



NOT A FAN

“The Open Invitation”

Luke 9:18-25

November 13, 2011 A.M. Service

What is a Fan? An Enthusiastic Admirer

What is A Follower? One Who Is Completely Committed

Anyone is Welcome

Anyone Means Everyone

No Qualifications Means No Excuses

It's Anyone But It's Everything

Everything Leads to Exclusive – It's All or Nothing

How Do I Become A Follower & Not a Fan?

It's Understanding Believing With Your Head and Heart the ABC's of becoming a Christian

Then Following Him in a Relationship With Him for the Rest of our Lives!

- ✓ There is No Forgiveness Without Repentance
- ✓ There is No Salvation Without Surrender
- ✓ There is No Life Without Death
- ✓ There is No Believing Without Committing

Our Response:

1. Have you given your heart and life to Jesus Christ – Are You a Fan or are you a Follower? You can become a follower by accepting this free gift of God if you will by faith believe and surrender your heart and life to Him! It's as simple as ABC. **Admit** to God you are a sinner, **Ask** for His forgiveness, **Believe** Jesus is God's Son, **Confess** Him as Savior & **Commit** Your Life to Him as Lord for the rest of your life & being His fully devoted follower!
2. Have you asked Christ into you heart, but never made it public? Have you been baptized – identified with Christ & His church through Baptism? If not, you can make that decision today & be obedient & follow through & become a part of the Bethsalem Family. Step out and tell everyone, I am signing up for Duty!
3. Do you need a church home? – a proper foundation – without one a Christian is a soldier with no army to fight with him or to help him fight. Don't just attend – step over the line today and join this church family!
4. Encourage you to get into a Small Group either Sunday Mornings at 9:45 a.m. or Wednesday Nights @ 6:30 p.m. and pursue deeper and further this series of Not a Fan
5. Are there any excuses you need to let go of today that have kept you from following Christ with everything you have? What are they? Name Them. Ask Christ to help you put them aside and follow Him
6. Would you be willing to be a part of a church that is truly willing to let “anyone” come to Christ? Will we truly open the doors of this church and say, COME! Won't be easy, costly, challenging, not comfortable... but well worth the price to see people come to Jesus
7. Has it been Jesus plus something or someone else, or are you following Him exclusively? Jesus is looking for all or nothing, no in between. Will you be like those disciples and lay down whatever it is that would keep you from following Him, lay it down and Follow Him with everything you have and everything that you are?

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Review From Last Week – Fan or Follower, Secret Admirer or Not a Fan Remember, Fan is an enthusiastic admirer and a follower is one who is completely and totally committed no matter what the cost .

Where are you today? What has it cost you to follow Christ this week?

How was this week different than the weeks prior?

I am praying as the Lord continues to challenge us that we will respond in concrete ways, not just that was nice, or good, or that hurts or is challenging, but instead, how did your life change? I am praying that this series makes us all uncomfortable and forces us to really take a deep look inside about our relationship with Christ or if we have one at all.

One of the most important parts is of that process is the small groups and you can jump in one today – 9:45 on Sunday mornings – you can catch up by joining a group tonight @ 5 p.m. or Wednesday nights @ 6:30 p.m.

You will miss the incredible story that goes along with this series and really is helping to bring it to life. It’s the story of Eric Nelson, a guy who was a fan, but became a follower and follows his story in that process.

Today we will continue looking at the same Scripture but and really just look at really one word – and that is the word Anyone.

Have you ever seen one of those car dealership commercials that says, “Anyone can buy a car here!” But then you look at the fine print at the bottom of the screen and see that “Anyone” really means the people who pass their credit check? Or have you ever tried to get a special deal on a cell phone plan you saw a commercial for, and the commercial claimed this new deal was for anyone, only to be told that discount only applies to a certain group of customers? It sure seems like whenever people say “Anyone is welcome,” or “Anyone can cash in on this deal,” they don’t really mean anyone, do they? There’s always a catch. In [Luke 9:23](#), Jesus says, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me.”

