



New Apostolic Church USA

Do we follow Jesus because we love Him? – Written by Apostle Miguel Flores
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My beloved brothers and sisters, in these days, in this time of pandemic, everyone is at home, listening and watching how the number of infections and deaths from Covid-19 increases every day, and the impact of this is beginning to be felt in different areas of life - of individuals and of the entire society. This leads to fear, grief, suffering, and the uncertainty of tomorrow.

Remember what Jesus taught us in Luke 9:23, ***“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”***

Those who want to enter His Kingdom, *must deny themselves...*

They cannot follow their own path, but must align themselves to the teachings of Jesus.

This reminds us of the message the Lord inspired in us a few days ago and taught us through our District Apostle. He said: How will we remember the year 2020? Will we remember it as the year we learned more about our faith? More about our relationship with God?

We should ask ourselves: how were we following the Lord? How are we aligning ourselves with His teachings? Or is something lacking? Then we will remember 2020 as the year in which we amended our understanding about our faith, and of our following Jesus.

The verse from Luke says we must do these things ***daily***.

We should also ask ourselves: what was our prayer like and how is it now? How was my relationship with my spouse? And how is it now? May this time of pandemic be a time where we advance ourselves in our relationship with God and with our neighbor.

To enter the kingdom of God, they must also *take up their cross every day...*

It is logical for man to begin to seek refuge in God to escape what is being experienced today. They look for that refuge in Jesus Christ, they make promises, they are willing to do anything. We hear people say: when the pandemic is over, I will do this and that (I will go to church, this time I will, now I will help, now I must believe, now I agree, etc.).

It really is very nice to hear those desires. But the help that Christ wants to give us is more than what we expect. He wants to give us something else: He wants to give us salvation. He wants to free us permanently from evil and lead us to live with Him in His kingdom!

Taking up our cross every day means that we are determined to kill the sin in us *every day*, and overcome evil *every day*. In this way, we take up our cross daily! Let's not stop: let's move towards our goal of faith by taking up our cross.



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We follow Jesus to enter the Kingdom of God...

Part of following Jesus is to endure this time of pandemic - or any other cause or difficult situation - that we have to live through. Above all, we trust in the Lord, we trust in His love, we trust in His help, we trust that He is in control of everything, and we trust in His promise.

In the verse, the Lord was addressing those who wanted to follow Him. Many came to Him for help, and left Him again. The disciples followed Him because they wanted to stay with Him - they loved Him. Some Christians approach Jesus like a doctor. They ask for His help and are even willing to “pay something” in return. As soon as their problem is solved, they return to the normal course of their lives.

We want to follow Jesus, and we want to stay with Him no matter what happens, because we love Him, and we also stay with Him because we want to enter His kingdom.

It moved us greatly, when our Chief Apostle reminded us of Thomas' words, when he inspired the other Apostles to go and follow Jesus to Jerusalem, saying, *Let us also go, that we may die with Him* (John 11:16). Did they love the Lord Jesus so much? They followed the Lord because they loved Him, they were willing to follow Him and die with Him - they had true love.

We also want to love our Lord Jesus in this way, we want to stay with Him because we love Him. We love Him because we know Him, we know Him because we have decided to fall into His hand (1 Chronicles 21:13) and each experience in our lives shows us more and more what He is like. And because we love Jesus, we are guided by His example. We love each other (John 13:34), we serve each other (John 13:15) and we forgive each other (Matthew. 18: 23-35).

Loving greetings.