

"Follow me!"

Essential content of the message of Jesus

15 slides for a lecture

Speaker: Manfred Hanglberger

Pastor and family therapist (retired), author

www.hanglberger-manfred.de

Most important Bible passages

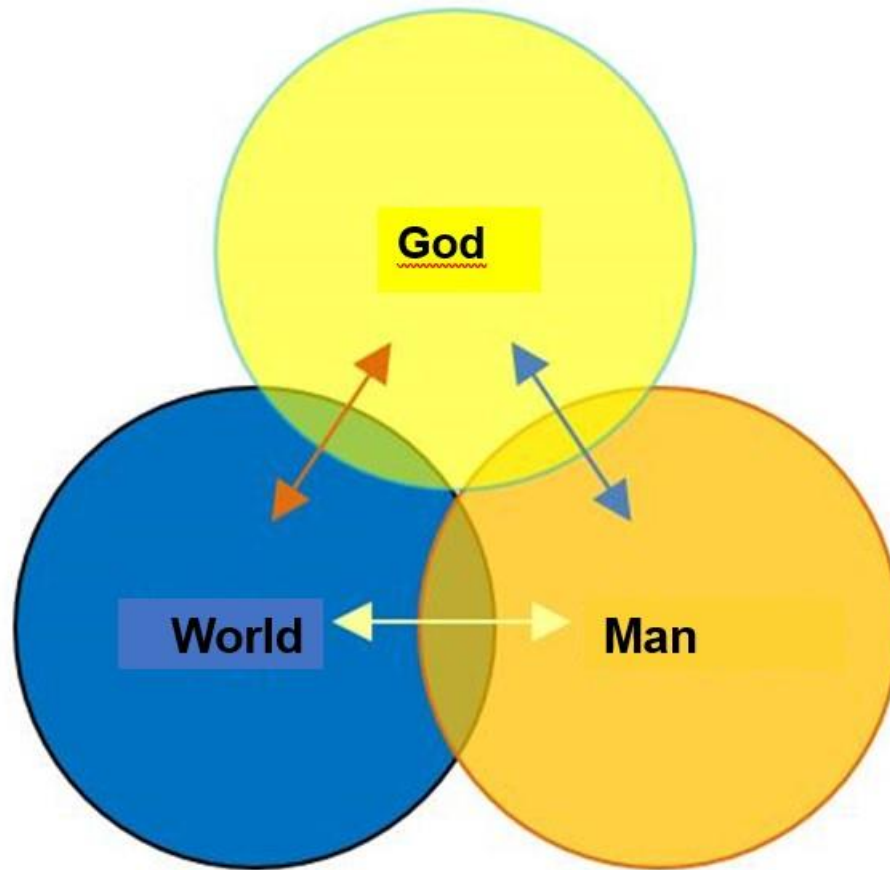
Jesus to Matthew, who was sitting at the customs house: "Follow me" (Mt 9:9)

Jesus to Peter (after the resurrection):
"Follow me" (John 21:22)

Following

1. Following = Going behind: Path-character
Cf.: "I am the way and the truth and the life": John 14,6
2. Discipleship = faith in the spirit of Jesus:
 - *New view of God*
 - *New view of man*
 - *New view of the community (the People of God)*
 - *New view of humanity (the nations)*
 - *New view of the world*
 - *New view of religion and religious commandments*
 - *New view of religious rites*
3. Consequence I: *Disciple instruction (New view of faith)*
4. Consequence II: *Practicing a new way of life*

Discipleship: Faith in the Spirit of Jesus: A new view of the relationship between God-Man-World



Instruction in Faith (1): A new view of God and man (1)

1. God is not a ruler who needs obedient servants, but a loving father who wants to help people to grow up and take responsibility.
2. That is why a person is a "Child of God" and not a "Servant of God":
Servants must serve for a lifetime, children are allowed to grow up and take on responsibility.
3. Reversal: Parents "serve" their children to become adults.
4. Renunciation of power: (Mt 20:25; Mk 10:43f; Lk 22:25f).
5. It is not perfection that is required (knowing and obeying all the commandments exactly), but the willingness to "grow" and learn.
New understanding of perfection: (Mt 5:48)
"I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Mt 9:13)
6. Even "Children of God" are allowed to make mistakes:
"Growing up is associated with frictional losses."
Luther: "Redeemed sinner"
Problem: Suicide rate of young people in Protestant parsonages
7. Jesus lives and proclaims a new understanding of authority:
"Do not be called master, father or teacher!" (Mt 23:9)
The words "obedience" and "obey" never appear in the mouth of Jesus as moral requirements for people.

