

Luke Chapter 9 v 57 - 62

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[0 : 00] 9 and we commence reading from verse 57. So it's Luke chapter 9 and verse 57. Let's share the word of God.

As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, I will follow you wherever you go. Jesus replied, Foxes have dens, birds have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head. He said to another man, Follow me. But he replied, Lord, first let me go and bury my father. Jesus said to him, Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God. Still another said, I will follow you, Lord, but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family. Jesus replied, No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.

Amen. May God bless to us that reading from his holy and wonderful invitation that sinners could ever receive. He invites us to follow him.

[1 : 28] To be his disciples. And he welcomes us. Whoever our backgrounds.

Whatever things we might have found ourselves involved in. Whatever status we might have today. Whatever limitations or drawbacks there might be in our lives.

Whoever we are. We are invited. To follow the Lord Jesus.

And when we receive such an invite. And our response is, Well, Lord, you know, I'd love to follow you.

But. But. As we insert that word, but. Then we turn.

[2 : 30] That wonderful offer of the Lord Jesus Christ. Into our own sad loss. To be a disciple.

Is to be a follower. To be a student. And really, I've just taken up a new position.

Teaching science. And. I've been there for two weeks now. And. I have students.

I have disciples. People who. Listen. Hopefully, listen. To what I say.

And. Who put. That knowledge. Into practice. In their lives. And really, that's what being a disciple is.

[3 : 31] To be someone who. Is instructed. In a certain way. And who follows. That path. And. When the Lord Jesus Christ.

Invites us. To be. His disciple. Then. He does it in such a way. As not to. To.

Fool us. Or mislead. Or mislead. But he makes it quite clear. What actually being a disciple. Of his. Means. He says this.

If. He said to them. If anyone would come after me. He must deny himself. And take up his cross daily. And follow me.

Whoever wants to save his life. Will lose it. But whoever. Loses his life for me. Will save it. What good is it. For man. To gain the whole world. And yet lose.

[4 : 32] Or forfeit his very self. If anyone is ashamed of me. In my words. The son of man. Will be ashamed of him. When he comes.

In his glory. And in the glory. Of the father. And of the holy angels. It's laid on the line.

Isn't it. If anyone. Would follow me. Let him take up his cross. Daily. And follow me.

It's not going to be easy. Really when you think about it. You can sort of picture it. As a. Walking along a pathway. Indeed.

The Christian life. Is often referred to in that way. It's a journey. It's a race. So follow. You're following a pathway.

[5 : 29] You're following. After the Lord Jesus. And you come to a crossroads. And there. At that fork of the road.

One path. Looks smooth. And easy. And it leads towards some goal. That I would want to reach. Perhaps. My own personal comfort.

The gratification. Of some desire. And you look to the other side. And it's. Rough. And it's unpleasant. And it heads in a direction. That I really don't want to go in. Perhaps towards. Personal hardship. Or humility. To that sort of self-denial. That leads to maturity.

[6 : 30] And. I know which pathway. I want to take. And it's the way of comfort. And.

And then. Up ahead. The Lord Jesus. Says no. Come. And follow me. And that's. When you realize. That the Christian walk. Isn't. Always easy. There are tough decisions to make. But we know. That if the Lord says. Follow me. That's the way. We ought to go. Because ultimately. It is the way of blessing. And. That's. The moment.

[7 : 30] Of decision. You can either. Follow after the Lord Jesus Christ. Or you can go your own way. And if you go your own way.

Then oftentimes. You find yourself later on. Having to repent. And say. Lord. You know what's best. And so. When the. The risen Lord Jesus. Writes to the church. To Ephesus. The instruction. He gives to them.

Is this. Remember. From where you have fallen. Repent. And do the first work. Remember. Where you. As it were. You. You took your foot off. That. The right road. And come. And follow me. If we look.

[8 : 32] To the scriptures. We see. A number of occasions. When the Lord Jesus. Called. People to come after. And follow him. We can think of the disciples.

We think of Matthew. There. Working at his tax collectors booth. He was no doubt. Well off. A nice home. Friends.

Yet the Lord Jesus. Came up to him. And said. Follow me. And hearing those words. Matthew rose up. To leave everything behind. The money table.

The profitable business. Everything. And he followed after Jesus. Or Philip. Jesus intended to go to Galilee. And he turned to Philip. Of the town called Bethsaida. And said. Follow me. And Philip left. His own world behind. And followed.

[9 : 31] After the Lord Jesus. And then there's a fisherman. As Jesus walked beside. The sea of Galilee. He saw Simon.

And his brother Andrew. Casting and let. Into the lake. For they were fishermen. Come follow me. Jesus said. And I will make you fishers of men.

And at once. They left their nets. And followed him. And when he'd gone a little farther. He saw James and. Son of. Sorry. He saw James.

