

2nd Opinion: Jesus Christ commands, 'Follow me'

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As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place 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 plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:57-62)



Eric Black As they were walking along...

Already, the story is moving. Already, Jesus is on the move with people following after him. Jesus is indeed moving. Even while we sit here, Jesus is moving. After we sit here a while, will we then be on the move with Jesus?

The first one said, "I will follow you wherever you go." Would he? Jesus doesn't sound too confident in the man when Jesus says, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

When Jesus says to the man, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but

the Son of Man has no place to lay his head,” Jesus is telling the man following Jesus will be like going through life without security.

When we as a church say we will follow Jesus wherever he goes, are we willing to go with him out into the wilds of the world? Are we willing to forego the security of our structures?

Right where we need to be

If we are, then we are right where we need to be. If we are willing to follow Jesus outside the comfort and security of church as we know it, then nothing will rattle us.

Jesus told another man to follow him, but the man said he needed to fulfill the traditional expectation of burying his father, and Jesus told the man to let the dead bury their own dead. Jesus told the man not to let even the most honorable tradition stand in the way of proclaiming the kingdom of God.

Just as there is comfort and security in our structures, there is comfort and security in our traditions. The trouble is, tradition can stand in the way of proclaiming the kingdom of God.

Into the unknown

Are we willing to step outside what we know in order to follow Jesus into the unknown? Are we willing to set our traditions aside in order to proclaim the kingdom of God?

If we are, then we are right where we need to be. If we are willing to follow Jesus outside the comfort and security of church as we know it, then nothing will rattle us.

As they were walking, another man promised to follow Jesus—after he said goodbye to his family. Jesus told him whoever can't let go of the past isn't

fit for service in the kingdom of God. Actually, Jesus said, “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”

Walking on

We see honor in remembering our past. We see good advice for the future in our past. Yet Jesus is walking on. In our need to stop to cherish the past, will we watch Jesus walk farther and farther away?

Are we willing to remember our past and learn from it without trying to regain it? Are we willing to follow the God of the resurrection into the life of the future?

If we are, then we are right where we need to be. If we are willing to follow Jesus outside the comfort and security of church as we know it, then nothing will rattle us.

Remember a time when, as a child, you followed one of your childhood heroes on a grand adventure, hoofing it along some path or trail in search of who knows what? Remember your trust in your childhood hero? Remember Jesus teaching us we must be like little children to enter the kingdom of God?

It can be a bit scary to sleep out under the stars if you aren't used to it. It can feel disrespectful to neglect the obligations of our traditions. It can seem cold-hearted to walk away from our past.

And yet Jesus doesn't call us to fear, disrespect or callousness. Jesus calls us to faith, to wonder and to obedience. Jesus calls us to follow him along the path in search of the kingdom of God.

As long as we are with Jesus, we are right where we need to be.

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