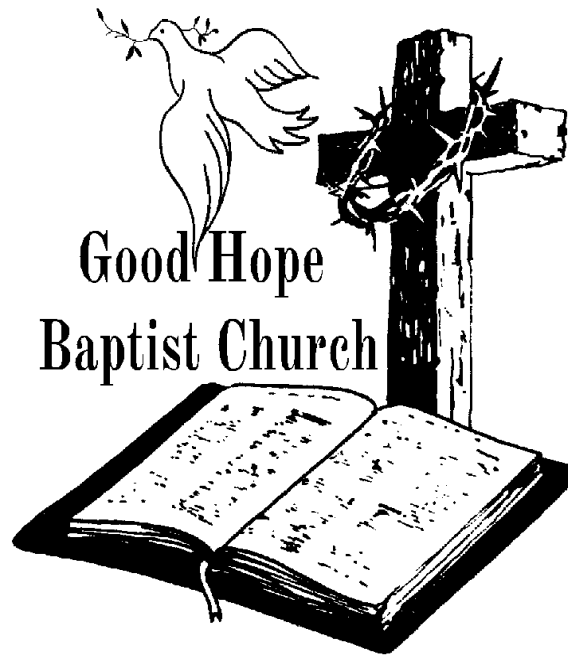


Faith Follows

Luke 9:55-62



Good Hope
Baptist Church

Living Together In The Love Of God

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FOCAL Read Responsively Luke 9:57-62 And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. (58) And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. (59) And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. (60) **Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.** (61) And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. (62) And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Our Lord Jesus Christ loves people. He was always going out of His way to meet new people, to tell them that He had come to save them. Jesus said “**him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out**” (John 6:37). In our context today Jesus went out of His way to visit a **village of the Samaritans** with some of His disciples as He journeyed on His way to Jerusalem. We read:

CONTEXT Luke 9:53 And they (the Samaritans) **did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.**

The Samaritans refused to receive Jesus, an action that angered the disciples. The disciples asked Jesus “**do you want us to call fire from Heaven down on them and destroy the village?**” (verse 54). Jesus responded by rebuking His disciples, saying:

CONTEXT Luke 9:55-56 ... Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. (56) For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.

Jesus made it very clear in His ministry that **He came to seek and save that which is lost (Luke 19:10)**. Jesus went out of His way to tell people about His Gospel. He stayed up late at night so **Nicodemus** could come and speak to Him (**John 3:1**). He went out of His way to visit the Tax Collectors **Matthew** while he sat taking taxes, and **Zacchaeus** while he sat up in a tree. Jesus went to the fishermen **James** and **John**, and spent time with the **rich young ruler** and the poorest of widows. Jesus never turned any away, but each place He stopped at and each person He preached to He said "**Follow Me**".

It is possible to follow Jesus and not be saved. People followed Jesus for healing, for food, to see the miracles, to hear Him preach. It is, however, *impossible* to be saved and *not be a follower of Jesus*. Those who are saved follow Him. Those who are His Sheep are always close to their Shepherd.

The first part of salvation is following Jesus. "**Follow Me**": That another way of saying "**repent**". Before you are saved you "**follow yourself**" or "**follow the world**". Your life is not defined by the Lord Jesus, but by what you want or what others want. You are not under the care of the Great Shepherd. But once you **repent, turning to Jesus to be saved** then you "**follow Him**". You stop being the boss of you, and start letting the Lord be the Boss of you. He defines you, He tells you what is right

and wrong, good and evil. He sets the standard, for to the saved "**Jesus is Lord**".

The three men in our text today are not repentant, nor are they saved. To them Jesus is *not* Lord, and they are lost.

None of these individuals are saved, for none of these individuals have repented. Repentance is so very necessary for salvation. Those who come to Jesus, He will in no wise cast out. But each of these who came to Jesus in our focal text, not one of them were repentant. There was no tear in their eye, no broken heart.

Psalms 34:18 The **LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite (shattered, crushed) spirit.**

And again

Isaiah 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; **I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite (crushed to dust) and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.**

The three that Jesus speaks of in this text have no sense of their sin, nor do they feel that they need a Savior. It is as if they have come to the Lord so as to do Him a favor, as if the Lord of glory was standing – hat in hand – begging people to follow Him. This is not the case. Jesus Christ came to this earth – **not to destroy men's lives** –

but to save as many as would come unto Him by faith.

