



**“Foxes, Funerals, & Family:
What is Your Level of Commitment?”**

Luke 9:57-62

Jan. 15, 2023

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- 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."
- 59 And He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father."
- 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."
- 61 Another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home."
- 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."

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- Here is the first example of following the Lord Jesus – leaving our comforts.
- Jesus is always on the move.
- The “someone” here, according to Matthew, is a scribe.
- The scribe was a lawyer, one who interpreted the Law. Lived a good life financially and materially. This is a person revered and respected in Israel. But scribes did not like Jesus.
- Must have been impressed by Jesus and what Jesus does.
- Makes a pretty bold statement. Sounds committed.
- Jesus knew his heart.
- But Jesus replies with, “but are you ready for this?” “Are you ok with losing your comforts?”

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 "I don't have a home. I don't know on any given night where I am going to be sleeping."
Think about it -
 • Nazareth rejected Jesus and threw Him out.
 • Gadara sent Him away and didn't want to see Him again.
 • Capernaum didn't want Him.
 • Samaria said, "No room here. We don't want Him."
 • Jerusalem, the place where He is going, will reject Him and crucify Him.
"foxes and birds"- Ironically, the creatures Jesus created, had it better than He did.
 Foxes roamed Israel, and birds migrated through Israel from Europe to Africa.
 Jesus was not afraid to call for a level of commitment. We lack commitment today because we don't ask for commitment. Jesus did.

"Living the Christian life is not about your comfort. Will you follow Him? What about your home, your furniture, the security you enjoy there, your comforts in the climate controlled year-round perfect atmosphere, your roach-free, mouse-free, ant-free, totally automated kitchen, your new surround-sound home entertainment center? Jesus says, Follow me. Am I not more precious, more satisfying than these?" - John Piper

A cartoon showed a church building with a large billboard in front that proclaimed: "The LITE CHURCH: 24% fewer commitments, home of the 7.5% tithe, 15 minute sermons, 45 minute worship service; we have only 8 commandments—your choice. We use just 3 spiritual laws and have an 800 year millennium. Everything you've wanted in a church...and less!

"Many churches are lowering the commitment level to attract attenders. They're afraid that if they preach against sin, they might offend some folks, so they focus on the positive and speak about sin only in the most general terms. They don't want to deal with touchy doctrinal issues, because people in our culture want to be tolerant and non-judgmental. They wouldn't dream of practicing church discipline! Their focus is on being upbeat so that everyone feels loved and accepted unconditionally. As a result, we have millions of churchgoers who call themselves Christians, but who are not fully committed to Jesus Christ and the gospel."

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- Jesus replies essentially by saying, "I am more important than your father or your inheritance."
- So Jesus says, "Let the spiritually dead bury the physical dead."
- Life goes on. Believers are on a mission. The world is filled with all kinds of events, activities, and the like. Who is going to reach the spiritually dead with the gospel? We can always find a million reasons not to share Christ.
- This is not saying that we should not attend funerals, especially for parents or relatives.
- It is saying our mission is the spreading of the gospel even when it is inconvenient

"One of the famous liberators of Italy was a man named Garibaldi. He set out to liberate Italy and he asked the young people to follow him. "What do you offer?" they asked. He said, "I offer you hardships, hunger, thirst, sickness, suffering, and victory in the noblest cause you ever faced."

Does this mean we are not to own homes or beds? No. This was the problem Jesus knew the scribe had. But it does have application to us. If we are called to be a follower, would we give these up to follow Him?

"We can still hear the heartbeat of folks like Judson Taylor, William Carey, David Livingstone, D.L. Moody, John Wesley, Fanny Crosby, Charles Spurgeon, and George Mueller. The list goes on and on. These folks gave the Lord a blank check to their lives by saying, "Lord I will follow you wherever you go."

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- Here is the 2nd example of following the Lord Jesus – leaving our customs.
- This father did not just die or this person would not be there with Jesus. He would be burying his father. Burial took place the same day as death. He would be at the funeral.
- For Jews the burial of the dead was a religious duty and custom that took precedence over everything. "The duty of burial took precedence over the study of the law, the temple service, the killing of the Passover sacrifice, the observance of circumcision and the reading of the Megillah."
- This person is saying that he needs to follow the custom of the day and wait until his father dies and then he will follow.
- Plus he probably wanted his inheritance.

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- Here is the 3rd example of following the Lord Jesus – leaving our closest loved ones.
- This person already is following or “plowing”.
- His problem is his affections. He is still tied to those in his past.
- He looks back with longing in his heart. He has a divided heart.
- Feelings change when one looks back.
- You become indecisive, fickle.
- Long, drawn out goodbyes are not good. You may forget your calling. You may get talked out of your calling.

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- Why does Jesus use the example of “plowing?”

- You can't be Mr. Facing Both Ways” – John Bunyan in Pilgrim's Progress
- Lot's wife was delivered from the sinful city of Sodom, and she was told not to look back in longing and nostalgia for that lifestyle. She looked back and died!

Gen 19:26

26 But his wife, from behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt. Those who look back, like Lot's wife, want to go back.

- We look back because we have idols in our hearts that we have not dealt with. Idols are those things that are more important to us than God. The Lord Jesus knows perfectly what idols are competing in our heart with the Lord Jesus for our affections.

- **Keep your eyes looking ahead -**

Heb 12:2

2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

- **Here is the good news when we sacrifice and follow Christ -**

Luke 18:29-30

29 And He said to them, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, 30 who will not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life."



Why is looking back a problem?

1. Waste of time. Nothing in the past of value.
2. Slows you down. You walk slower when you look back.
3. Makes a crooked row. Affects the future negatively.

“When Julius Caesar landed on the shores of Britain with his Roman legions, he took a bold and decisive step to ensure the success of his military venture. Ordering his men to halt on the edge of the Cliffs of Dover, he commanded them to look down at the water below. To their amazement, they saw every ship in which they had crossed the channel engulfed in flames. Caesar had deliberately cut off any possibility of retreat! Now that his soldiers were unable to return to the continent, there was nothing left for them to do but to advance and conquer! And that is exactly what they did.”

Take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to Thee.
Take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless praise.
Take my intellect and use every power as Thou shalt choose.
Take my heart, it is Thine own; it shall be Thy royal throne.
Take myself and I will be ever only, all for Thee.

(Francis Ridley Havergal 1836-1879)

Application

1. Everybody in this world is following someone or something. What are you following? What or who is more important to you than following the Lord Jesus?
2. When you follow Jesus Christ you give up the right to everything, for him. Every single thing. Why? because he is the eternal God and you are a tiny speck, born yesterday, living today and dying tomorrow.
3. Following Jesus is not about walking an aisle to the front of a church sanctuary, not kneeling at an altar rail, not being baptized, not swallowing bread and wine, not having the hands of a priest or bishop rest on your head. Following Jesus is a spiritual change of heart and life brought about by the Holy Spirit in which inwardly we do his will.