

# Three strong statements

## Luke 9:57-62 (NRSV)

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, first let me go and bury my father." But Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." 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 a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

# Expect no perks from the rulers of the age of decay

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# Kingdom announcement takes priority over even the most weighty religious or familial priority

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# A volunteer

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# The most reasonable of requests

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# Old Testament Precedent!

1 Kings 19:19-21 (NRSV)

So he set out from there, and found Elisha son of Shaphat, who was plowing. There were twelve yoke of oxen ahead of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle over him. He left the oxen, ran after Elijah, and said, "Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." Then Elijah said to him, "Go back again; for what have I done to you?" He returned from following him, took the yoke of oxen, and slaughtered them; using the equipment from the oxen, he boiled their flesh, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out and followed Elijah, and became his servant.

# Again, very STRONG language

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 a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

Luke 14:34-35 (NRSV)

"Salt is good; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; they throw it away. Let anyone with ears to hear listen!"

# What does this look like?

Genesis 19:24-26 (NRSV)

Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the Plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

# What does this look like?

Numbers 11:4-6 (NRSV)

The rabble among them had a strong craving; and the Israelites also wept again, and said, "If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; but now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at."

# In Common

- Lot's delivered family, delivered Israel, seekers of the kingdom of God leave the comforts of the age of decay and enter an exile from it into the wilderness looking for a home they haven't known
  - "... the Son of Man has no place to lay his head..."

# Biblical "Ages"

## The Age of Decay

- Loss of life
- Loss of relationships
- Loss of stability
- Loss of identity

## The Life of the Age to Come

- "your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven"
- Luke: Kingdom of God
- Matt: Kingdom of heaven
- John: Eternal life (lit: "life of the age")
- Paul: "In Christ"

Church:  
Community of  
Christ

# Christians in the middle

- We cling to the age of decay
  - It's all we've known
  - We've experienced good in it
  - We continue to imagine we can make life work here and somehow secure it for ourselves
    - This is why "the poor" generally "get it" quicker than the wealthy and the comfortable

# “unfit” Christians

- We're not clear on the futility of trying to secure life in this wilderness until we've spent years clinging to

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- Our vision of what we is truly ours, and guaranteed is thin and weak
- God doesn't use us because we're no different than anyone else
  - Clingy, worried, faithless, joyless

# Where is love for Jesus increasing?

- Among the poor
- Among the imprisoned
- Among those with few choices in life
- Despite poor theology
- Despite meager or no resources
- Despite no Christian tradition
- Despite persecution in places

# Soberly evaluate your grasping for this age

- What are you expending your life in search of?
- How flimsy is your ability to secure any of it?
- How fragile is your life?

# Meditate on his promises to you

- The worst life as one night in an inconvenient hotel room
- His love, its cost, the age to come more just, more beautiful, more meaningful
- There is no power in this age that can threaten it

Gratitude