



Day Fifteen Luke 9:57-62

Surrendered and Focused Forward

“As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, " 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." To another He said "follow me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father. "And Jesus said to him, "leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God. "Yet another said, " I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." Jesus said to him, "no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

In this account, Luke is telling us three men it seems, could not meet the conditions Jesus laid down to enter the kingdom of God, and journey on with Jesus. This was a tough word to three would-be disciples. Are you surprised at Jesus' response to these three men? I'm sure they, and the "large crowd" they were part of were as well.

We can gain some insight concerning the nature of God's Kingdom, and the truth of what it means to be a Christian by this interaction with Jesus.

These three potentials were members of a crowd following Jesus. They obviously enjoyed being part of the movement, but Jesus knew they had a fundamental ignorance to what was required to enter the kingdom and journey on. They had a false enthusiasm as most did who followed him because they lacked understanding. (John6:66) Jesus knew this, and I'm sure they had good intentions but, He knew their hearts were looking for the physical blessings that He was providing and that they were not yet committed followers. He knows us better than we know ourselves.

Jesus seems to be discouraging them. How Jesus handled this, seems so contrary to what we see in the church of today, and what we are accustomed to. We are accustomed to the church doing everything they can to attract people. We have made it so easy for people to think they've entered the kingdom. Just say a prayer and you're in. But Jesus, seems to be doing the exact opposite, and I'm sure all were caught off guard.



Why did Jesus handle these men in the manner He did? Why did He seem so unsympathetic and harsh with his three responses? What did Jesus mean when He said, no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God?" Why was He turning potential ploughman away, when, just two verses later, He says *"the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few"*? (Lk 10:2) Let's take a look!

Profession is easy! Jesus knew their hearts. Their minds lacked understanding therefore, their hearts had the wrong motive to enter in. I'm sure they were sincere in their thinking, but they exhibited the wrong motives. He rebuked them because He wanted them to know exactly what they were doing. He wanted them to know that committing to Him is more than a prayer. He wanted them to realize they needed to *surrender all* that would hinder their relationship with Him. He was trying to teach them and all who had ears to hear!

Keeping in context, many healings and miracles have recently taken place. Jesus had recently taught His followers about self-denial, cross bearing and losing one's life. (v23-24) Jesus had announced twice to the disciples His forthcoming rejection and death. (v:22+24) and He had just steadfastly set His face towards Jerusalem. (V:51) ...He had His game face on. He was trying to make them understand the seriousness and the consequences of not understanding what was soon to take place. He was going to die for them.

When Jesus talks of putting one's hand on the plough and turning back, He is saying, the disciple must fix his eyes on Jesus and His mission. He must *"seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."* (Mt6:33) A disciples consuming purpose is to FIRST KNOW JESUS, and then, MAKE HIM KNOWN, which is the most important thing in this life.

Are there things of this world hindering you from being fit for the kingdom of God? Family? Work? The gym? Your bank account? Are you ashamed? Too tired? The reality is *One doesn't fit Jesus into their schedule, they fit their schedule into Jesus*'. Is Jesus the focal point of your life? He deserves you full time, not when you have the time!



I enjoy Jesus' agricultural analogies, they're so applicable. In this case, He uses a plough. A symbol of work. To plough a straight furrow, the ploughman focuses on a point ahead, he needs two hands on the plough to strike a straight furrow. This can't be done if he's looking back. In like manner, looking back at former desires and ways, will distract you from the mission and lead to temptations of this world.

Jesus knew these three men had a divided loyalty. They wanted to be with Jesus, but they didn't want to *surrender all* the world was offering.

To Journey with Jesus and receive His blessings and joy requires leaving worldly values with a clean sever and an immediate separation from the pride of life!

"For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."(Hebrews 4:12)

"Love not the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love for the father is not in them."(1Jn2:15)

Jesus gave the warning, *"remember Lot's wife, whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it."*(Luke17:32-33) I can't help but wonder if she was longing for the former life as she looked back. Her life was apparently pretty good there. She probably knew it was wrong, but she liked it. (We have the same problem , Paul says he dies to self daily) Apparently, she was hesitant to *surrender all* and looked back with longing eyes, in disobedience, and died instantly.

Since the only way to really Journey with Jesus is with unconditional commitment. We need to ask ourselves, am I keeping one foot in the world just in case? Am I committed to Jesus Christ unconditionally? Am I ready for the high cost of discipleship? Have I counted the cost? Because if you are following Jesus the way he intends you to, it's going to cost you things you enjoy if it hasn't, you need to reassess your life. Jesus wants you to understand what discipleship in His kingdom requires because He loves you. He wants you on the right train because it's a one way ticket. After all, because of His supernatural love for us, He paid the ultimate cost for our redemption so we would not face God's wrath. Praise God!

" the cross is laid on every Christian. The first Christ-suffering which every man must experience, is the call to abandon the attachments of this world. It is that dying of the old man which is the result of his encounter with Christ." Dietrich Bonhoeffer