

Luke 9:43-62

⁴³ And they were all amazed at the greatness of God.

While everyone was marveling at all that Jesus did, he said to his disciples,
⁴⁴ “Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men.” ⁴⁵ But they did not understand what this meant. It was hidden from them, so that they did not grasp it, and they were afraid to ask him about it.

Who Will Be the Greatest

⁴⁶ An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. ⁴⁷ Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. ⁴⁸ Then he said to them, “Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For he who is least among you all—he is the greatest.”

⁴⁹ “Master,” said John, “we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him, because he is not one of us.”

⁵⁰ “Do not stop him,” Jesus said, “for whoever is not against you is for you.”

Samaritan Opposition

⁵¹ As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. ⁵² And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; ⁵³ but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?” ⁵⁵ But Jesus turned and rebuked them, ⁵⁶ and they went to another village.

The Cost of Following Jesus

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 holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”

⁵⁹ He said to another man, “Follow me.”

But the man replied, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.”

⁶⁰ Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.”

⁶¹ Still another said, “I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family.”

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

Luke 9:43-62

1. How much did the disciples understand of what Jesus told them? (9:44-45)
What could have kept understanding hidden from them?
2. Today, are there things that you don't understand about Jesus? What clouds your understanding? What can you do to make things clear and learn more?
3. About what were the disciples arguing in Verse 9:46?
4. What did Jesus use to reply to the disciples' argument about which of them would be greatest? What effect do you think the example had on them?
5. The message in the last sentence of Verse 9:48 is repeated many times in the New Testament. What does that mean? (Matthew 19:30, 20:16, Mark 9:35, 10:31, James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:4-6)
6. John changed the subject (9:49). Why? What reaction was John probably expecting from Jesus?
7. Jesus embraced the idea of teamwork in 9:50. What kind of teamwork is Jesus looking for today among his followers? How can *you* be more cooperative and foster a spirit of teamwork in your church or Christian small group?
8. Why didn't the Samaritans welcome Jesus? (9:53)
9. What did James and John want to do to the Samaritans? If you had been a disciple, what would you have suggested? How do you handle it when someone rejects you because of prejudice or for petty reasons?
10. What did Jesus do? Can you learn something from this? How can you avoid getting sidetracked by a desire for retaliation or getting even?
11. On group projects, what excuses do people give for avoiding or postponing fulfilling their obligations? Do you ever have conflicting obligations (or loyalties) say like going to church or taking your son to soccer practice? What do you do?
12. In light of Jesus' concern for family, why did he tell the second man not to go bury his father?
13. From these verses (9:57-62), how would you summarize the costs of following Jesus? If God loves us absolutely and wants us all to be saved, why are there such high costs (indeed, any costs) in following Jesus?

Verse 9:58

Jesus' statement that He has nowhere to lay His head (Matthew 8:20) is aimed primarily to wake the man up to what sort of commitment that he is saying he's capable of. The question arises, however, as to how it was that Jesus could say that He had nowhere to lay His head when He had a residency in Capernaum (Matthew 4:12-13)? After all, Jesus wasn't homeless and could always have returned to His residency when He chose to do so, it would appear.

The answer seems to lie in the route that Jesus has chosen to 'go over to the other side' of the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 8:18) which was not a well-planned and organised preaching campaign but a step out in the dark - no hotels had been booked and no dates in the local synagogues been arranged for Him. Whatever was there was what they'd find and there was the likelihood that it would mean that they were to sleep out in the open with no roof over their heads.

But, perhaps more than this, Jesus is hinting at the way of discipleship that was to follow the Galilean ministry and the persecution that would fall upon His followers in years to come. If the man was to wholeheartedly follow Christ wherever He might lead, he may find himself in areas of the world where no one would turn to help him, where the message of the Gospel is as despised as the One who first made it possible.

Q12. Verse 9:59

The second man who says that he wants to first go and bury his father implies that his father is perhaps expected to die soon and he wants to be around for the funeral. If he was dead, he would have already been buried.

Jesus' response is not meant to pull away from family commitment but to emphasise the importance of Jesus' call. While there were probably numerous relatives who could have seen to the funeral arrangements when necessary, it's only this one man who has been called to follow Christ, whose eyes have been opened to the revelation of who Jesus is, and who needs to respond immediately to that call lest the time pass him by.

Jesus' expression that the disciple should '...leave the dead to bury their own dead' is, perhaps, a comment on the new life that the man has received as opposed to the rest of his family who have not yet realized the truth about Jesus Christ. In that case, Jesus is saying that he should leave the spiritually dead to bury their physically dead—as is fitting. But, now that the man has discovered life, he should forsake what makes for death, leave it behind immediately and follow after a new way of living.