

Tuesday, October 13, 2020
Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Jim Murr...

**"As they were going along the road, someone said to him,
'I will follow you wherever you go.'
And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests,
but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.'
Yet another said, 'I will follow you, Lord,
but let me first say farewell to those at my home.'
Jesus said to him, 'No one who puts his hand to the plow
and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'"**

Luke 9: 57-58, 61-62

Is it time to talk about the challenges that are involved with being a follower of Jesus? Do you even consider yourself to be a "follower of Jesus"? Or would you say that you are just a "believer in Jesus"? And is there a difference? A follower goes somewhere. He or she follows a leader. A follower does a lot of the same things that the one they are following does. Soldiers FOLLOW their leaders into the battles that they face. Civilians stay home even if they "believe in" what the military is doing in a particular war. Not everyone in our country goes off to war when our country goes to war, not even those who "believe in" that war.

Jesus doesn't just want you and me to "believe in Him." He wants us to FOLLOW Him. To go where He goes. To live like He lives. To love like He loves. To serve like He serves. You can see why there were some individuals who said they wanted to follow Jesus, but at the same time weren't quite ready to dive completely in. Jesus talks about putting one's hand to the plow and then looking back. He says this person is not fit for the kingdom of God. That's a hard pill to swallow! Isn't it enough that I BELIEVE in Jesus? Do I have to actually DO SOMETHING about it? I wonder how many people, or even world leaders, would "believe in" a particular war if they had to go into battle themselves? It would probably be a more peaceful world if that were the case.

Jesus' point is not that we need to somehow earn our salvation. I'm not sure Jesus is talking about salvation in our reading above. He is definitely talking about being a DISCIPLE – that is, a FOLLOWER of His. After all, it's not "believers" in Jesus who make a difference in the world. It's FOLLOWERS who make a difference because it's followers who do the same things that Jesus does. It's followers who share the gospel; it's followers who love their enemies; it's followers who serve according to their gifts; it's followers who pray for the growth of the Kingdom of God. It's soldiers who face the enemy in the war, not those who simply "believe in" the war.

Does this make sense? Our world needs followers of Jesus because our world has lost its way. Jesus said to His followers: "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

God's Peace!
Pastor Jim