**Not now but maybe later**

Luke 9:57-62 - 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.” To another he said, “Follow me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” And Jesus said to him, “Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” 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.”

These replies from Jesus may seem rather harsh at first but the bottom line was Jesus called each of them to follow Him but they all had excuses why they couldn’t follow him at that time. Basically, they told God “Not now but maybe later”. This is the most common answer people will give when they are approached with the decision to follow Jesus

**1st Man**

Luke 9:57-58 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.”

Jesus answer hints to the fact that the man asking was either looking to gain something by following him or was impulsive without thinking of what he would have to give up to follow. So, Jesus set him straight that there is no worldly gain in following him. You might not even knowing where you will be sleeping each night. We must lay aside all worldly constraints and desires.

“I will follow if it’s not too much work”

“I will follow if others will respect me and look up to me”

“I will follow if I don’t have to commit to anything”

**2nd Man**

Luke 9:59-60 - to another he said, “Follow me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” And Jesus said to him, “Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.”

Jesus told this man “Follow Me” but the man replied that he needed to bury his father. If the man’s father had just died he would not have been with Jesus but occupied with the funeral, so the story implies that he wanted to stay at home until his father died maybe to obtain an inheritance. It’s not that he isn’t interested in following Jesus it’s just a bad time.

The statement “Leave the dead to bury their own dead” was stating that he should leave the spiritually dead to bury the physically dead in light of Jesus calling. Jesus’ answer makes clear that this man’s request was putting his own desires ahead of serving God. God should always come first over everything else in our lives.

**3rd Man**

Luke 9:61-62 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.”

With this man we see one eye on God but the other on the world. If you recall what happened to Lot’s wife during the destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah, She **“Looked back”** showing a longing for the things of this world over the hope God had to offer. Many people when called to Christ will do an evaluation of all the things they will have to give up or change and decide they cannot give up those things even for Christ.

(I will have to give up friends, bad habits, and spend time reading the bible and going to church)

In Mark we find the story of another man (The Rich Young Ruler) Whom Jesus called to follow him

**4th Man**

Mark 10:17-23 As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments, ‘Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.’” And he said to Him, “Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up.” Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, “One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property. And Jesus, looking around, said to His disciples, “How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!”

We see here a man who was looking to gain eternal life – Jesus asked him if he had kept all the commandments and he said he had but Jesus knew he had an attachment to the things of this world being a man of wealth and was not willing to part with it even if it meant eternal life.

Jesus called them, they wanted to go, but each had excuses why they could not follow right now. Each man showed a devotion to worldly things instead of showing a desire and devotion for the grace and love of Christ.

If we contrast these men with how the disciples responded when Jesus called them

Matthew 4:18-22 While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” **Immediately they left their nets and followed him**. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. **Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him**

When Jesus calls you to follow he is looking for an immediate response because he knows tomorrow turns in to next week, turns in to next year, and turns in to never. It starts out with good intensions but you think I am too busy right now I will commit to Jesus when I get out of school. Then it turns in to when I get a good job, when I get married, when we have Kids then life gets busier than ever and it never happens and if it does happen you have lost so much time to get to really know Jesus and missed out on so many blessings.

Sometimes it takes some tragedy in your life to finally bring you to Christ

* **We need to put God first and let him take control of our lives and our situations.**

The disciples were astonished at Jesus response to these people and asked, “Then who can be saved?” but Jesus replied “With people it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God.” (Mark 10:24-27)

* **We cannot get into heaven on our own, we all fall short, and we need God’s help, through Christ, to get us there.**

Not everyone who is called will accept. Don’t let your past hold you back from your future. The ones that made excuses went back home to their plows but the ones that followed Him became the ones that we read about today. (Peter, Paul, John,…)

Many people desperately need God in their lives, but they always put it off to some future date. They will say let me deal with these issues first but then decades go by and they still have not dealt with the issues or have new issues to deal with.

Some people feel they cannot accept Christ until they have dealt with all the sin in their life. This is a lie the enemy puts in your head to make you feel unworthy. You can accept Christ just as you are and he will change you from the inside. You just have to want him to make those changes

I have had many bad habits and I still have some. At one point I was afraid of the changes God would make in me. (This is the enemy at work) I was afraid that I would not be “me” anymore and I was right! I am so much better off without all that baggage. What seems cool and good when you are in the sin looks like filth when you are on the other side.

2 Cor 3:18 tells us that As the Spirit of the lord works with in us we will become more like Christ and reflect his glory.

* **Christ will change you to look like him if you will let him.**

Your life is happening now and there is nothing more important than your relationship with God Almighty and he can help get you through all your issues. Take the risk. **Don’t look back**. This is real. Jesus never said that it would be easy to follow Him. The Apostles led lives filled with trials and tribulations while filled with unspeakable joy (Another Sermon). Get your head in the game and set your sites on moving forward not looking back.

What excuses do you have today to say “not now” to God. What opportunities will you miss by turning your back on him?

Some of you are probably sitting there thinking this sermon is not for me saying “I am already a follower of Jesus” but are you really a follower? Matthew 7 tells about a day when we will all stand before Jesus and Jesus will say “I Never knew you”

Matthew7:21-23 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

You may notice in each one of these stories Jesus asks the person to “follow” him not just believe in Him. Many people can say they believe in Jesus (maybe you raised your hand at a rally or walked forward after a sermon) but Jesus calls us to more than just belief he wants you to **follow**.

Matthew 16:24 Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself (The pleasures & treasures of this world) and take up his cross and follow me (Desiring, above all else, a relationship with God).

Do you really know what it means to follow Jesus? What if life or death, heaven or hell all came down to this one question? Are you a follower of Christ? Are you sure you are a follower? Are you living every aspect of your life for Christ? Are you holding anything back? Are you truly a **follower**?

* **Maybe you want a relationship with Jesus except you want it on your terms not his (Like the men we just read about)**

This is not saying we can’t take any pleasure or own anything. It just says we can’t let any of these things come between us and our relationship with God.

* Would I rather sleep-in than go to Church.?
* Would I rather buy myself something I don’t need or help someone who has a real need?
* Would I rather be comfortable sitting at home watching TV or getting out and sharing the word of God?

This is not a question of whether you know about Christ but do you really know him. Are you dedicated to doing whatever He calls you to do to win the game and gain eternal life? Are you willing to follow Him wherever He takes you? Do you follow Him no matter what the opposition? Is Christ at the center of your life or are you at the center. Does everything revolve around what you want or around what Christ wants for you?

**Can you say “I choose Jesus over …( put anything important in your life here)?” Friends, Sleep, money, bad movies,…**

These are not easy questions and should not be answered with a flippant “Yes”. Spend some quiet time thinking about this. Will you do whatever God calls you to do? Where do you draw the line? Be Honest. God knows your heart. Then Go to God in prayer and ask him to make your heart ready for whatever he calls you to do and to remove any lines you have drawn in your life and then never look back.

Around 360BC Alexander the great was made king at the age of 20 when his father, King Philip II, died. Alexander went right to work following in his father’s footsteps in his conquest of Persia. In 334 BC, Alexander led a fleet of Greek and Macedonian ships into Asia. When he reached the shore, Alexander burned the ships. He told his men “We will either return home in Persian ships or we will die here.” By the age of thirty, he had created one of the [largest empires](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_largest_empires) in history”

You can’t follow Jesus if you are always looking back over your shoulder for something you may be missing out on. Don’t pass up a chance to follow Him. If he is calling you, let go of everything that is holding you back, burn those ships and keep moving forward and never look back. He will Change your life forever!!!!