

## Luke 9:57-62- The Uncommitted Follower

TSK, GreekLexicon, Reinecker, JFB, Geneva, Gill, Robertson, Poole, Clarke, Spurgeon, Trapp, Henry, Geisler, Calvin, Barnes?

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: "A mile wide and an inch deep," is a characteristic (特点) of many Christians.

I see this in Christian clubs in Universities where the young people speak enthusiastically about their love for Jesus, only to plunge into deep sin the next week. Maybe they are Christians, but their lives don't fully match their talk and emotions.

I see this among those who like the idea of looking spiritual around other Christians, and maybe they are Christians, but they have little interest in holy living or talking when no one is looking. You couldn't tell them apart from the drug dealer.

I see this among young people who are baptized (受洗的), who have the catechism 教理问答 memorized and sing with gusto in the worship service, but their lives do not reflect full Christian living.

These are uncommitted followers who are a mile wide, but only an inch deep.

The fact that some people in the church are "a mile wide and an inch deep" is not new. Hear today about 3 types of uncommitted followers of Jesus!

Our headings are:

I will follow, but my Comfort comes First

I will follow, but my Father comes First

I will follow, but my Family comes First

Our goals are: That you will be moved in the New Year to be a truly committed (委身的) follower of Jesus Christ and do your part in his kingdom!

### I Will follow, but My Comfort come First

57 Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go."

#### 1. Someone walking with Jesus proclaimed that he would follow Jesus wherever he went.

It is possible that this man was emotionally moved by what he saw and heard, but he was not moved to the depths of his soul. (This is like when a man promises to do everything for a woman because he is emotionally drawn to her.)

It is possible he saw the crowds that came to Jesus and wanted to be part of the movement! Many were following Jesus and he wanted to do so too. (This is like kids who state they like a singer or an actor simply because others say they like him.)

It is possible he wanted to look spiritual, for people to think highly of him, like a politician who calls on God to bless the people, even though he is not a true believer in Jesus.

It is likely that there were a combination of reasons for his bold, but it was a shallow claim.

58 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."

#### 2. Jesus' response was significant: He rebuked the man for his statement because he knew the heart of man.

The language here does not seem like a rebuke (指责), but when you look at the context you can be sure of this. This rebuke parallels 2 other rebukes that follow.

#### 3. So how was Jesus rebuking this man – a Scribe 文士 (Matthew 8:19)? Jesus told the Scribe that:

a. He was expecting too much of the world's grandeur and wealth – and he wouldn't get it. As a Scribe, he would have felt entitled to comforts of life by virtue of his position. His blinding eagerness showed he was ill-prepared for the task.

b. Jesus was implying that he would eventually abandon the Lord. Jesus knew that when he was going to suffer and that all his disciples would abandon him. Jesus knew that his disciples would do this when they realized that he would not set up an earthly kingdom and put his disciples in prominent positions. Jesus knew that his disciples' cravings 欲望 were too strong! Spurgeon said of this man: "He was a volunteer; but his zeal was too hot to hold out long."

#### 4. Lessons:

a. The Lord welcomes all kinds of people into his kingdom. It doesn't matter where you are from, how poor you are, or what others think about you. He was willing to engage a Scribe...a snob...or a tax collector...or a fisherman!

b. Those who follow Christ must be prepared in body and soul to suffer discomforts! You must be willing to fully separate from the cravings on this world...like Moses and other the saints of old!

Hebrews 11:26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

Hebrews 11:37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted ( 被试探 ) , were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute ( 穷困的 ) , afflicted, tormented —38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.  
1 Corinthians 4:11 To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless.

If you lose your job for following Jesus, it must not drive you into depression. If you have broken glass put into your food like the Vietnamese police did to a pastor, you would not be surprised!

### **I will follow, but My Father comes First**

59 Then He said to another, "**Follow Me.**" But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." 60 Jesus said to him, "**Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.**"

#### **1. Jesus then challenged another man to follow him, and, according to Matthew, to go and preach the Gospel.**

Jesus did this to expose another non-committed follower – a mile wide, but an inch deep!

#### **2. But the man responded that he wanted to go and bury his father first before following Jesus.**

a. **This doesn't mean that the man's father had died and he needed to go for a funeral.** The Jews buried their loved ones the same day they died. So if his father had died the same day, he would have stayed at home and not come to meet Jesus.

b. **What this man meant was that he wanted to go back to his home, nourish ( 赡养 ) his father while he was alive, wait until his father died, and whenever that happened, bury him, and then follow the Lord.**

#### **3. Jesus' response was significant: Let the dead bury their own dead...and you go and preach the kingdom of God.**

**"Bury their own dead" meant that the Lord knew the man was making an excuse and he rebuked him unequivocally ( 不含糊地 , 明确地 ) .** We know Jesus was treating this as an excuse because the **Lord was not against attending funerals.** He went himself.

