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Matthew 8:18-22

Christian Discipleship!

Intro: What is a Christian disciple? A Christian disciple is a believer who follows after Jesus Christ.

Jesus departed from Capernaum after healing many people of sicknesses, diseases, and demon possession. He gave orders to His disciples to leave the thronging and excited crowd to go to the other side. An excited scribe came up and said to Jesus, Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go. What the scribe "said" was easier said than done. Christian discipleship involves more than talk. People can say a lot out of their mouth with no heart to do. Declaring and doing are two different things. Speak and service are two different things. Isaiah 29:13 The Lord says: *"These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me."*

The scribe had a burning with no in-depth learning of Christian discipleship. The scribe lacked precious time with Jesus as a learner. Jesus taught discipleship is costly. Jesus said, *"For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it – lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple"* (Luke 14:28-33). Jesus said in Matthew 16:25-26, *"For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul."* The scribe did not sit down first and count the cost. He did not think about his profession of devotion.

Jesus didn't encourage the scribe to follow after Him because the scribe didn't have the right heart. The Lord could see his heart; it was not the heart of an apostle, he was ready to follow Jesus at that moment, in the season of Jesus' popularity; but would he persevere in danger, in persecution, and in hardships? The answer to the question is no. I believe the scribe was moved by sudden impulse or the surrounding excited crowd. Sudden impulse and exciting crowds fizzle out. When the excitement is gone your commitment to Jesus Christ should remain. When the crowd is gone your commitment to Jesus Christ has to remain.

Jesus wants disciples but not at any cost. Christian discipleship is not cheap Christianity! There is a high cost in following after Jesus; a cost many people are not willing to pay. The cost of discipleship is being completely sold out to Jesus Christ (Galatians 2:20). The cost of discipleship is persecution (Matthew 5:11). The cost of discipleship is hardship (2 Timothy 2:3-4). The cost is isolation (Revelation 1:9). The cost is separation from friends and family (Matthew 4:21-22).

There are two aspects of Christian discipleship that Matthew shares with us in verses 20-22:

I. **Christian Discipleship Requires Self-Chosen Poverty:** Verse 20 Jesus said unto Him, *“Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”*

Every Christian should be willing to forsake all. Every Christian believer is called to give up any idol that stands in the way of following Jesus wholeheartedly.

Examples: Matthew 19:16-30 His disciples gave up everything to follow Jesus. Jesus told a parable in Matthew 13:45-46 of a merchant who found that pearl of great price and sold everything he had to possess it.

Jesus the Creator of all things, the Possessor of earth and all therein, the Messiah, the Son of God, had no settled dwelling, no home of His own. Jesus chose to live a life that embraces poverty. After His baptism, He went into the wilderness, lived as a starving person would. He lived the life of a poor itinerate preacher, walking on foot for thousands of miles and often sleeping outdoors.

Foxes have holes—fox holes are where foxes hide themselves from danger, take their rest, and secure their whelps.

Birds have nests—bird nests are where birds sit, lay, and hatch their eggs, and bring up their young.

The Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head—In essence, Jesus said to the scribe, “If you want to follow Me, this world cannot be your home. You have to realize that this world is not your home. You are just passing through this world.

Jesus was functionally homeless. His disciples were functionally homeless. He and His disciples stayed in homes of those who would take them in. Luke 10:6-8 *“And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you.”*

If you want to be a true disciple of Christ, you must define your relationship to the world. The word “world” in the Bible refers to a man made system, which is alternate from God. Jesus is telling us not to cultivate friendship with the world. Christian are in the world, but are not to be of the world. Jesus said in John 15:19, *“If you were of the world, the world would love you as it own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”*

II. **Christian Discipleship Requires Jesus First:** verses 21-22 Another said to Jesus, “Let me first go and bury my father.” Jesus answered, “Leave the dead to bury the dead.” The man’s request seemed quite normal and legitimate. We would think that this man was honoring his parents by taking time to bury his father. It is not clear from the text whether his father was sick and going to die soon or if his father was

already dead. I don't think his father was dead, if so the man would have been at home with the mourners. The practice was to bury as soon as possible, within twenty-four hours after death if possible. It is likely that the man was asking for permission to remain at home unto his father's death and burial, and then follow Jesus.

Jesus is not advising that children should disregard their family responsibilities. In Matthew 15, Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for not honoring their father and mother. Jesus said to the Pharisees, "You know the fifth commandment—honor your father and mother, but you use your traditions to disregard your duties to your parents."

Jesus responded to the disciple's use of the word first. Let me *first* go and bury my father. The word "first" reveals the spirit of the man. His first consideration was not Jesus. His first consideration was his family. To be a disciple of Jesus Christ your first consideration must be Jesus. Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, "*Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*"

A few chapters later Jesus will repeat the same teaching. Matthew 10:37 Jesus said, "*He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.*"

There are times when discipleship and family obligations conflict. When this happens, put Jesus first.

Jesus said, "Let the dead bury their own dead. Let those who are dead in sin stay home and take care of the burial of those who are physically dead."