Son of Zebedee. And his brother John. In a boat. Preparing their nets. Without delay. He called them. And they left their father. Zebedee. In the boat.

With a hired man. And. Followed him. These. Men. Along with the rest of the twelve.

[10 : 30] Followed. After Jesus. And. This little band of. Ragtag disciples. Were used to change the world.

And. I wonder if. You've. Been hearing that. Voice of Jesus. Encouraging you.

To follow him. And you said. Well. Lord. I'd. Love to follow you.

But. I'd love to follow. But. And. You know that when.

The Lord Jesus calls. If you obey that calling. You may have to leave some cherished habit.

[11 : 35] Or practice behind. And perhaps it's because. Following him may. Mean. A period of suffering. Or pain. Or.

Maybe that thought. Well. As a Christian. Following Jesus. You're going to be misunderstood. Or ridiculed. Or maybe. He called you to.

Follow him. And you know that. You're going to have to break. Out of that. Unwise relationship. It may be.

A variety of things. And you say. Lord. I'd love to follow you. But. And so.

I want us to. To think this evening. Of that. Portion of scripture. We read earlier. Where. There are three men. Who are.

[12 : 35] Either. Called. To follow Jesus. Or. Or they volunteer. To follow Jesus. But it's a case of. Lord. Yes.

I'll follow you. But. So we read. 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 of holes. And. 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. God. And another. Also said. Lord. I will follow you. But let me first.

[13 : 29] 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. So I want us to look. A little more closely. At these three. Potential followers. And first.

We see. The one reason. That people may add. The but. Is a failure.

To count. The cost. Luke says. Are they walking along the road. A man said to him. I will follow you. Wherever you go. And you notice.

That this man. Didn't wait. For Jesus to call him. He. Perhaps. Adjoined himself. To the band. Of Jesus followers. As they traveled along.

[14 : 29] And according to the gospel of Matthew. This. Very eager. Potential follower. Was a scribe. He was. A teacher. Of the law. An educated man.

One who was trained. In the scriptures. As such. He would have been. Well respected. And this. Person. Says. I want to follow you. And not only that. But I. I'll follow you. Wherever you go. What a tremendous asset.

This man. Would have been. To a team of disciples. And yet. The Lord Jesus. Saw. A problem. And if you think about it. His offer has. Something of a familiar ring to it. Again. We think of. The apostle Peter.

[15 : 27] What does Peter say? Lord. Why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you. A promise.

He made just a few hours. Before he denied. Even knowing. Who Jesus was. And then. Peter. Barely promised.

Lord. I am ready to go with you. Both to prison. And to death. And the Lord said. I tell you Peter. Before the cock crows today.

You will deny me. Three times. Peter's promise. Was made. Far too hastily. And so was the promise.

Or this. These words. Of this scribe. This scribe. No doubt. Had seen.

[16 : 30] What the Lord Jesus. Did. He'd seen some of the miracles. The feeding of the five thousand. Five thousand.

Fed with. Just a few small fish. And a handful of loaves. He'd shared no doubt. What the Lord Jesus was saying. On the sermon.

On the mount. And something. Might have struck a chord. With him. And said. Well. Could this be. Could this be. Messiah.

Could this be. The promised king of Israel. Lord. I will follow you. Wherever you go. I want to be with you.

I want to. To share in this. I want to share in your kingdom. But the question is.

[17 : 27] Had he really. Counted the cost. Did he know. What following. The Lord Jesus Christ. Would entail. Jesus turned to him.

And says. Foxes have holes. Birds of the air. Have nests. But the son of man. Has nowhere. To lay his head.

Yes. There will. Come. Ultimate blessing. Glory will be seen. But not yet. The way ahead. For me is. Trial. And tribulation. And hardship. And the cross. And this man.

Needed to realize. What following Jesus meant. And I'm reminded. That when you see.

[18 : 26] These. Adverts. For the forces. Join the army. See the world. The adverts.

For the navy. The air force. And everything. Is a positive spin on it. Travel. Excitement. Adventure. Sporting opportunities. Learning a trade. And you think. Yes. It's fantastic. Join the army.

Look at the advantages. But never. In those. Adverts. Do you see.

