



## Continuing In His Steps

“The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach”

(Acts 1:1).

Are you actively continuing in Jesus’ footsteps?

In 1896, Charles M. Sheldon published his classic *In His Steps*. This book has sold more copies than any other religious book except the Bible. It has been published in more than fifteen languages. Over thirty million copies have been sold.

In the story, members of a local church vow to follow in Christ’s steps by asking themselves daily, “What would Jesus do?” They ask this question before they made any major decision. Although this book was written more than one hundred years ago, it is still being read and is relevant to us.

“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps” (1 Peter 2:21).

In some parts of the world, a special season of “Christmas” is observed. During this time attention is drawn to celebrating Christ’s birth. In the midst of this activity, the real reason for His coming is often overlooked. One Christmas slogan reminds us, “Jesus is the reason for the season.” Jesus is the focus of the celebration, but “Evangelism is the reason for the season.” Evangelism was the reason Jesus came to the earth. If we follow in His steps, evangelism will be our primary focus.

### Evangelism

#### The Reason Jesus Came

& “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

& “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

& “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

& “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised” (Luke 4:18).

Jesus walked on this earth for more than thirty years, died at Calvary, and rose again to redeem mankind.

The Book of Acts is a carry-over of what Jesus began to do. In the Gospels He walked on the earth, doing good. In Acts He continued His work through the apostles who followed in His steps.

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Acts is the story of the expansion of the church as men and women walked in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. He started the work in the Gospels, continued it through His disciples in Acts, and it is carried on through us today.

“Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence,

no man forbidding him” (Acts 28:31).

Acts is one of three New Testament books that do not end with “Amen.” This is because the church is still expanding and continues to develop, even after nearly two thousand years.

The church is God’s on-going project, and He expects us to be going on.

### **Prayer**

“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest” (Matthew 9:36-38).

As we continue in His prayer steps, a major focus of our prayers will be evangelism.

“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you” (2 Thessalonians 3:1).

### **Leadership Development/Training**

“I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18).

Jesus knew His purpose when He came to the earth. He came to seek and to save the lost, and to build His church. To ensure the church’s success, Jesus spent quality time in the leadership development of twelve chosen men. When He returned to heaven, He left a handful of qualified leaders to carry on the vital tasks He had started. Jesus knew His work would not fail because He had trained leaders. From the beginning, Jesus told these leaders He would not always be with them. He trained the most successful leadership team of all times. As a result, once their leader departed, the church continued to experience tremendous revival and growth, as they followed His example by effectively training other leaders. Leaders today should follow the same pattern.

Before Jesus departed He said, “As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you” (John 20:21).

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:19-20).

### **Study Questions**

1. What was Sheldon’s book called?

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2. What was this book about?

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3. What is the Book of Acts a story about?

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4. The church is God’s ongoing project. What does He expect from us?

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5. What should we pray according to Matthew 9:36-38?

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6. According to Matthew 16:18, what was Jesus’ purpose in coming to earth?

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7. How did Jesus know that His work would not fail?

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