When making the invitation to potential followers, Jesus invites “Anyone.”

Anyone Is Welcome

But over the years, we've gotten to the point that even when we hear Jesus say anyone we think, "Yeah right. What's the catch?" There's no catch. No small print. No hidden fees. It's all laid out in that verse, and it's open to "Anyone." And when Jesus said "Anyone," the crowds would have looked at his disciples and known that He meant it.

We have to understand, to his society, Jesus was a rabbi. Homeless, unconventional, but a rabbi nonetheless. And a rabbi was a teacher of God's Word, which was then the Old Testament. rabbis had extensive knowledge of the Torah and all of the writings of the prophets.

Rabbis were also special because they had a group of talmid (pronounced tal-meed). The word talmid translates to "disciple" or "student." So, essentially, every rabbi had a class of students. This was an incredibly exclusive group of students. Most people didn't end up as students of rabbis. In fact, those who didn't make the cut most often ended up learning some sort of trade, typically one that was passed down in their family. They'd work as stonemasons, fishermen, tradesmen.

For those students wanting to become the talmid of a particular rabbi, you had to go through an application process. Firstly, there were hefty pre-requisites before even being considered to become a talmid. These were the equivalent of the GPA and transcript pre-requisites for getting into an elite college or academy.

If you want to go to Harvard, you better have a 4.0 GPA, or a 32 on your ACT, or a 2400 SAT score. Without those kinds of stats, you're probably not going to get in, right? Well, it's the same with a talmid applying to join a rabbi's school. Talmids had to have an impressive knowledge of Scripture, and a rabbi would quiz a prospective talmid, asking them to recite an entire book, or to tell him the number of times the name of the Lord was used in the eleventh chapter of Leviticus. This was an intense, painstaking process. But rabbis had to be thorough, because the excellence of the student reflected the excellence of the teacher. If a rabbi just let anyone in, it was clear he was not a sought after teacher. On the other hand, if a rabbi's group of talmid were especially brilliant, the rabbi would be respected and admired. But then Jesus changes the system, especially when he invited a tax collector to be a talmid.

ILLUS: Clip from Not a Fan - Matthew

So when word gets out about a new rabbi who is picking out followers at random, people start to wonder what's up. They come to hear from this incredible teacher named Jesus, but when they look at his disciples, they must have been confused. They must have shook their heads and thought, "These are his students? They're nobodies! Those two used to be fishermen, a few of them are just political hotheads, and that guy's a local tax collector!"

But then Jesus makes the invitation, and when people hear that anyone can come learn from this incredible rabbi, I'm sure they started to entertain the idea. People who had given up the dream of learning from a rabbi a long time ago were now wondering if they'd be welcome in this new rabbi's group. And slowly but surely, people started to come and want to follow this rabbi Jesus. They realized when He said "Anyone," He meant it. When Jesus said that anyone was welcome, the crowds began to understand that meant everyone was welcome.

And it's true **Anyone Means Everyone**

But here's the struggle: though we'd never say it, we don't always buy into the idea that church should be for just "Anyone." We kind of like church the way it is, don't we? We usually prefer things to stay the same. And same soon becomes standard, and pretty soon a standard becomes a qualification. I think Jesus knew that's how things would go, and I think [Luke 9:23](#) is here to remind us that there shouldn't be any qualifications.

So Jesus does away with the qualifications to follow. He got rid of the long list of prerequisites; he did away with the standard application process. And I think the Church should do away with some of our qualifications.

