

# I love you. I must be going.

You can measure one's faith by their ability to move on. Jesus encountered many people who fawned and queried Him, looking to work out some kind of bargain, complete with caveats and clauses. He presents each follower with a moment. These moments connect us to a point of decision. When that moment comes, you'd better grab it because it's singular in transcendence. It transports you into both adventure and holy consequence. In Luke 9, we see three symbolic responses to the Jesus call. Each representing different ways

## **During times of hardships**

The first declaring voice makes an enormous claim. The would-be follower meets Jesus on the road and says, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

So often I have longed for a 10 year plan. I've dreamed of putting down roots and knowing exactly where I will find myself at the end of every day. I hate surprises and Uncle Murphy who shows up when everything that *can* go wrong *does*. He enters the arena of my personal world in force and fanfare. I don't like it. I hate it. I hate surprises. And I HATE MOVING BOXES. What will happen next? Only God knows and He won't tell. Sometimes life is void of parachutes, exit plans, and emergency funds. Sometimes we exit the scene of the fire, smelling like soot and hopping in the car of a loved one with little explanation, because life is *just* that unpredictable. Don't feel abandoned because you lack the certainty of addresses and schedules. He's there. He's just silent.

## **When we anticipate grief**

Some of us see grief just around the corner instead of 10 years down the road. We catastrophize tomorrow and we say like

Jesus' next potential follower, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." The context is probably not a hospice situation. Burying your father in that culture is committing to be there to the very end for your earthly community. This person's father could have been in perfect health and 40 years old. Jesus' response would seem terse and unsympathetic if the dad was presently at death's door but probably that was not the case. Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

We love to be tidy, even obligatory in life. But with Jesus, we don't loiter in the obituaries of our mind. We hug their necks, bid farewell and trust God. No one has funerals on their calendar months in advance. Life goes on and Jesus calls us into life which, at its core, can't be tethered to future sackcloths.

### **When we have to leave home**

*Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family." Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."*

Sometimes our exits are protracted. We don't know how to hang up the phone or walk out the door. We do postmortems where we look at our past and wonder if we could have left later. We burden ourselves with feeling of guilt for not being with the same people in the same town, facing the same problems. We have to stop rubbernecking our history and move forward. Sometimes you have to cry the tears, hug the necks, and pack it in- **all on the same day**. We don't have time to worry about what will happen in our wake.

There has never been a time when I left a ministry, job or town that everything suddenly fell apart because I left. I can't think that much of me. None of us are indispensable. You'll be missed but the people you have to leave will be

fine. Don't idolize your importance to an organization or a community. To do so limits your perspective on the sovereignty of God.

So when you are faced with a sad, yet mandatory farewell and you find your beloved friends questioning, speculating and bargaining regarding your departure, here's a good response: "I love you. I must be going."

Our trust in God's plan should be:

- **Unconditional**

- **Unwavering**

- **Undaunted**

- **Undeniable**

- **Unadulterated**

**It means giving God a blank check.**