A deep wound in the body must be explored by the surgeon, and must be cleansed before it can ever be bandaged. The deep wound of sin in the soul must be explored and exposed by the Heavenly Surgeon, and must be cleansed before the balm of salvation can be applied. Those who are saved are first made aware of their sin, and are shamed by it. They *repent* under the convicting power of God the Holy Spirit.

1. Before Anyone Is Saved, They Must First Be Lost

FOCAL Luke 9:57-58 **And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. (58) And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.**

The Bible tells us in the King James that "**a certain man said unto (Jesus), I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest**". On the surface that sounds quite nice. I know that, as a Pastor, it is often hard to get people to help out in the Church. It is a wonderful thing when someone comes up and says "If you need help, Pastor, I'm ready. Just tell me what you need."

This man came to Jesus, and he called Him "**Lord**". He was a volunteer. But I want you to notice that Jesus didn't applaud his offer, but spoke in the negative: "**Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head**". Why

did our Lord do this? I think it has to do with the man's heart. Notice what the man said:

"I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest"

The man was going to follow Jesus *in his own power*. He did not say "**Lord, help me to follow You**", nor did he say "**Hold me up, and I'll be able to come with You**". No, this individual is confident, but not in the Great Shepherd. He is confident in his power to save himself, in his power to go with Jesus, and not in the Great Shepherd's power.

In order to follow Jesus, you need to understand *Who Jesus is* and *who you are*. You need to understand that *you* are a sinner, and Jesus is the *Savior*.

The Bible tells us:

Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

All of Adam's children born into this world, man woman and child, are sinners. All die, because all are sinners. Sin is universal, cloaking, covering each and every one of us. **A man is not a sinner because he sins. He sins because he's a sinner.** We are all natural born sinners!

ILLUSTRATE A little boy had come forward at the end of a worship service, professing to have been saved. The preacher sat down with the parents and the child to make sure he understood what he was doing. The

preacher asked the child, "How do you know that you're saved?" The little boy replied, "I know because I did my part, and the Lord Jesus did His part". The preacher said, "Can you explain what you mean by that?" The little boy said, "Sure! I did all the sinning, and the Lord Jesus did all the saving!"

That is an excellent description of salvation. We are all sinners, all lost, all unable to fix this terrible condition we're in.

My salvation is not based upon what I did, but on what God *must* do. The Lord *must* call me and open my eyes to the fact that I am a sinner. In love He had to reach out to me:

1 John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.

Oh glorious Grace! Jesus Christ loved me before I ever knew Him. He died for me before I ever realized I was a sinner. He came to be my Shepherd while I was but a wolf, and called to me - and to you - promising sweet salvation if I would but come.

Romans 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

I believe it was Adrian Rogers who said "Americans are, by and large, proud peacocks strutting their way to hell". That is just too true. The average American is like this first man. "I'll follow You, Jesus, whithersoever You go". There's no repentance, no turning to God in helplessness saying "Save me, Lord!" We're too proud

for that!

Listen Beloved: While we like dogs chased after the bone of sin, the Blood of Christ was shed for us. That which I do to be saved is to *admit I am a sinner, hopelessly lost and undone*. I deserve hell, but Christ has purchased Heaven for me by the shedding of His own precious Blood. He paid the way, and I - repenting and turning from myself - turn fully to Him.

This first man also not only relied upon himself ("I WILL follow Thee"), but believed that following Jesus would perhaps bring with it some earthly, temporal riches. Jesus warned **"If you follow Me, you're not necessarily going to receive a better temporal life. Foxes have holes - I don't have anywhere to even lay My head"**.

If you ever watch TBN or these other so called "Christian Television Stations" you'll find a group of people who teach that being saved is all about being rich and well to do. They call themselves **"Name it and Claim it"** Christians. They believe that salvation properly understood consists of personal prosperity, that every believer should be rich, free from pain and want, and driving Mercedes cars. They are like this man who says **"I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest"**. They are pleased to go with Jesus, but only if Jesus is going to the bank or the country club. Jesus said:

FOCAL Luke 9:58 ... Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

Will you follow Jesus? Will you be saved? Then once you're saved, you are to follow Jesus. Where will Jesus lead you? Some may be led to the Palace or the White House, but very few. Remember where Jesus walked? He walked amidst the poor and the downtrodden, but very rarely among the rich. Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to the cheering crowd, saying:

Matthew 21:9 ... Hosanna to the son of David; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

Just a few days later Jesus would stand before that same crowd. No longer do they praise Jesus. Pilate asked:

Matthew 27:21-23 ... Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. (22) Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. (23) And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

If you - once saved - will follow Jesus, it will not be to the penthouse but to the prison, not to cheers but to jeers. Though one day you will have a crown, there is never a crown without there first being a Cross.