We usually don't talk about it, but we've got our own unwritten code, don't we? For instance, there's kind of an unwritten dress code, right? Over the past few decades, there's been a little bit of an unwritten political code, too. And in most churches, there have been all kinds of things added to their unwritten code. Whether or not you should listen to this or that style of music. What your income is. What your social agenda is. What your church denomination is. The list stacks up pretty quickly. Sure, the church keeps saying, "Anyone is welcome." But when you look at how the

members dress, or what their political leanings they prefer, or what style of music they accept, it becomes clear that there are some qualifications. But Jesus didn't just get rid of the qualifications. When Jesus said, "Anyone," he did something else. In eliminating the qualifications, Jesus got rid of all the excuses.

No Qualifications Means No Excuses

See, when Jesus invites anyone to follow him, He doesn't just break down the barriers that keep so many people from learning more about God. He also gets rid of all the excuses different people were hiding behind. So now the tradesmen had no excuse not to follow a rabbi. Now the drop out student couldn't complain about his past anymore. Now the mother of four couldn't say she never got a chance to learn from a rabbi.

So what has your excuse been? I think most of us have been holding off on a relationship with Christ because we say we're busy. So what is it for you? Is it because you're too busy with putting in hours at the office? Is it because you've really been focusing on your marriage lately? Is it because the kids need a lot of time and attention? Is it because times have been tough and you just got a second job?

Others say it's because they've got a past they're not proud of. So the baggage from the addiction or the divorce or the bankruptcy has been your excuse for a long time. It's easy to hide behind those kinds of excuses, because who's going to argue with someone who's been through a tragedy, or someone who's been emotionally scarred? But Jesus gets rid of all the excuses when he invites "Anyone."

Anyone is welcome to have a relationship with Jesus. Anyone.

Sexual past? Anyone. Ex-con? Anyone. Inmate? Anyone.

Recently divorced? Anyone. Legalist? Anyone. Alcoholic? Anyone.

Pot head? Anyone. Addict? Anyone. Hypocrite? Anyone.

Now, we need to be ready for what can happen when we embrace the invitation to "Anyone." Because if anyone can come to church, that'll kind of mess things up. All of the sudden, the church gets filled with a lot of "un-churched" people. If we really accept "Anyone" into our churches to follow Christ, we'll be forced to deal with our unwritten codes. We'll be forced to get out of our comfort zones and rub shoulders with people from different backgrounds and social circles, people who have different music

collections and recreational activities than us, people whose wardrobes confuse or annoy us, people who are hard to tolerate and even harder to love. But followers are willing to break down walls, trash the unwritten codes, and welcome “Anyone” into God’s family right alongside Jesus. Some of you are probably thinking, “Wait a minute! We can’t just let anyone into our church! We can’t just let people show up and invite them into God’s family and tolerate anything they want. That’s not Biblical!” You’re right. That’s not Biblical. I’m not saying we tolerate or condone anything sinful. When a person wants to become a Christian, it’s right to make sure they understand what God’s Word allows and what it doesn’t. But when Jesus makes the invitation, he says, “Anyone.” So some of the people who respond to that invitation will have a past that you don’t approve of. Some of them will have been involved in lifestyles you’d be embarrassed to hear about. Fans don’t know how to handle new people like that. They prefer not to know. Fans prefer things to be shallow and comfortable. But followers are willing to listen, willing to hear stories of brokenness and sin and still welcome those people with open arms. This next point is crucial to making sure that we help all of us—both brand new Christians and long-time believers—move into a completely committed relationship with Jesus.

It’s Anyone, But It’s Everything

When Jesus makes His invitation, he welcomes anyone who could come after Him. But He also makes clear that when you choose to follow Him, you were giving up everything. So it’s Anyone, but it’s Everything.

When a talmid was finally accepted into a rabbi’s school, they would leave their homes, their jobs, whatever was holding them back, & they would go & follow the rabbi. Literally, they would follow him wherever he went.

ILLUSTRATION: Get a volunteer to follow me wherever I walk.

So if the rabbi decided to go to market, his students would follow. And if a rabbi decided to go to another town, his students would follow. If the rabbi needed to visit some sick in the area, his students would follow.

