

church of Christ at Greenwood

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November 27, 2022

I Will Follow You

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Luke 9:57-62 says, "As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, 'I will follow You wherever You go.' 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.' And He said to another, 'Follow Me.' But he said, 'Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.' 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.' Another also said, 'I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home.' But Jesus said to him, 'No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.'" In this passage, Jesus had three exchanges with individuals concerning the idea of following Him and what it meant to be a disciple of Jesus. I think the items Jesus emphasized are just as needed today as they were in the first century when He spoke them.

The first matter that Jesus discussed involves the idea of our separation or exclusion from the world. Jesus emphasized the fact that He did not have anywhere to lay His head. In other words, He was an outcast. We often talk about the fact that Jesus left His home in heaven and came to earth where He dwelt as a stranger or a pilgrim. And it is certainly appropriate that we take some time to consider the fact that Jesus gave up His home and lived as a wanderer on the earth. However, the main point in what Jesus was saying in Luke 9 was that His followers would also have the same sort of lifestyle. If we want to be a disciple of Christ, we are going to have to be a pilgrim. But what does it mean to be a pilgrim? It means that we cannot get too "tied down" to this world. We are not to be entangled with

the affairs of men and with the pursuits in which they so willingly engage themselves. In fact, the New Testament warns us against pursuing the same things that the Gentiles pursue. Instead, we must place our focus on heaven, where we lay up our treasures and from whence will come our reward one day. Set your mind on things above, not on all that is here below.

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In the second exchange between Jesus and a would-be follower, Jesus told a man who had requested permission to go and bury his father that the dead should bury their own dead. As for this man, he should be busy proclaiming the kingdom of God. Once again, the message of this exchange is very similar to the first. It seems to focus on the idea of being different or set apart from the world. However, instead of emphasizing the pilgrim idea, Jesus places his attention here on the idea of being a proclaimer. In other words, we are not only called upon to remove ourselves in some way from the world around us, we are also entrusted to deliver the good news about His kingdom.

The third conversation centered on a third individual. This man promised to follow Jesus, but only after he said good-bye to his family. Jesus told him not to look back, but to continue plowing. Once we have decided to do the work of the Lord, there is no place for going back. Instead, our focus must be toward the things of God. As the apostle Paul said, “forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:13-14)

Today, I want you to consider how good of a job you are doing at being a pilgrim, a proclaimer, and a plower. Have you fully left the world behind and set your mind and heart on the things of God? Are you sharing the good news of the kingdom with others? Have you focused your efforts on working in the vineyard of God? If not, the time to do so is now. You made the promise that you would follow Him, are you doing it?