

LIBERATING DISCIPLESHIP

WEEK THREE – “Radical Discipleship” (Luke 9:57-62; Matthew 8:18-22)

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR JULY 28 –

This week’s texts could be from a Bible study on “tough teachings of Jesus.” In both instances the gospel writers give accounts of people who want to follow Jesus but are told that there’s more to following Jesus than just saying you want to follow. The shocking one is the man who wants to follow Jesus but needs to bury his father first. It appears that, in both cases, Jesus tells the man that he should “let the dead bury the dead” and that if he truly wants to follow Jesus he’ll leave his father behind. If discipleship is the byproduct or evidence of our faith, does that mean Jesus requires us to leave *everything* behind to follow him? What does that look like for us? A helpful tool to see the similarities and differences in each account can be found at the University of Toronto’s “Five Gospel Parallels” website - <http://sites.utoronto.ca/religion/synopsis/meta-5g.htm>

1. Aside from following Jesus, what would you consider your prime motivator for life? Is it family? Is it career? Is it friends? Home ownership? What does this prime motivator provide for you? How would its absence affect your life?
2. What is our culture’s expectations of what our prime motivator should be?
3. Even though we understand Jesus as “Son of God,” what do you suppose the designation “Son of Man” stands for? How are these designations similar? How are they different?
4. In first century Palestine, do you think that burying one’s father was considered a noble religious duty? If so, why would Jesus tell someone that it’s more important to follow him than to fulfill a family obligation? Does this seem insensitive of Jesus?
5. If you have a hymnal at home (doesn’t matter which), can you find examples of hymns that deal with discipleship and what it means to follow Jesus (example CH #602 “O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee”)? What are some examples of what Jesus requires of his followers in these songs? What do the followers owe Jesus? What kind of loyalty is mentioned? What does one have to renounce or surrender? What assurances are given for following Jesus? What benefits or rewards are offered?

6. In Luke's gospel account, a third person is mentioned who simply wants to say goodbye to his family, but Jesus suggests that this is not as important as following him. How does placing a high priority on family make one unfit for the Kingdom of God?

7. Is it possible to take the radical demands in these passages seriously? If we want to be sincere and credible with regards to our faith, what are we to do?

8. What is the difference between someone who is "radical" and someone who is a "fanatic?" What motivates a religious fanatic to perform extreme actions (e.g. terrorism) in the name of a cause?

9. How does following Jesus affect your lifestyle? Relationships? Priorities?

10. When does Jesus' way conflict with your way?