**2. Once I Am Saved, My King
And His Kingdom Must Always Be First**

FOCAL Luke 9:57-62 And he said unto another,

Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. (60) Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

For years I misunderstood this text. It seemed to me that the second man asked a quite reasonable request. You see, Jesus commanded him "**Follow Me**", but this man said "**I'll follow You Lord, but let me first go and bury my father**". Here I thought that this man lost his daddy to death, and Jesus - quite unreasonably it seemed - didn't want Jesus to bury him. That's not the case. I was researching this text when I came across a commentary by **G. Campbell Morgan**, a great Bible Teacher of the nineteenth century. Dr. Morgan said that a friend of his was trying to get a young Arab to come with him to be an interpreter as he preached in Arabia. Dr. Morgan said:

"At last the Arab looked at him, and said, "Suffer me first to go and bury my father," in the very words of Scripture; and the old man was sitting by his side when he uttered them. What he meant was, "I have a filial obligation that prevents my coming." (Westminster Pulpit, Volume IV, pg 164)

The father wasn't dead, but the man refused to go with Jesus because - perhaps as the older son - he had an obligation to his father's house. He wanted to remain with his parents until his father died. Then, after the death and burial of the father, and the settlement of the estate, *then and only then* was he willing to follow Christ.

This is so applicable to our age. People are extremely

busy, concentrated on doing good things. Children are in school learning good things, and many school activities are even after school. There are baseball games, football games, tennis, archery, band practice, many many things that are good for the development of the child. Schools have even begun to schedule these activities where they conflict with the times that Church services traditionally were held. Parents are overwhelmed, having so much confronting them, so much that they feel they must do for their children. **Let me see to the needs of my children. Let me take them to their sports, their activities, their debate teams, their boys and girls scouts - when I am done, Lord, I will follow You.**

Then there are other good things. Our own parents are aging, and many feel that they must look after them. They have to - like this man in our focal text - stay with their aging parents. **Let me tend to my parents estate - let me bury my father and mother - and then I will follow You, Jesus!**

Then there are personal good things. We seek to be married, or tend to our marriages. We are focused on the good of work and making a living. Doesn't the Scripture command?:

2 Thessalonians 3:7-12 For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; (8) Neither did we eat any man's bread for naught; but wrought with labor and travail night and day, that we might not be charginable to any of you: (9) Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example unto you to follow

us. (10) For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. (11) For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. (12) Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

Work is not a bad thing - it is a good thing. It is a commanded thing. We are to work if we are going to eat. The Bible says of marriage:

Hebrews 13:4 Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

There are so many good things that we *can* and *should* do. But we must never let a good thing keep us from doing the *best* thing. The best thing is to **follow Christ, preaching by your life the Kingdom of God!**

ILLUSTRATE One of my favorite movies is called "The Patriot". The movie is about the American Revolution, and how one man who initially resisted the Revolution eventually joined - and helped win - the war. The main character, Benjamin Martin initially refused to go to war because he was a widower trying to raise a family on his own. When his eldest son joined the Revolution as militia Benjamin Martin joined with him in order to look after him. Later when his son was killed Martin initially gave up, but then rebounded and is seen joining the battle with a battered American flag in his hand.

You see, Benjamin Martin realized that - if he did not stand up for what he believed - that his children and his children's children would be enslaved under the British Monarchy. In the same way Jesus Christ calls those who follow Him to FOLLOW HIM. The devil is always busy, doing his evil work, striving to take over every place he can.

God's people do not have the luxury of standing back and doing nothing. We must **let the dead bury the dead**. Let the lost put the good things first. You who belong to Jesus are to put the best thing first: "**but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God**".

ILLUSTRATE The poet, **Josiah Gilbert Holland**, writes:

**GOD, give us men! A time like this demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith and ready
hands;
Men whom the lust of office does not kill;
Men whom the spoils of office can not buy;
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honor; men who will not lie;
Men who can stand before a demagogue
And damn his treacherous flatteries without
winking!
Tall men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog
In public duty, and in private thinking;
For while the rabble, with their thumb-worn creeds,
Their large professions and their little deeds,
Mingle in selfish strife, lo! Freedom weeps,**

Wrong rules the land and waiting Justice sleeps.

