

DETERMINED DISCIPLESHIP – Part 2 by Andrew Roberts

Have you determined to follow Jesus Christ?

We began a series of articles last week concerning determined discipleship. We pointed out that Jesus rarely walked alone as He moved throughout Galilee and Judea fulfilling His ministry. Yet His teachings about the level of commitment involved with discipleship are challenging. Particularly in Luke 9, Jesus effectively divided those who would *like* to follow Him and those who are *determined* to follow Him.

Last week we noted that following Christ often means sacrificing comfort and security. Jesus leads us where He needs us, even to the extent of physical hardships, such as Christians faced in the first century. But His leading may also prompt us to sacrifice the comfort and security found in religious tradition. Disciples must ask themselves if they want to expend energy defending the status quo of methods and religious tradition or follow Jesus by defending His message against enemies of the cross.

Furthermore, Jesus calls His disciples to change their priorities and accept His will for their lives.

“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’” (Luke 9:59-60).

Here, one of Christ’s followers catches His eye and He calls him. Can you imagine being that guy? It has been the worst week of your life. Your father has passed away. Most of us can relate to the deep mourning and inner void felt when someone dear to us dies.

Suddenly Jesus looks directly at you. He points to you and tells you, “Follow Me.” My ears would perk up. Jesus noticed me! Jesus picked me! Jesus has given me something to do! Maybe there’s still hope. Maybe life still has a purpose and it is following Jesus!

Gladly I’ll follow you Lord. I just need to bury my father and settle some estate issues. Then I’ll be free from all obligations. I just need to handle this one heart breaking trial by myself and then I’m all yours, Lord. But Jesus is impatient. Jesus apparently lacks compassion. Where is the gentle Jesus?

Jesus is teaching this follower (and all of us) a lesson about determined discipleship. The determined disciple takes his priorities and mission from Jesus Christ. While this follower could bury and pay respect to his dead father, he could not help him. Meanwhile there was a world full of living (though spiritually dead) people that desperately needed the message of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus came to seek and save the lost. He came to free captives of the chains of sin. He came to thwart the devil, by His atoning sacrifice and deliver humankind to an everlasting habitation with the Father. And there is no time to spare!

“And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation” (Heb. 9:27-28).

Preaching the Kingdom to the world is the most important thing that disciples can do. Preach Jesus Christ and His divine plan for salvation. Preach the church, the household of God to all who are outside of this spiritual family. Preach the Word of God that makes us wise for salvation and equips us for all good works and righteousness.

People continue to die. But the determined disciple can do such greater service and honor than merely burying someone. Disciples have been empowered and commissioned to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. By doing so we prepare others for an eternity with God. When they pass from this life, if they’ve accepted the gift of God, they stand before the judgment seat with an advocate, Jesus Christ.

That is the priority and mission of the determined disciple. So, disciple, how are you accomplishing your mission? Most of us can probably use a little jolt from time to time to help keep our priorities straight.

Certainly for the man with a dead father, the Teacher’s instructions were a jolt. But this encounter illustrates for us the importance of the message and the urgency with which we need to present the message. It can’t wait...for anything. We must determine to follow Christ, making His priorities our own.