Images. Of broken. Mangled. Bodies. People. People. People. With. Limbs.
 [19 : 23] Lost. Through. Explosions. Seeing. Your best friend. Dying. In your arms. The reality.
 Of war. War. And so. When the Lord Jesus. Calls people. To follow him. He gives us.
 The true picture. Doesn't he? It is with much. Tribulation. That we enter. The kingdom. Of heaven.
 And this man. Needed. To be able. To count the cost. Because it's one reason. Why many people.
 Start off. Following Jesus. With great. Eagerness.
 But they soon. Fall away. When the going. Gets tough. They had. In their minds.
 [20 : 19] That the Lord Jesus. Would lead them. Into pleasant paths. Towards the road. Of
 happiness. And maybe prosperity. And yes. They are right.
 That following Jesus. Does lead. To ultimate blessing. But they don't realize. That the path. That his
 followers.
 Have to take. Maybe the path. Of suffering. So that they learn. Endurance. Or the path.
 Of trial. And tribulation. So that they learn. To trust in him. Or the path. Of waiting. So they learn.
 Patience. Or even down. A path. Of painful loss. And grief. So that they learn. By experience.
 [21 : 17] That he is sufficient. For every need. Everyone. Who is invited. To follow. The Lord Jesus
 Christ.
 Needs to know. That there is. Going to be. A cost involved. God. And he says.
 In another place. If anyone. Comes to me. And does not hate. His father. And mother. His wife. And
 children. His brothers.
 And sisters. Yes. Even his own life. He cannot be my disciple. And anyone. Who does not. Carry
 his cross. And follow me. Cannot be my disciple. Will he not.
 First sit down. And estimate. The cost. To see. If he has enough money. To complete it. For if he
 lays down. The foundation. And is not able. To finish it. Everyone who sees it.
 [22 : 17] Will ridicule him. Saying this fellow. Began to build. And was not able. To finish. Or
 suppose. The king is about. To go to war. Against another king. Will he not.
 First sit down. And consider. Whether he is able. With 10,000 men. To pose the one. Coming
 against him. With 20,000. If he is not able. He will send a delegation.
 While the other. Is still a long way off. And will ask. For terms of peace. In the same way. Any of
 you. Who does not give up.
 Everything he has. Cannot be. My disciple. Now perhaps. You began.
 To follow. The Lord Jesus. In a very. Committed. And devoted way. But then.
 [23 : 11] You became disillusioned. And perhaps. Wandered off the track. Becoming discouraged.
 Because.
 Well the way. Just got too tough. And we need to realize. Yes. There may be.
 Problems. There may be. Obstacles. But remember this. God is bigger. He's far greater. Than any
 of those.
 Obstacles. And by his grace. By his strength. He enables us. To overcome. To come. So while. We
 may.
 Have to count. The cost. Well we should know. That. The cost. Is worth it. For the glory. That is
 going to be.
 [24 : 07] Revealed. In him. Soon. Soon. The dwelling place.
 Of God. Will be amongst his people. And. I think one of the passages. That help us to realize.
 what it means to be a follower and what the rewards are is found in Hebrews chapter 12.
 It says this, Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off
 everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and let us run with perseverance the
 race marked out for us.
 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus. The author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him
 endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
 [25 : 12] Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful man so that you will not grow
 weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding
 your blood and you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons.
 My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline. Do not lose heart when he rebukes you because
 the Lord disciplines those he loves and punishes everyone he accepts as a son.

The thing is that the Lord Jesus, he has walked that path himself. He has overcome the obstacles and he leads the way for us.

And not only that, please, as I'm going before you to prepare a place for you that where I am, you might be also.

The cost is worth it. The second reason why there may be a but in the invitation or the acceptance of following Jesus is, I suppose you could say it's a failure to give the Lord Jesus his rightful place.

[26 : 41] Luke goes on to tell us about another man, a man to whom Jesus personally extends an invitation, and follow me. And when we think about this encouragement, this invitation, it's found in what is the present tense.

So the perfect tense, isn't it? Present tense. And it's translated, be following me. So follow and continue following. Almost to suggest that this man has already, again, attached himself to the Lord Jesus.

And Jesus is encouraging to keep on. And in the next section we find in Luke 10, the next thing we find is Jesus sending out disciples before him, sending out the 70 to preach the word of God.

Would he be one of the 70? Be following me. And this man says, well, Lord, let me first go and bury my father.

And as you've read that story, you might think, well, that's a perfectly reasonable request. After all, we're encouraged in the scriptures to honor our mother and our father.

[28 : 28] And you might be a little bit surprised by the words of Jesus, who says, well, let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God. Well, perhaps it's helpful to use the illustration provided by the preacher G. Campbell Morgan, who wrote about a friend of his who was seeking to travel in some unfamiliar territory in the land of Israel.

The man went to a friend of his in that land, a wealthy Arab, who he tried to persuade to go on the journey with him as a guide. The young Arab wanted to go, but he insisted that he couldn't do it right there and then.

He pointed to his father, a stately, robust old man sitting at the door of his tent in seemingly perfect health and said, sir, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

father. The old man was certainly not dead, but the young man was expressing in a typically Eastern way his devotion to his father by saying that he couldn't go on such a journey so long as his father was still alive.

And I believe that this describes the case with this man. there was something about this follower that moved Jesus to call him to immediately to a particular task.

