

## **Two Difficult Statements**

Luke 9:57-62; Matt. 8:18-22

### **Introduction.**

1. This lesson will examine two difficult statements Jesus made in the gospel of Luke - one of which is also found in the gospel of Matthew.
2. These statements were uttered to emphasize the cost of discipleship.
  - a. On other occasions Jesus had emphasize the great cost of following Him. (Matt. 10:37-39; 16:24-26; Lk. 14:26-33).
  - b. Jesus had warned that those who followed Him would be persecuted, hated, and even put to death. (Matt. 5:10-12; Jn. 15:20-23; Mk. 13:12; Lk. 21:16; Rev. 2:10).
  - c. Those who teach a cheap discipleship have never seriously considered the words of Jesus.
3. Luke records these words of Jesus. (Lk. 9:57-62).

LUK 9:57 And as they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go."

LUK 9:58 And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

LUK 9:59 And He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Permit me first to go and bury my father."

LUK 9:60 But He said to him, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God."

LUK 9:61 And another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home."

LUK 9:62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

4. Matthew records. a more abbreviated account than Luke. (Matt. 8:18-22).

MAT 8:18 Now when Jesus saw a crowd around Him, He gave orders to depart to the other side [of the Sea of Galilee].

MAT 8:19 And a certain scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go."

MAT 8:20 And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

MAT 8:21 And another of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father."

MAT 8:22 But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me; and allow the dead to bury their own dead."

### **Statement From Unknown Person Who Was Willing To Follow Jesus Anywhere**

1. The account begins with a statement from an unknown person who was willing to follow Jesus anywhere.
2. One must assume the man was sincere in making this statement, but from the response of Jesus he may not have understood the impact of what he was saying to Jesus.
  - a. He undoubtedly very impressed with Jesus.

- b. He had likely heard Jesus speak and perhaps had witnessed one or more of the miracles of Jesus.
- c. He wanted to be with Jesus in His travels and witness the excitement of the crowds.
- d. Matthew tells us this request was made by a scribe who made his living by copying scripture and by doing this became experts in legal matters of the Law. (Matt. 18:19).
- e. Matthew also emphasizes that this scribe called Jesus “Teacher.” This was a frequent title for Jesus in the gospel of Matthew. (Matt. 12:38; 19:16; 22:16, 24, 36).
- f. By this title, one can assume that this scribe was different from the many scribes who were hypocritical. (Matt. 5:20; 23:2,3).
- g. The words “another of the disciples” in Matthew 18:21 indicate he was a disciple of Jesus.

### **Jesus’ Response To This Man (Scribe, disciple)**

1. Jesus responded by saying, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."
  2. Jesus makes it clear to this man that traveling with Him would not be easy.
    - a. Jesus had very little materially.
    - b. He was born in a manger. (Lk. 2:7, 12, 16).
    - c. His parents were poor (Lk. 2:24), and He was poor.
    - d. He did not have a home and the comforts of home. He likely only had the clothes on his back, and the few things He could carry.
    - e. Even His grave was a borrowed one. (Isa. 53:9; Matt. 27:57-60).
    - f. Jesus had instructed His apostles to carry little with them, but to depend on the hospitality of others. (Matt. 10: 2,3, 9-14).
    - g. Paul made reference to the poverty of Jesus. (2 Cor. 8:9).
- 2CO 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.
3. We do not know if the man followed Jesus or not, but the implication of the passage is that he did not.
  4. Surely Luke or Matthew would have recorded such an act of commitment.
  5. The gospels record the apostles leaving all to follow Jesus.
    - a. They ceased their employment as fishermen or as a tax-collector.
    - b. For a time they even spent little time with their wives. (1 Cor. 9:5).
    - c. Their children, assuming they had them, are never mentioned.

- d. Peter's mother-in-law is mentioned. (Matt. 8:14, 15).

### **Jesus' Request To Another Man**

1. Luke proceeds to record Jesus' request to another unidentified man.
2. Jesus said to him, "Follow Me."
  - a. What a great invitation!
  - b. Imagine the Son of God giving you a personal invitation to follow Him.

