

not a fan.

COMPLETELY. COMMITTED. FOLLOWER.

Week 2 - the open invitation

“Come on down to Crummy Cars where anyone can buy a car! Bad credit? No credit? Income? No income? No problem!” Fine print, “Only well qualified applicants will receive financing.” Ever try to get that special deal you see on TV only to find out you don’t qualify? They say anyone, but they don’t really mean it. There’s always a catch.

[2] **Luke 9:23** When Jesus invites anyone, He means anyone.

[3] **Anyone Is Welcome**

It seems that most people, even believers, are skeptical of this. What’s the catch? No small print, no hidden fees, it’s all in that verse. And when Jesus said, “anyone” the crowds just had to look at His disciples and they would have known that He meant it.

Among other things, Jesus was a Rabbi. Unconventional, but still a Rabbi. 1st century meaning.

- A kind of itinerant teacher of God’s word.. He would raise up disciples to carry on his teaching, not just academically. [4] **The mission of a rabbi was to become a living example of what it means to apply God’s Word to one’s life. Likewise, Jesus’ goal was to raise up disciples who would become like Him.**
- To follow a Rabbi meant something other than sitting in a classroom and absorbing his lectures. Rather, it involved a literal kind of following, in which disciples often traveled with, lived with, and imitated their Rabbis, learning not only from what they said but what they did - from their reaction to everyday life as well as from the manner in which they lived. [5] **The task of the disciple was to become as much like the Rabbi as possible.**
- Every Jewish child learned the Torah, the law, through age 12.
- If they did especially well in school they would go on for another three years of school. If not, they learned the family trade. No shame in this.

- At 15 they were eligible to be chosen by a Rabbi to be a talmid, disciple. If not, again, trade. If you weren't chosen by then chances are you never would be. To be chosen by a Rabbi to be a disciple a big deal and a high honor.
- Rabbi's were careful who they chose because their students would reflect on him. If they let just anyone in, he was not a sought after teacher. If his disciples were brilliant, he would be highly sought after and admired.

Then Jesus goes and chooses guys past the typical age of choosing, guys who never thought of being a Rabbi's disciple, who were just living their lives. What's more, He chose the most mixed matched group of guys who would have been at each others throats, and often were.

People would have looked at His followers and thought, "These guys?" Then Jesus makes the invitation to anyone. Those who had given up or didn't make the cut might have considered the invitation. They realized that anyone meant anyone. What's more...

[6] Anyone Means Everyone

That's what Jesus said. But what do you say? Look at us. Middle of the road white bread. People usually like things to be the same, uniform. If different people show up, the regulars can feel threatened, and the different can feel excluded. Is this why Jesus said anyone?

Jesus did away with the typical qualifications of His time. The church should do the same. "But we don't have any." Really?

- Dress code?
- Politics? Social agenda?
- Drink alcohol?
- Books you read?

Do we as a church have an unwritten code of qualifications that we may not even be aware of?

Jesus didn't just get rid of the qualifications. In getting rid of the qualifications He also got rid of the excuses.

[7] No Qualifications Means No Excuses

Now no one has any excuse as to why they can't be a disciple of Rabbi Jesus. Jesus didn't just get rid of the barriers people were hiding behind, He also got rid of the excuses. Any tradesman, any dropout, any Gentile, any woman had a chance to walk in the dust of the Rabbi.

How about you? What's your excuse been? What's keeping you away from a full-time relationship with Jesus? Too busy working? Kids taking too much time? Hobbies taking too much time?

Do you have a past that you aren't proud of? Are you carrying around some baggage that people have been judgmental about so you think Jesus is going to be the same? Jesus said ANYONE.

- Sexual past? Anyone. (say it)
- Ex-con? Anyone.
- Inmate? Anyone.
- Divorced? Anyone.
- Legalist? Anyone.
- Alcoholic? Anyone.
- Pot head? Anyone.
- Addict? Anyone.
- Hypocrite? Anyone.

[8] Jesus loves people and accepts them just the way they are. He also loves them too much to leave them that way. **John 8**, woman caught in adultery.

Think about this: what if anyone showed up here? Could you handle that? Could we handle that? Would you judge them for their past or would you love them into their future? Fans don't know how to handle anyone. Followers lead them into the arms of Jesus.

This last point about the open invitation is huge. It's the missing link in the life people want to have with Jesus for new and old believers alike.

[9] It's Anyone, But It's Also Everything

Luke 9:23 Jesus invites anyone to give up anything.

When a talmid accepted a Rabbi's invitation, they left their homes, their jobs, everything to go and follow the Rabbi. They literally followed wherever he went, learning to be a copy of Him. (Pick someone to come up and follow me for next bit.) Go to market, follow. Got to another town, follow. Go among the rejected, follow. Not run from persecution, not run.

This is what Jesus is offering; not to be a fan, but a follower. The greatest Rabbi ever, God Himself, has invited you to be His talmid. There are no qualifications, which means there are no excuses. It will also cost you everything. Are you ready? Are you willing to follow Rabbi Jesus?