

Stage VI. Jesus' Later Judean Ministry
A. Jesus Travels to Jerusalem For the Feast of Tabernacles

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #143

3. Jesus Copes With Inadequate Discipleship
Luke 9:57-62 (Parallel Text: MT 8:19-22)

57 As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." 58 Jesus replied,

"Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

59 He said to another man, *"I command you to continually follow me."*

But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

60 Jesus said to him, *"I command you to let the dead bury their own dead, but you must go and keep on proclaiming the kingdom of God."*

61 Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family."

62 Jesus replied, *"No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."*

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	On the Journey to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles
Timeline	September (Month 31)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VI: Jesus' Later Judean Ministry
	A. Jesus Travels to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles
Title	3. Jesus Copes With Inadequate Discipleship

COMMENT:

Today's reading describes the third and final event that occurred on Jesus' journey to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles. It delivers a profound message to us from Jesus on the nature of discipleship.

While Jesus was relentlessly moving closer to his cross on the journey to Jerusalem, he was confronted by people in the crowd along the way with a faulty understanding or commitment to discipleship. Jesus faced the same kind of discipleship issues throughout his ministry, and we face them today.

The problem was a matter of just two words: *"But first..."* Obedience was the second priority for these prospective disciples, not the first. Because the issue of Jesus' sovereign reign as King over their lives had not been settled, he knew that it was just a matter of time until their secondary commitment to him would be overshadowed by the higher priority they had placed on someone, or something else.

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If Jesus is our true Master and Lord, there are no #2 or #3 priorities in our lives, for everything is under his direction and control. HE is our all, in everything we are and do, and his will directs every relationship and activity of our lives. When someone says "but first let me do something else before I obey you" to Jesus, they are telling him that they are not ready to really follow him at all.

Once we have "put our hand to the plow," we become useless if we "look back" to recommit ourselves to something that we should have left permanently behind. On a practical level, if we are holding on to a plow and turn around to face behind us, it is inevitable that we will pull the plow-handle in the direction we face, and our plowing track will begin to turn in that direction. We cannot help plowing in a big circle if we try to do it while we are facing backward!

The only way to plow in a straight line is to stay focused on what is straight in front of us. Like Jesus had his eyes fixed on Jerusalem. Keeping our eyes on Jesus is the only way to follow him. Absolute surrender to Jesus' control over everything in our lives is the starting point for true discipleship.

The large band of disciples that were following Jesus to Jerusalem had left everything to follow him. They were far from perfect in their obedience, and in their likeness to Jesus. But they were irrevocably committed to his control over their lives. Jesus was not just first, he was everything to them. Because Jesus is the Infinite God of the entire universe, the Creator of all things, total surrender and abandonment to him is the only appropriate way to relate to him.

APPLICATION:

The only way to move ahead with Jesus is with our eyes fixed only on Him, not what lies behind us.

Is there some way you are saying "but first.." to Jesus? Is your obedience immediate, and full?