfect, and you can get discouraged. I've been at those points in my life. There was a point when I was pastoring that little church up in London. Nothing was going right.

To me, it wasn't going right. I had a vision in my heart, but it was not coming to fruition. And I said to April, I said, I can't get these people motivated to talk to people about Christ. Nobody's bringing visitors to the church. Nothing's happening. And it was a tiny little group. In fact, the district was going to shut it down. And I said, I'll go in. Let me have a go at it. And they said, you'll never make it, but go ahead if that's what you want to do. I said, I have to go. I felt it in my heart.

But now things weren't working out as I thought they should. And because things were not panning out the way I thought and the way I had planned, my plans weren't working. I started doubting the calling of God. I started doubting that maybe God, maybe this wasn't God's plan in the first place. I don't know. And so I went over to the church on a Saturday night.

Our church, by the way, was a little four-room school, two up, two down. It was a pathetic building. When it rained outside, it rained on the inside. It was cold. It was ugly. It wasn't a happy place, an old worn-out school. And the principal's office was my office. It was like a cave. It was like a tiny little place with no heat in it.

So I went over to the church that night, Nicholas, and I'll tell you what my plan was. I was going to go over there and have a pity party, because tomorrow morning I'm going to resign. I got to go over to the church, and I got to feel sorry for myself. When I got there, I did not turn on the lights. If you want to have a pity party, don't turn on the lights. That might give you a bright idea.

And I didn't invite anybody else. I didn't invite my hopelessly positive wife to come along. She'd come along with reasons that I should stay. No, I'm done here. I'm finished. So I went in, and I'm going up this little staircase up to the principal's office, and there's a window up here, and there's a light coming through. I don't know if it was a street light, the moonlight, but something caught my eye on the floor right in front of the door. Something was sort of like a flashing light. And as I reached down to figure out what it was, I touched it, and I could feel it.

It was a vase, a glass vase. I thought, where'd this come from? So I opened the door in my office, and I had to turn on a light to find out what this thing was. And sticking out of the vase was a single carnation. Do you know how much carnations were back in those days? Ten cents a carnation. Do you know what you could pick up a vase for at the Towers store? That was the original Walmart. You could get a thing like that.

That vase, you could have got that vase on \$1.44 a day, and if it'd been returned, you'd get it for a buck ten. Somebody had spent about \$1.75 on a glass vase, a cheapie, and a single carnation. And I looked at this thing. What is this? Oh, there's a little tag attached to it. So I sat down in a chair, and I read the little card. It was in ladies' writing. Men, you guys are sloppy. We all know that. I had a banker say to me the other day, that is your signature.

I said, that's as close as I got to being a doctor. She laughed, and she said, well, nobody's going to copy it. I said, no kidding. So it was a lady's writing, and here's what it said. Dear Pastor David, please be encouraged. God sent you here for a purpose, and we are a very blessed people. I held it in my arms, and I cried, and I cried, and I cried. Whoever this lady is had more hope and faith in me than I had in me. The following morning, I stood in my pulpit, and I held up a glass vase with a single carnation.

I didn't tell the story. I just said, this was a gift to me. It's meaningless to you. There are about 25 people there, a few less than what we have here today. I held up this little vase. I said, this doesn't mean anything to you, but let me tell you what it means to me. This little vase tells me that somebody in this church loves me, and that Jesus loves me. And I said, whoever you are, you just changed my life. Seven years later, I stood in that pulpit, and I was saying goodbye, tears running down my cheeks.

I said goodbye, goodbye, goodbye. That's another story. And that evening, I said, there's somebody probably sitting in this church, a lady.

You have a wonderful handwriting style. I said, to this day, I don't know who you are. I said, you blew out about a buck and a half on me seven, eight years, ten years ago, whatever it was. And I said, you changed my life. How I would love to know who you are. I said, you have to know. With that little card and that little thing, I said, you restored hope in me. And here now, I was pastoring a church that was the fastest growing church in Canada. I said, you had a part in this.

Whoever she was, she never, never said a word. Now, there is a camp grounds up on Lake Erie. It's a German campground. Hello? You know the campground. And I was preaching there the summer before I came to meet you people. I was preaching in that camp, and there was a little withered elderly, elderly lady. We used to call her in our church Auntie Hody because our kids couldn't pronounce her name properly. She was Auntie Hody. And I started telling this story to that, to that camp meeting for some reason.

And I stopped and I looked and I said, Auntie Hody, are you the lady? And she pulled this beautiful wrinkly smile. And she said, yes, Pastor Dave. I broke into, I said to the congregation, you can do whatever you like. I said, I got to hug somebody. I got to kiss somebody here. I said, this lady made the biggest difference in my life.

Watch this. I was the pastor. I was the Elijah. She was supposed to be the Elisha. But if you do your responsibility well, your Elisha will turn into your Elijah. That lady, by blowing less than two dollars, mentored this preacher and made a difference in my life, such a big difference, that in the year 2025, I'm telling you this story.

And I have an idea that has tickled somebody's heart even today. Her little investment, I told that story in how many countries I encourage congregations. I've actually pointed to the pastor and said, is anybody willing to spend five bucks and give this guy a carnation? You never know what he needs.

The sermon that I preached when some of you were gathered and voting on me to be the pastor here, I had no idea what you were up to. I was preaching to some 2000 pastors in, out in the bush of Kenya. And when I got to the end of the message, I spoke to these 2000 pastors, here is the general superintendent sitting on the stage.

