

Following to the Kingdom

Luke 9:57–62

Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, “Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.” And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” Then He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.” And another also said, “Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.” But Jesus said to him, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Main Point

Make it your greatest priority to follow Christ to the Kingdom.

I. Introduction

- A. What reasons do people give for not following Christ? Why do people rationalize rejecting the gospel message which Christians herald to all people?
- B. Three different people come to Jesus with either the question of following Him or being invited to follow Him. In all three cases the people seem to prioritize something else above the high commitment of following Christ.

II. Exposition

A. Follower #1 — (9:57–58)

1. In the first case the person desired to follow after Christ (literally, walk with him and be the “thirteenth disciple”).
2. Jesus responds that the followers of Jesus will be rejected.
 - a) Foxes go out to hunt on their mission for food and then return back to their dens.
 - b) Birds fly about the area hunting for food but at the end of the day return back to their cozy nest.
 - c) Jesus, as a traveling itinerant preacher, did not have a place to lie down.
 - (1) He had no personal home because that was not necessary for His ministry.
 - (2) Most people would house traveling rabbis but in this case Jesus claims that people refused to do so. He was *rejected*.
3. *The ones who follow Jesus need to be prepared to be rejected by the world.*

B. Follower #2 — (9:59–60)

1. Jesus goes to the next person and invites that person to follow Him, to which the person responds, “Let me first go bury my father.”

- a) Burying parents was the expected (and important) duty of every child. Joseph, for example, made it a priority to mourn the loss of his father (Gen. 50:1–14).
 - b) What is unclear here is whether or not the father is dead yet. The person could be saying:
 - (1) “My father just died and I need to go bury him before I follow you.”
 - (2) “My father is not yet passed and I need to wait until he does before I can come join you.”
 - 2. Jesus makes it clear that following Him should be of *first* priority.
 - a) “Let the [spiritually] dead bury the [physically] dead.”
 - b) The priority of the follower of Jesus is to eliminate even the faintest of excuses.
 - 3. *The ones who follow Jesus need to prioritize the gospel above even the most important things.*
- C. Follower #3 — (9:61–62)
- 1. The third person initiates and acknowledges that he wishes to follow Christ but first desires to bid his family goodbye.
 - a) This was exactly what Elisha did with the call of Elijah (cf. 1 Kings 19:19–21), and Elijah gave him permission.
 - b) Family ties are important and Scripture makes it clear that children should honor parents and parents should invest in and care for their children.
 - 2. Jesus responds by giving an agricultural illustration:
 - a) A person who flowed would have one hand on the iron plow and the other hand controlling the ox. To look back at the rows just plowed would surely lead to veering off course.
 - b) Jesus in essence teaches that followers who desire to enter into the kingdom of God will radically prioritize looking forward to the prize (cf. Phil. 3:14) and not longing for the past (e.g., Lot’s wife looking back at Sodom).
 - 3. *The ones who follow Jesus need to prioritize focusing on Him and not letting other things turn their gaze away from Him.*

III. Truths

- A. Following Christ Requires Suffering Rejection
- B. Following Christ Requires Prioritizing the Gospel
- C. Following Christ Requires a Singular Focus