#### **4. But what does "let the dead bury their own dead" mean?**

**The Lord meant that those who were "spiritually dead"** are the ones who could and should become preoccupied with ( 专注于 , 被...所占据 ) the "physical dead."

#### **5. Lessons:**

a. **Do you want to wait until your children are grown up and go off to college before you work hard for the Lord?** You want to wait until you retire before you serve as elder? **The procrastinator ( 拖延者 ) hurts his, the Lord's, and his neighbor's cause.** Don't wait until you have nice furniture before you invite people to your house! So find out what you can do for the kingdom, get trained if you need to, and do it. That's what the serious Christian will do.

b. **If you have been working faithfully for the kingdom, don't stop. Keep doing it.**

c. **Pious ( 虔诚的 ) words don't fool God.** The man might have seemed to be good in the eyes of those around, but the Lord knew the heart. It was an open book in front of Jesus.

### **I will follow, but my Family comes First**

61 And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house." 62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow ( 犁 ) , and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

**1. Then another person committed himself to following the Lord but asked for some time to go and say goodbye to his family at home.** This man wanted to go home, spend time, set his house in order, and then leave. He had no intention of starting to follow the Lord immediately.

**2. The Lord condemned this man's lack of commitment to his service.**

**For sure, the Lord was not against saying goodbye to one's family,** like when one goes to the mission field. In fact, Elisha asked Elijah to say goodbye to his family when he was preparing to take over from him and **Elijah gave him permission to do so.** And after saying goodbye, Elisha returned.

1 Kings 19:19 So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke ( 轭 ) of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. **Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle ( 斗篷 ) on him.** 20 And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." And he said to him, "**Go back again,** for what have I done to you?" 21 **So Elisha turned back from him,** and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen's equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. **Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant.**

This man had other distractions ( 分心 , 干扰 ) . **He could not focus on the pursuit of spiritual things.** He was distracted as Lot's wife! She wanted to leave, but her heart was still set on Sodom.

Genesis 19:26 But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

**3. To illustrate his point, Jesus said that this 3<sup>rd</sup> man was like one who was plowing and looking back.**

The man who looks back can never make straight furrows ( 犁沟 ) , for he pulls to one side. (Ever seen people change lanes when they look off to the side of the road at an accident? Same thing.) The one who plows must focus on that which is ahead.

**So the meaning is that the one who keeps his trust in Jesus Christ is one who does not stray 走偏.**

He wanted to look spiritual in front of people, but he did not have a heart commitment.

**4. Lessons:**

**a. Many desire to follow Jesus and to work for him in different areas of service, but they often start with: "Lord, I want to serve you, but..."** Financial security takes over. That 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> academic degree takes over. Raising children takes over. Entertainment and pleasure-seeking take over.

**If you have done this, it is time to drop the excuses and totally surrender ( 降伏 ) to the Lord.** The Lord is not fooled by your talk or your good intentions. He wants to see some depth in your life.

**b. While you are not fit to be part of the kingdom because of your constant looking back, yet the Lord makes you fit by his taking the punishment for all your sins.**

**Conclusion:**

**Jesus highlighted 3 things that cause the uncommitted follower not to serve him.** They put their comfort, their father, and their family before him.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

**1. The Lord Jesus wants you to be focused on him** – focus on this work of creating and re-creating you in Jesus Christ. Only when you focus on him you will be more committed to his work. Psalm 80:17 "Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, Upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself." 18 Then we will not turn back from You; Revive ( 复兴 ) us, and we will call upon Your name.

**2. So will you take some time on this New Year's Day to focus on what is distracting you from real commitment to kingdom work?** Will you see if pursuit of comforts take over your life...or whether success in your family takes over your life...or whether your self-promotion takes over your life...or whether pleasures like sports, games, foods, intimacy...take over your life?

**3. If these things are taking over your life, ask the Lord for the grace to see all he has done and fully commit to him in the New Year.**

Finally: Being vaguely familiar with the Lord isn't enough. Even talking to him and singing to him aren't enough. You have to be fully committed to him. You can only be fully committed to him if you know him intimately! You can only know him intimately if he changes your heart and takes away your sins. He will only change your heart and take away your sins if you ask.