### **Response Of The Man**

1. The man responded, "Permit me first to go and bury my father."
  - a. Matthew tells us this unnamed disciple called Jesus "Lord."
    - 1) This word is from "kurios" [**koo** ree ahs] meaning "Lord."
    - 2) Jesus had emphasized that those calling Him "Lord" must be obedient. (Matt. 7:21; Lk. 6:46).
    - 3) The Hebrew writer also taught obedience to Jesus is essential to salvation. (Heb. 5:9).
  - b. This does not seem like an unreasonable request.
  - c. Usually the dead were buried the same day (Matt. 9:18, 23; Acts 5:6-10), and this would not mean much of a delay in following Jesus assuming he immediately followed Jesus.
    - 1) The burial might include a few days or weeks of mourning.
    - 2) We cannot be sure this was included in the request of this man to bury his father, but it might have been.
2. The Mosaical law taught children to honor parents and Jesus taught the importance of honoring parents. (Exod. 20:12).
  - a. This meant respect and obedience.
  - b. This meant support if needed. (Matt. 15:1-9; Mk. 7:1-13).
  - c. Honoring parents would include burial of a parent that was considered a binding religious obligation by the Law.

### **Jesus' Shocking Response**

1. Jesus said to him, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead, but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God."
2. Luke does not record what the man did, but nothing is recorded to suggest he followed Jesus.
3. Men have struggled with the harsh and demanding request of Jesus.
4. Why was Jesus so harsh and demanding? What is meant by these words of Jesus.

5. Literally it is impossible for the physically dead to bury the dead.
6. Let us examine these words.
  - a. Some have tried to explain them by saying the man's father was not dead, and he is asking Jesus to stay at home until his father died.
    - 1) This explanation is given to soften the demand of Jesus
    - 2) Some think it makes Jesus less demanding because the man wants to spend an undefined time at home and then follow Him.
  - b. The meaning of Jesus is more likely this, "Leave the [spiritually] dead to bury the [physically dead]." The word "dead" is sometimes used in the scriptures to denote those spiritually dead. (Eph. 2:1; 1 Tim. 5:6; 1 Jn. 3:14).
    - 1) Others could bury the father.
    - 2) The matters of the kingdom must be first. (Matt. 6:33).
    - 3) Jesus is teaching the man had a more important work to perform. Men often fulfilled a military obligation leaving others to bury the dead. How much more important is the army of the Lord and His kingdom!
    - 4) Jesus, as the Son of God, regards the duty of following Him right then and promoting the kingdom of God as more important than even burying a parent or some other loved one or any other duty.
    - 5) Jesus gave this mandate, "but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God."
    - 6) These words about the "kingdom of God" are omitted by Matthew's account. (Matt. 8:22).
    - 7) The "kingdom of God" [kingdom of heaven] was near (Matt. 3:2; 4:17), and it was urgent that this message be declared to as many as possible.
    - 8) Jesus had impressed upon the twelve the urgency of proclaiming the nearness of the kingdom. (Lk. 9:2; 10:9).
    - 9) He also commissioned the "seventy" to proclaim the gospel, and to depend upon those whom they taught for support. (Lk. 10:1-4).

### **Another Man Seems Eager To Follow Jesus**

1. He said, "I will follow You, Lord, but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home.
2. Again this does not seem to be an unreasonable request.
3. He might be gone for a long time, and "to say good-bye to those at home" would appear to be a normal action.

### **Jesus' Response To This Man**

1. Jesus is all-knowing and sees the person's response as a lack of commitment.
2. Jesus replied, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Lk. 9:62).

3. This statement does not appear quite as hard as the previous one, but it is hard.
4. Why did Jesus respond in this way? What is the meaning of Jesus' words.
5. The meaning is the same as the previous example.
  - a. This man had a once in a life time opportunity to follow Jesus and share in the proclamation of the approaching kingdom.
  - b. One must be willing to follow Him, and never look back.
  - c. Those looking back were not "fit for the kingdom of God." This means they are lost.
  - d. In another passage Jesus taught that those unwilling to pay the cost could not be His disciple. (Lk. 14:33).
6. All of this teaches Jesus demands complete loyalty and commitment from us.
7. We must daily take up our cross and follow Jesus. (Matt. 16:24; Lk. 9:23).

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