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 Bridgeway Community Church  
 Series: Guest Speaker Series  
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**WINTER GUEST SPEAKER SERIES:**  
**“Admirer or Follower of Jesus?” (Rev Dr Elona Prroj)**

We celebrate leaders like MLK and Mother Theresa. We admire them. But do we want to follow them? Are we willing to sacrifice what they sacrificed in standing for human rights?

What is your relationship with Jesus?

Jesus was not impressed with Admirers or Fans. The crowds cried “Hosanna, Hosanna!” And a week later none were at the foot of the cross. Jesus would say of them: *“Father forgive them for they know not what they do.”* (Luke 23:34 NIV11)

Once after Jesus preached, *“On hearing it, many of his disciples said, ‘This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?’”* (John 6:60 NIV11)

**I. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ADMIRERS AND FOLLOWERS**

**Admirers** - Impressed

**Followers** - Devoted

**Admirers** - Good Intentions

**Followers** - Actions

**Admirers** - Consumer

**Followers** - Contributor

**Admirers** - Argumentative

**Followers** - Obedient

**Admirers** - Wear Crosses

**Followers** - Bear our own cross

**Admirers** - Applaud

**Followers** - Surrender

Where do you stand? Are you an Admirer or Follower?

**Matthew 19:16-22 NIV11:**

*16 Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?” 17 “Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments.” 18 “Which ones?” he inquired. Jesus replied, “‘You shall not murder; you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, 19 honor your father and mother,’ and ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’” 20 “All these I have kept,” the young man said. “What do I still lack?” 21 Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” 22 When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.*

He wanted the privileges, but did not want the commitment or responsibility.

Sometimes it's not about more with God, but less.

## II. THREE LESSONS FROM THE RICH YOUNG RULER

### 1. Let go of your power

It's not about what we can do for Jesus, it's about JESUS. Finding our identity in him. Rejoicing and trusting, not in what we can do, but in what *he has done*. Don't make God your last choice, make him your first solution!

We've got to let go of our own solutions and plans and let God be God. Followers are marked by radical obedience. Followers are willing to leave revenge to God. We are called to forgive and to be Christ's instruments of justice. This requires us to be Followers, not Admirers.

### 2. Let go of your past

So many “Christians” are living off of their past history with God. We deceive ourselves into false peace when we judge our present relationship with God on the basis of our past successes or failures. This is the attitude of an Admirer, not a Follower!

Don't make your past your pasture!

You cannot live in your past. You cannot spiritually feed yourself off of your past. You will rob yourself of your God-ordained future!

The Apostle Paul said...

**Philippians 3:13-14 NIV11:**

*Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

We aren't there yet, but we are pressing on. We have to let go of our past. To follow Jesus, you have to move on out of your past and FOLLOW him! Jesus is there. He has promised his presence even in the deepest, darkest valley.

**3. Let go of your possessions**

When Jesus said to the Rich Young Ruler, "go sell everything and follow me," he invited him into a beautiful exchange. To exchange everything he had to sit at Jesus's feet, to follow him until his last breath, and become a witness to how death can be overcome. But the Rich Young Ruler lost his chance. His possessions *possessed* HIM.

We must deny ourselves to give everything to the Lord. Give him your hardest "yesses"!

**Question:**

**What is your hardest "yes" you could give to God?**

Give Jesus your most difficult "yes," and he will give you his blessing.

Jesus calls us to take up our crosses DAILY and follow him. This is Jesus' invitation for this young man, and this is his invitation for us.

But the young man wouldn't do it. He was an Admirer, not a Follower. On the other hand, the Apostle Paul said... *"But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ."* (Philippians 3:7 NIV11)

III. SERMON REVIEW

**To truly be a Follower of Christ and not an Admirer, we've got to...**

- 1. Let go of your power**
- 2. Let go of your past**
- 3. Let go of your possessions**

We must be willing to follow Jesus wherever he leads. We have to trust that even in the valley of death, if he is there, LIFE is there.

In the valley of death, I learned to live! In the valley of death, I met my Father like never before.

At your funeral, when people reflect on your life, what would you like them to say...

*That you were an Admirer or a Follower?*