



AFTERWARDS COURAGE
 FAITH
 FEAR FOLLOW JESUS
 KINGDOM PERSECUTION



The word “after” conjures up a lot of different kinds of images in our minds. It’s a word that describes what is to be done when the action, the fear, the problem, the blessing... anything noteworthy is complete.

Our culture is, and always has been, focused on the here-and-now, rather than what’s next. The idea of delayed gratification is the nemesis to Satan’s plan. All of us have been tempted to give in to the pressure (good or bad) to indulge in something that seems more favorable.

Jesus tells his followers in Smyrna, “Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor’s crown.” (Rev 2:10)

He told his disciples in **John 14** that they didn’t need to be afraid of the unknown future of God’s kingdom. He assured them that he would come again, that he would “be with them forever”.

Therefore, they had to trust his words and directions that he was giving them, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them... I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe.” (John 14:23-29).

Deciding to follow Jesus is about trust during times of fear and uncertainty. We walk by faith, not by sight, and so we trust that God will do what he promised, even if I’m not quite certain I understand it all.

Consider all the excuses people have offered up to why they can’t follow him yet – “bury my father”, “plant a field”, “say goodbye to others first”, etc. Ultimately, to follow Jesus requires us to trust the Spirit who has been given to them who are baptized into Christ. What does that look like in your life today?

Read **Luke 9:22-26**

What does “happily ever after” mean to you?

Name some changes in people’s lives that chose to follow Jesus (examples from the gospels)

Define *Courage*:

How does courage resemble faith?

Explain the significance of **Rev 21:8** on the condition of the church today?

What words of encouragement would you offer someone who wants to become a follower of Christ?