Instruction in Faith (1):

A new view of God and man (2)

1. Every person has a direct relationship with the Father-God
2. The "mediator" Jesus makes this possible!
3. Otherwise, there are no more "mediators".
4. Loss of power for the previous "mediators": priests and kings (Mt 23):
An essential reason for the crucifixion of Jesus! >>>
5. "The children of this world are often wiser than the children of light"
(Lk 16:1ff: Parable of the "unjust steward")
=> *As believers, be creative, imaginative and clever as coworkers
in the Kingdom of God!*
6. God also works outside of official religion!
7. The traditional division into "believers" and "unbelievers" becomes
meaningless.
 - *"The Spirit blows where it wills" (John 3:8)*
 - *Jesus hears the voice of his heavenly Father in a gentile woman
(Syro-Phoenician: Mt 15:21-28; Mk 7:24-30)*
 - *"Parable of the two brothers" (Mt 21:28-31)*

Instruction in Faith (2):

A new view of the People of God and of humanity

1. Already in the Old Testament there are beginnings of universalization:

- *Abraham shall be a blessing to all nations (Gen 12:3)*
- *Jonah: Sent to the capital of mortal enemies (Nineveh)*
- *Pilgrimage of the nations (Isa 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-3)*
- *Egypt and Assyria will also be a blessing (Isa 19:24)*
- *An offering will be made to the Lord in every place (Mal 1:11)*

2. Realization of universalization in Jesus:

- *Healing of the daughter of a so-called "pagan" (Syro-Phoenician: Mt 15:21-28; Mk 7:24-30)*
- *Healing of a man in the Decapolis (Mk 5:1-20)*
- *Healing of the servant of a Roman centurion (Mt 8:5-13)*
- *Great Commission: Go to all nations (Mt 28:19-20)*

3. Universalization through love of enemies! (Mt 5:44; Lk 6:35)

4. The New "People of God"

- *A universal community of "communities of trust"*
- *"Communities of trust" practice non-violent communication and develop non-violent structures within their worldwide organization and for the peoples of the world.*
- *"Light of the world" and "leaven" for a just and peaceful world.*

Instruction in Faith (3):

A new view of God and man in relation to the world

1. The father of the house is away (Mt 25:14):

- *The outwardly absent God*
- *No almighty ruler who directs everything.*
- *"Almighty God" is not a term for God in the entire New Testament:
New understanding of God's work in the world and of his existence in the world: New ways to experience God!*
- *Catholic Council Document "Gaudium et Spes", Chap. 36*

2. New significance of human perceptual abilities

- *"Why don't you find the right judgment yourselves?" (Lk 12:57)*
- *"Who made me a judge or arbitrator among you?" (Lk 12:14)*
=> *Make an effort for independent knowledge and personal responsibility!*
- *New significance of man's rational abilities*
- *New significance of man's spiritual abilities*

3. "Secularization" is a task of Christians! >>>

Instruction in Faith (3): A new view of the world (2)

1. The "Kingdom of God" is to be established in the world.
2. The kingdom of God: already there and in need of development
 - *It is already "in you" and "in your midst" (Lk 17:21)*
 - *It is already dawning (Mk 1:15)*
 - *It comes like the growth of seeds and like the leaven that leavens the flour (Lk 13:20-21)*
3. The "Kingdom of God" does not come in the future
 - *by an abrupt violent intervention of God*
 - *is not prepared by violence of the faithful.*

Instruction in Faith (4):

