

***Nurturing Faith...  
Every Day in Every Way***

September 13, 2015

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

**Isaiah 50:4-9a**

**Psalms 116:1-9 (9)**

**James 3:1-12**

**Mark 8:27-38**



**Fans or Followers?** *Object: Some items a person might wear or display to show that they are fans of a particular person, group, or sports team.*

Have you ever been a member of a fan club? Some of you may not even know what a fan club is. A fan club is a group of enthusiastic supporters of a well-known person, music group, or a sports team. If you are a fan of a particular sports team, you might wear a t-shirt with the team name and a picture of their mascot on it. If you are a fan of a singer or a musical group, you might have their posters decorating the walls in your room.

One thing I have noticed about fan clubs is that the number of members in the club usually depends on how popular or successful the person or team is. If a sports team wins a lot of games, they will probably have a lot of fans. But if they start to lose, the fans usually fall away. (A few years ago the fans of one sports team went to the games with a brown paper bag over their head to hide their identity!) If a singer or music group has a lot of big hits, they will have a lot of fans, but if the hits stop coming, the fans will go away.

When Jesus was on earth, he had a lot of fans. As he traveled around performing miracles like feeding 4,000 people with seven loaves of bread or healing a blind man, there were huge crowds of fans everywhere he went. But do you know what? Jesus wasn't interested in having fans, he wanted followers. One day he said to a crowd of people, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it."

To be a follower of Jesus means much more than being a member of his fan club. It means more than wearing an "I Love Jesus" t-shirt, a WWJD\* bracelet, or a necklace with a cross on it. It means to follow the teachings of Jesus every day. It means to reach out to the poor, to feed the hungry, to be a friend of the friendless, to love the unlovely. In other words, it means to show the love that Jesus showed to everyone we meet. That is what separates a fan from a follower.

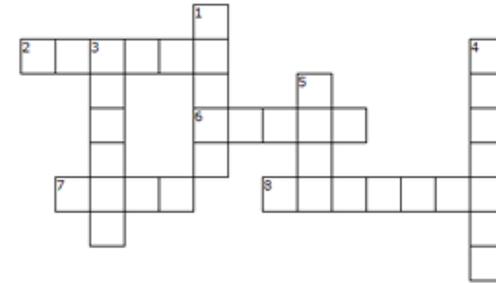
Do you want to be a follower, or are you satisfied with just being a fan? Father, help us to be more than fans - help us to be true believers and followers of Jesus. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

\*WWJD-What Would Jesus Do?

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**Gospel Acclamation:** Alleluia. Christ suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. Alleluia

**Crossword Puzzle**



**ACROSS**

2. To experience injury, pain, or death
6. The evil enemy of God; the leader of the fallen angels
7. The spiritual part of a person which exists after death
8. The expected savior of the world

**DOWN**

1. The object upon which Jesus was crucified
3. To take someone as our leader or model
4. A person who speaks for God
5. To keep something from harm or loss

SUFFER  
MESSIAH

SATAN  
PROPHET

SOUL  
FOLLOW

CROSS  
SAVE

**FOOTPRINT BIBLE VERSE:** Give the children a sheet of white paper to trace their foot. They will then cut it out and lay that foot cut out onto a piece of construction paper and cut around the foot a little larger than the original tracing so that it can be glued to the construction paper tracing. Today's Bible verse should be written on the foot and hung by a ribbon around the room.

**PAINTED HEARTS:** Provide the children with water color paints, brushes, and a sheet of white paper with a large tracing of a heart. Have the children paint rainbow-colored strips across the heart and then cut out and glue a cross on the painted heart. On the cross, encourage children to write FOLLOWING JESUS in bright colored markers and decorate the edges of the cross. (The teacher may choose to draw the cross and have older children tear the cross out along the traced lines to give it the appearance of "the old rugged cross.")

I WANT TO FOLLOW JESUS.

HE IS GOD'S SON.



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