[30 : 08] But the man was telling Jesus that he felt that the obligation to his father took precedence over everything else.

even the call of Jesus upon his life. And really the response of the Lord Jesus was this.

Look, anybody can physically bury the dead. It's not essential that you be here to do it. so let those who have not been called let the unbeliever be taken up with the concern of burying the dead.

But you I have called you. I have called you for a purpose. There are needs around.

There are those who are going to a lost eternity in hell and they need to hear the good news of salvation. What I want from you is this.

[31 : 27] Go and preach. That is our calling. And it's meant to teach us that when it comes to following the Lord Jesus it's his agenda which is to take first place.

Yes, there may be things in our lives that we want to do. Things that we are taken up with. And we feel that yes, we do have an obligation to various things.

To family, to friends. things in our lives. And sometimes we do feel torn about doing this, letting someone down.

But when we feel torn between following the Lord Jesus or following someone else, there should really be no contest.

Again, the Lord Jesus said, anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. Anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

[33 : 00] Anyone who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it. Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

It's hard. And sometimes people will not understand the decision that we make to follow Jesus. But nevertheless, if Jesus calls us, we ought not to say but.

Yes, but. And this leads us to our third reason. It's a failure to remain single-minded.

The first man offered to follow Jesus, but Jesus stopped him. The second man was called by Jesus to follow, but his father stopped him.

And now there's a third man who offered to follow Jesus, but then he stopped himself. Luke writes, and another also said, I will follow you, Lord, but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family. [34 : 24] what did he mean by this? What did he mean by saying goodbye to his family? There's a story in the Old Testament of Elijah calling Elisha to follow after him, to be the prophet in his place.

Elijah turned to Elisha and said, please let me kiss my father and mother and then I will follow you. And Elisha permitted him to do this. And so Elisha made a fire from the farming equipment and slaughtered the livestock upon the altar that he'd made and he made a great feast.

And then he got up and he followed Elijah from then on. But in this account there's more to this man's intention than just kissing mum and dad goodbye and then getting on with things.

Luke tells us, Jesus replied, no one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God. And then he uses the picture of a ploughman grabbing hold of the plough to do the work in the field.

[35 : 49] And to do the job properly that the ploughman, he had to fix his eyes upon a point on the other side of the field and keep his eyes fixed on that point so that when he ploughed the furrow would be straight.

Because if he started looking back to the farmhouse and the plough could go everywhere and you look back and you see, ooh, and it would be no good.

And that's what it is of constantly looking back. It's showing that we're not single minded.

There's other distractions taking hold of us. There's other concerns. things. And this man was expressing a commitment to follow Jesus after he'd written farewell to those who were at his home. Maybe he was looking and saying, oh, in a dismal way, well, you know, following Jesus is going to be so tough, so difficult that he's basically saying goodbye to everybody.

[37 : 05] His life wasn't worth living anymore. and rather than trusting, rather than looking to Jesus and trusting him to keep him and to sustain him, here was a divided man.

he was willing to follow Jesus but he also wanted to keep his interest at home well maintained because really that was where his heart was.

And again, this arrangement would never work. we have to be wholeheartedly devoted to following after Jesus.

Now, the Lord Jesus often calls us to serve him and follow him in the midst of other earthly responsibilities.

Not everybody is called to what we may term as full-time Christian ministry. We're not all called to the pastorate.

[38 : 25] We're not all called to missionary work in a sense that's going on overseas to the mission field. But really in a sense we are all called to missionary work where God has placed us.

In the office, on the factory floor, amongst our families and our friends, in school or college, we are called of God to follow him, to serve him.

And we ought to do so with devotion. God to follow him to follow him after Jesus because of a divided focus.

Perhaps with one eye on the heavenly cause, but another eye on earthly treasure. Jesus taught that many a man would hear his word and the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth will choke the word, making it unfruitful.

And likewise, the apostle Paul wrote, no one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs. No, he wants to please his commanding officer. we have all been offered the privilege of following Jesus.

[40 : 11] But this evening we looked at three ways that we can hear the call of Jesus to follow, but we fall short. We, as it were, say, Lord, yes, I will follow, but we fail to count the cost, or we fail to keep him as our top priority, or we fail to give our single focus to him.

It's tough to follow Jesus. I won't deny it, but it's worth it.

And so just think upon the person of our Savior. If he calls, he doesn't expect us to do it on our own, he says, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.

I will be with you to the ends of the end. And that's our hope. God will be with us through all the trial, all the tribulation, all the hardship.

And we know that the trials of this present world are nothing compared to the glory that is going to be revealed.

[42 : 05] world. So when he calls, I hope you will be able to say, Lord, yes, I will follow you. No buts.

Let's pray. God God love God God God