Now, to follow the rabbi named Jesus, this would cost even more. Because if the rabbi decided to live without a home, his students would follow. And if Jesus the rabbi decided to go among the sinners and the shameful, his students would follow. And if Jesus the rabbi decided not to flee from

persecution, his students would follow.

And that's what Jesus offers. The greatest teacher who ever lived offers you the chance to become one of his students. And when he says anyone, he means everyone. And with no qualifications, you've got no excuse. But even though He makes his invitation to anyone, He also guarantees that it will cost you everything. Are you ready? Are you willing to follow the rabbi Jesus?

Will you have the same response as Andrews, Peter, James, John, - they left their nets and they followed Him? Will you have the same response as Matthew that you talked about in your small groups this morning – leave that tax collector booth and follow Jesus?

Everything Leads to Exclusive – It's All or Nothing

See [Luke 14](#)

Is Jesus One of many or Is He is Your One and Only?

Fan says, I love you, care about you, committed to you, but let's not be exclusive. DTR – with girlfriend – find pics of other girls in his wallet

For what do you sacrifice your money?

Fan asks how much can I spend on my house, but when it comes to giving, do I have to give off of my gross or my net? In other words, what's the most I can spend on my house and the least that I can give to God? How we spend our money tells a story about what matters most to us!

ILLUS: Giving more to Lottie Moon than what we spend on Christmas

ILLUS: Giving & Tithing – give more than what is “required”

When you're hurt, where do you go comfort?

Refrigerator, parent, spouse – do they take the place of Jesus

When our first response in suffering or difficulty is to turn to anyone or anything other than Jesus reveals our affection is divided and we are following something or someone else other than Jesus!

What disappoints or frustrates you most?

Something significant as a job loss, or a ballgame loss. Of course we will feel disappointed or frustrated, but if it is excessive and consumes us then there is a problem. **ILLUS: Dad takes child fishing, no fish caught – upset and frustrated, yet missed the point was spending time with his son.**

It can reveal our heart's true passion.

What is it that gets you really excited?

ILLUS: 12 year old – never seen you so excited – saw someone get baptized, new birth, participating in a church service, etc. no it was a college football game.

What excites and ignites your heart? Ouch!

Following Jesus means following Him alone. Fans don't want Jesus on the throne of their hearts. Instead they keep a couch on their hearts and at most give Jesus a cushion. He's asked to share this space. But Jesus makes it clear that He's not interested in sharing our hearts!

Hosea and Ezekiel – we are having an affair – unfaithful Say one thing but we do an entirely different thing.

In fact Luke 14 tells us that in comparison to loving Him, that our love would be so great and passionate, that our love would look hate towards our parents and our family.

The terms in following Christ are non-negotiable!

ILLUS: John Oros

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It's Understanding Believing With Your Head and Heart the ABC's of becoming a Christian

Then Following Him in a Relationship With Him for the Rest of our Lives!

- ✓ There is No Forgiveness Without Repentance
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For the Sake of the Call

Nobody stood and applauded them So they knew from the start
This road would not lead to fame
All they really knew for sure was Jesus had called to them
He said "Come follow me" and they came
With reckless abandon they came

Empty nets lying there at the waters edge
Told a story that few could believe and none could explain
How some crazy fishermen agreed to go where Jesus lead
With no thought for what they would gain
For Jesus had called them by name and they answered

CHORUS

We will abandon it all for the sake of the call
No other reason at all but the sake of the call
Wholly devoted to live and to die
For the sake of the call

Drawn like the rivers are drawn to the sea
No turning back for the water cannot help but flow
Once we hear the Savior's call we'll follow wherever he leads
Because of the love He has shown
And because he has called us to go we will answer

We will abandon it all for the sake of the call
No other reason at all but the sake of the call
Wholly devoted to live and to die

BRIDGE

Not for the sake of a creed or a cause Not for a dream or a promise
Simply because it is Jesus who calls And if we believe we'll obey

CHORUS