I said, you men, you men have no idea what this man goes through. I said, I don't know. But I said, what if he's discouraged today? What if things aren't going the way that he hoped? What if he feels the bigness of this man, his stature? What if he feels like a tiny mouse? What if he's discouraged? What are you going to do about it? That congregation of pastors, some close to 2000, rolls to their feet.

They ran to him. They fell on their faces before him. They formed a carpet of humanity up there, weeping and calling and blessing. I got letters from him for a year later when I was here at this church saying, Pastor David, you made a difference in my life. Thank you for the message. The love between me and my pastors has grown and grown and grown.

You never know when you touch somebody else's life, the difference that it's going to make. Pastors, we know, we see it. Not always, not always, but there's times when God gives us a little gift, a little gift of thank you, a little gift if you did something right. You helped me. I need to close with this. This should be a whole sermon all in itself.

But those men, when Jesus said, follow me, the responsibility that they had was that they would become just like Jesus. If they were anything less than how he functioned, if they didn't catch the fire, if they didn't catch the passion, if they didn't, if the Word of God didn't resonate, if they didn't allow the Holy Spirit to work in them properly, the whole thing would be a total disaster. They needed to breathe his breath.

They needed to adapt to the sparkle of his eyes. If he got up at five in the morning to pray, they needed to learn to get up at five in the morning to pray. If they did this on Saturdays, if he did it, they needed to walk as close as they could. And I preached in this church maybe a year ago with a caption that I read. It was on the cover of a book. It said about walking in the dust of the teacher. Can't remember what the teacher is in Israel. Who looks after the synagogue? The rabbi. That's too big a word for me to remember.

But walking in the dust of the rabbi. Somebody wrote a book, and what they meant was that the disciples walked so closely with Jesus they were almost wearing the dust from his sandal. They walked with him. They mimicked everything. It was Jesus' plan that they would become mini Jesuses. As the Father has sent me, I'm now sending you. So we have this little story. Follow me now as I'm about to close. The disciples are in a boat.

Jesus pressed them. He fed the people with loaves and fishes. And at the end of the day, he said to the disciples, you guys get in the boat, and you head across, and I'll meet you on the other side. What about you? Jesus said, I need to spend time with my Father. The word says that the disciples pushed off, and it's getting nighttime. Nighttime.

So they're out on the water, and the wind came up. Jesus spends time with the Father, and then he decides he's going to go and join the disciples. It's the fourth watch, says the scripture. That means it was sometime between three o'clock and six o'clock in the morning. They've been out on the lake all night, and they can't make any progress because the wind's against them. And they're afraid they're going to drown.

They're sitting there, and all of a sudden the word says, Jesus came to them, you know the story, walking on the water. And what does Peter do? He says, Jesus, if it's really you, can I walk on the water? And Jesus said, come on buddy, walk on the water. Why did Peter want to walk on the water? Because he knew he was supposed to do what Jesus does.

When he saw Jesus walking on the water, he said, I need to do this. Whatever Jesus does, I need to do. They would watch how he would pray for the sick, and that's how they would pray for the sick. They would watch how he prayed over the food. They would watch how he did everything. They watched everything.

And when Jesus walked in the water, Peter said, he expects me to walk on the water. I had a district superintendent come to us and visit us in our first little lonely church way up in the north part. We were about two blocks from an igloo up there, like we were in a tiny town.

And he came, and he sat, and he talked to me. And he said, David, if I was an artist, my favorite picture, if only I was an artist, would be a picture of Jesus and Peter walking on the water. You know what the story says? When Peter got to Jesus, it says that Jesus and Peter together walked back to the boat.

He said, that's the glorious picture of that story. When Peter dared to walk on the water, he had the glorious experience of telling people thereafter, Jesus walked on the water, and I was with him. We walked on the water. Jesus said, follow me. Follow me, art. That's the message.

You say, I don't understand all of this. They didn't understand where they were going, Nicholas. When they said yes, when they said yes, they had no idea where they were going to sleep, no idea where they're going to get their food. Two sons of Zebedee gave up their fishing, gave up everything, abandoned it. They had no idea where their next meal was going to come from. But the word, follow me, was magnetic.

It was magnetic. And when you dare to follow him, your life will change forever. And the impact that you as a disciple will have on many thereafter. Who preached on the day of Pentecost? Peter. How many say? Silver and gold have I none. Such as I have, give I thee. In the name of Jesus, rise up and watch. That was the man who had walked on the water. I dare you.

What'd you tell me you are now, Betty? How old are you? You young, beautiful thing. Is it 91, 92, 93, 94, 95.? What is your honey? What was it? 93. 93 years young. You still have an opportunity to follow, don't you? There's always new opportunities to follow and be an influence that's positive. There's an opportunity for everyone in this place. Hello, Siegfried. It's 14 minutes after. We got to be done by 15. What are you going to play for me? Huh? Work for the, I don't even know that one. Well, I don't know all the words.

Do you know work for the night is coming? You do, Pastor Kuke? Come on up here and lead it. No, stand with me. Work for the night is coming. Work through the morning hours. Work while the dew is sparkling. Work in blooming flowers. Work as the day grows brighter. Work in the burning sun. Work for the night is coming when all men's work is done. Amen. Thank you. Thank you, Maestro.

This guy's going to play the piano. Make sure that you get your tickets. Make sure that you don't miss that. I love it when this guy shows up. It's hard to get him here. He needs to go to Japan or France or whatever. And every once in a while I say, well, you come on back home. I love it when he and his beautiful wife, Linda, the most patient lady in the whole world, you know what I'm talking about. You know what I'm talking about. She's the most patient lady in the world. My wife is the other patient one. I never stop talking. She never stops listening. God bless our wives. And the men said. Amen.