The **Gospel of the Kingdom of God** must be preached! God's people must stand with and follow the Lord Jesus. The best thing you can do for your children is to put Christ first, to tell them of Jesus, to call them to salvation. The best thing you can do for your aged parents is to tell them that Jesus Christ died for their justification, and rose again for their sanctification. The best thing you can do for your job is to tell those you work with that you are a Christ follower, not a world compromiser.

America has fallen because the Church has fallen, and the Church has fallen because the Christian has fallen.

I remember at one point in "the Patriot" that the American Flag fell, and a man picked it up. He was then shot, and the flag fell, and another man picked it up. What would have happened if - when the flag fell - each man went running away, protecting their own interests? All would have been lost.

The Gospel is the flag of the Church, and it flies proudly over the Kingdom of God. We who belong to Jesus *must* put Jesus first for our own sakes, and for the sakes of those we love. His Kingdom must take precedent, or we will lose America - and all we hold dear!

**3. Now That I Am Saved, I Move Forward
Following Jesus One Day At A Time**

FOCAL Luke 9:61-62 **And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. (62) And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.**

ILLUSTRATE I was pondering how best to describe the Christian way of life, then the Lord put this on my heart. A missionary group wanted to go to the Far East, but had never been to the area they wanted to visit. So on their arrival in the Far East they hired a guide. The guide told them, **"Give me everything: Your luggage, your purses, your wallets, your passports. Hold nothing back."** Some of the women in the group wanted to keep their purses. The guide said, **"Your possessions are far more secure with me, and you'll be far safer without these possessions - we will be in some rough territory."**

When they arrived at the railroad station the guide left them for a few minutes while he secured their luggage. A train came in, and all the missionaries got on it. The guide came up and said, **"Will you come out of there?"** When they came out several asked the guide, **"Why did you make us leave the train?"** The guide said, **"That is the wrong train, and it's headed in the wrong direction. Will you please be kind enough to not go before me, but to follow after me?"**

Following their guide the missionaries got on the right train, and in three days they got to their final destination.

As they stood waiting on their guide a stranger came up and said, "I hope you have arranged accommodations before now. There is absolutely no where to stay in this city. The missionaries began to talk amongst themselves. When their guide came up he heard their murmuring and said, **"You must trust me for your accommodations. I have already seen to your needs - follow me."**

Just like this guide, there are three things that the Lord Jesus Christ tells His people:

- a. **Give everything to Me.**
- b. **Follow Me, but do not go before Me.**
- c. **Trust Me concerning the hidden things of the future.**

If you are born again by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ you are to do these three things. **You are not your own - you are bought with a price, a terrible price.** Look to Him Who purchased you.

FOCAL Luke 9:62 **Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.**

Word Study The word "fit" that Jesus used is the Greek EUTHETOS {ευθετος (pronounced yoo'-thet-os)} which means **"to be well placed, to be useful"**.

It is out of place - a bad fit - for a Christian to keep looking backward. We are to look forward, following Jesus. You cannot plow a straight furrow while looking backward. Looking backward makes a mess of a field,

and can even be dangerous. What does the Scripture say?
The Apostle said:

Philippians 3:13-15 ... this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, (14) I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (15) Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

Leave what was yesterday in yesterday. Live in today, and strive forward to follow Jesus. We are commanded to

Hebrews 12:1-2 ... lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, (2) Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith;....

The Lord Jesus runs ahead of us. Follow Him. Heed His Word. Speak to Him daily. Do as He commands. Follow Him!

May Christ speak to your hearts through His Word.



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John 6:37; Luke 9:53; Luke 9:55-56; Luke 19:10; John 3:1; Psalms 34:18; Isaiah 57:15

1. Before Anyone Is Saved, They Must First Be Lost

Luke 9:57-58; Romans 5:12; 1 John 4:19; Romans 5:8; Luke 9:58; Matthew 21:9; Matthew 27:21-23

If you - once saved - will follow Jesus, it will not be to the penthouse but to the prison, not to cheers but to jeers. Though one day you will have a crown, there is never a crown without there first being a Cross.

2. Once I Am Saved, My King And His Kingdom Must Always Be First

Luke 9:57-62; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12; Hebrews 13:4

The Gospel is the flag of the Church, and it flies proudly over the Kingdom of God. We who belong to Jesus *must* put Jesus first for our own sakes, and for the sakes of those we love. His Kingdom must take precedent, or we will lose America - and all we hold dear!

3. Now That I Am Saved, I Move Forward Following Jesus One Day At A Time

Luke 9:61-62; Philippians 3:13-15; Hebrews 12:1-2