New view of religion and religious commandments

1. They send everyone on a challenging path of spiritual and mental growth: No incapacitating obedience!
2. They send everyone on a challenging path of shaping the world in the spirit of Jesus!
3. "Do not judge!" (Mt 7,1; Lk 6,37):
Finding a path to achieve a deeper understanding of the background of the problematic behavior of others
4. Possibly learn to protect yourself
Those who are unable to protect themselves and set boundaries begin to devalue and judge others.
5. Similar to other "commandments" of Jesus:
 - *The main commandment of love (Mk 12:30, Lk 10:33)*
 - *Commandment to love one's enemies (Mt 5:44; Lk 6:35)*
 -

Instruction in Faith (4): A new view of morality (commandments)

**Jesus' preaching of morality is not
a morality of command and obedience,
but a "moral mandate",**

or an education

- for one's own perception of values,
- for one's own value-oriented decision-making ability,
- for independent responsible action,
- for maturity and independence,
- for global thinking and local action,
- for patience and faithful serenity on the one hand and resolute energy on the other,
- for alert and competent cooperation in building the "Kingdom of God",
- in order to understand life as a spiritual and mental growth and maturing process.

Instruction in Faith (5):

A new view of religious rites

Criticism of the divergence between rite and life:

- *Parable of the "Good Samaritan":*
Priest and Levite pass by the needy person.
- *Prophets' criticism of the temple cult:*
"I desire justice, not sacrifice" (Hos 4:1; Am 5:21; Mic 6:8)
- *Gospel: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice" (Mt 12:7)*

Christian rite (Experiential Redemption Event):

- *Experiencing oneself loved by God*
- *In mutually appreciative communication:*
Feeling loved by the faith community
(Unfortunately, this is usually missing today!)
- *Experiencing impulses where and how God's love can and should be passed on:*
 - => *Commitment to the suffering*
 - => *Salvation of the world!*

II. Discipleship: Practicing a new way of life (1)

1. Relationship with God gives a deep sense of self-worth >>>
2. Appreciative, honest and trusting communication
3. Making God's love tangible through love of one's neighbor
4. As in the "First Testament":
 - *God is on the side of the poor and oppressed.*
 - *Every believer stands with Jesus and God with the oppressed.*
5. Special challenges of discipleship today:
 - *In a globalized world, it is important to research, perceive and change the worldwide structures of injustice.*
 - *Analytical thinking is particularly required today.*
 - *Informing oneself is a moral obligation today.*
 - *Be critical of so-called aid organizations!*
 - *Political thinking and behavior are required!*
6. Shape your own life in such a way that it is sustainable and globally responsible!

II. Discipleship:

Practicing a new way of life (2)

"Ora et Labora" (St. Benedict)

1. Following Jesus in Prayer: Cultivating a relationship with God
2. Following Jesus in our commitment to those who suffer:
Not only wanting to help, but understanding what meaningful help looks like: Competence, rationality and spirituality:
 - *Heal the sick!*
 - *Cast the demons!*
 - *Mt 25: Parable of the Last Judgment*
3. Following Jesus in criticism of all inhuman aspects of religion and society!
4. Following the risen Jesus in the development of a contemporary doctrine of faith (Mental and spiritual work):
 - *Dialogue between spirituality and rationality in the social sphere: Cf. Catholic social teaching*
 - *Dialogue between spirituality and rationality in the modern world view (Natural sciences and faith: There is a deficit today!)*
 - *Dialogue between spirituality and rationality in the psychological sphere of man (psychology and faith: There is a deficit today!)*

II. Discipleship:

Practicing a new way of life (3)

Discipleship today:

1. Helpfulness in the immediate environment – without incapacitating!
2. Commitment at least in one of today's problem areas:
 - *Ecological endangerment*
 - *Worldwide injustice*
 - *Peace work near and far*
 - *Telephone pastoral care*
 - *Animal welfare in the immediate environment*
(food bank for animals, care for strays, ...)
 - *Animal welfare worldwide (e.g. against bullfighting)*
 - *Justice in the workplace (Trade union?)*
 - *Care sector*
 - *Commitment to the common good in the associations (child labour, ...)*
 - *Food bank*
 - *Help for the homeless*
 -