

"Let the Dead Bury Their Own Dead"

Matthew 8:18-22

Overview



Commitment is not a popular subject these days. Much of our culture and much of our lives are spent trying to achieve the “good life” - which usually means less responsibility, less work, less commitment overall.

And is there anything wrong with that? Who would not prefer a life of greater ease – one which allows more time for rest and spends less time spent stressed out over the cares of life.

There certainly is a time and a place for rest and restoration. But while allowing for that, Jesus also challenged His hearers with a different message – one that involved commitment and sacrifice and great cost (with Jesus as our priority).

Getting Started

All In??!



1. Share one thing that you have truly committed to in life (something that you have made a priority). What led you to choose that priority?
 2. Is there anything you wish you could commit more time and effort to right now? A hobby? An interest? A task unfinished? A dream not yet realized?
 3. Looking at the other side of the coin - describe what a day of relaxation looks like for you. Where are you? What are you doing? How do you unplug and unwind?
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The Text



¹⁸ When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake. ¹⁹ Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.”

²⁰ Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”

²¹ Another disciple said to him, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.”

²² But Jesus told him, “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.”

Matthew 8:18-22 (NIV)

The Video (optional) “Let the Dead Bury Their Own Dead” – Matthew 8:18-22 – by Kyle Corbin, Sept. 26/21 (view at www.immanuelonline.ca).



NOTES: _____

Understanding



1. Where is Jesus at this point in the narrative (check vs. 5, 14)? What has He been doing (vs. 16)? What do you imagine His state of mind, body and spirit are at this point?
2. What does Jesus command His disciples to do in vs. 18? Why do you think Jesus gave this command?
3. How is the declaration in verse 19 a remarkable one? Consider what is being said as well as who is saying it. NB: Is the teacher ready to follow Jesus across the lake – or is he saying something else?
4. At first glance, the reply to the teacher of the law’s promise to follow Jesus seems out of place (vs. 20). Why does Jesus reply in this way? What is He trying to tell the man? How is it that Jesus has “no place to lay his head”?
5. The term “Son of Man” was an ill-defined and vague term in Jesus’ culture. Why do you think Jesus chose to use such a term here?
6. What request does another disciple make of Jesus in verse 21? Does this seem like a reasonable request? Why or why not (what do you think he is really asking for)?
7. How does Jesus respond to the man’s request (verse 22)? What is Jesus trying to communicate with this response about what it means to follow Him? Who are the “dead” that Jesus is referring to (check out Eph. 2:1, Col. 2:13, Rev. 3:1-6)? How is it possible exactly that the dead will “bury their own dead”?

Applying



1. What might be different ways we can retreat from “the crowd” around us? What is your preferred way to retreat? On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 is “throw open the doors to the crowd” and 10 is “in full and total retreat”) what number represents your need to separate yourself from the crowd right now?
2. Can you honestly say to Jesus – “I will follow you – wherever”? What emotions do you feel as you say that? What might cause you to have reservations about making that declaration?
3. Are there any things people wrongly assume they will receive by following Jesus? What are some of those misplaced expectations? What do you suppose the teacher of the law (vs. 19) was looking for? Have you ever been guilty of looking to Jesus for the wrong things or wrong results?
4. What sacrifices has Jesus called you to make as you have followed Him? What new experiences has He called you to? How has God used those sacrifices or experiences to shape you? What blessings have you known as a result of the things God has allowed into your life?
5. What are the different reasons people give for not following after Jesus (or for not making Him a priority)? Are any of those reasons legitimate? Are any of them seen to be more acceptable than others?
6. In verse 21-22, Jesus seems to be asking the disciple to forego his duties to his parents and family. How do you reconcile this with God’s instructions to care for family (see Ex. 20:12, Eph. 6:1-3, 1 Tim. 5:8 but also Matt. 10:34-39)?
7. In reading this passage, are you sensing any way in which your commitment to Jesus needs to be strengthened or your priorities need to change? If so - how will you accomplish this?
8. What do you sense Jesus doing in your life right now – growing you, using you, or glorifying God through you? Is there any way you need to change how you use your time, your money, your effort?

Memory Verse(s)



³⁴ Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.

Mark 8:34-5 (NIV)

Extra Resources



- ❖ “*Let the Dead Bury Their Own Dead*” – *Matthew 8:18-22* – by Kyle Corbin, Sept. 26/21 (sermon, view at www.immanuelonline.ca). Pastor Kyle considers the implications of making Jesus our first priority.
- ❖ “*How to Almost Follow Jesus*” - by Marshall Segal (article at www.desiringgod.org, April 12, 2018). This article reflects on what Jesus calls His disciples to in Matthew 8 (and how we can fall short).
- ❖ “*The Marks of the Committed Christian*” – by John MacArthur (article at www.gty.org, 1983). In this extensive article MacArthur reviews John 13:31-38 for evidences of those truly committed to Jesus.