

## "Follow me"

N. Anderson.

With a view to drawing attention to the path of true discipleship it may be profitable for us to look together at Luke 9.

Verses 1-6: The twelve were called together, commissioned, empowered, and sent forth to preach and to demonstrate the Kingdom of God.

Verses 7-9: The impact upon Herod of this testimony.

Verse 10: The return of the apostles. Only one short sentence described their service. They "told Him all that they had done."

There is a salutary thought here for all who serve. We must give an account of our stewardship to our Lord. May we ever remember we are under His authority, and act as to Him in all our service with the light of the coming judgment seat before us.

He took them, and went aside privately into a desert place. How different this is from being under the public eye. Yet it is here, in the Lord's company, that we get His appraisal of all, and obtain needed adjustment, refreshment, and resource for further service.

Verse 11: *He*, the Lord, is the object of attraction; the people followed *Him*. Well for us if our service brings Him into prominence. Alas! too often we parade ourselves — our ability, our work. True service hides the servant and exhibits the Master.

Those who followed Him experienced the compassion which filled His heart. In all this He proved to the disciples and to the needy multitude His sufficiency. He is the Master of every situation.

On this occasion His bounty was not exhausted. Ample as was His provision in feeding the five thousand, there were twelve baskets left over. The twelve tribes of Israel shall prove that sufficiency in the coming day.

Verses 18, 19: Give the consensus of public opinion as to His Person.

Verse 20: Faith's confession, "Peter answering said, 'the Christ of God'."

Verses 21, 22: The shadow of the Cross pressed upon His spirit, and this He intimated to His own. His disposition of mercy was to be slighted. The crucifixion would be Israel's answer to that mercy and to the confession of who He is. Yet, midst this foretelling of His rejection was the portent of His triumph! "and be raised the third day."

Verses 23-27: It was just then that our Lord opened out the path of true discipleship. that path is possible *only* to such as have some heart-appreciation of His glory, and to such as would share His rejection now. "Our Lord is now rejected, and by the world disowned." Hence He appeals, "If any man will come after Me . . ." Is He my attraction? Is it Himself I want? Any other reason for my taking the path of discipleship will wane, sooner or later, and I shall be but another wreck by the way. ". . . let him deny himself." Self-abnegation is an outstanding mark of the true disciple. "Not I but Christ." ". . . and take up his cross daily . . ." What a sight to see a man carrying his cross. That man is finished with the world and the world is finished with him.

The cross is not the ordinary trial of everyday life, though the disciple will experience that too. Perhaps someone says under pressure, "I have a heavy cross to bear," but that is not the thought here,

for our Lord says, "Let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and *follow Me*."

He has been crucified here and He invites us to make the cross ours. Identification with the crucified Christ is another mark of true discipleship. The language of such a one would be "I am crucified with Christ." He passes judgment upon himself; he confesses that God's judgment of sin in the flesh, expressed in the cross of Christ, is the judgment that he, himself, deserves. He thus takes sides with God against himself. He would also say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6: 14).

To such a man, losing his life, having no recognition by that world which crucified his Lord, will be a comparatively simple thing. He will count, and keep on counting, everything but loss. We notice that our Lord said, "for My sake." Said the disciple Paul, as he assessed gain in this world to be loss, ". . . for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ" (Philippians 3: 8). Gain or loss for the disciple is governed by his affection for, and appreciation of, CHRIST.

Whilst the rigours of the path — rejection and loss here — are clearly indicated, there is abundant encouragement. So the Lord Jesus points on to the day of triumph and glory when he shall receive His rightful place. If, in that day, those who deserted the path here, shall meet with shame from Him, surely it is true that loyalty to Christ now will receive its reward then. "Follow Me" — the cross *now*, the glory *then*.

Verses 28-36, are an encouragement to discipleship.

A sight of the coming kingdom was given to the disciples to afford present encouragement. The Lord graciously gives to His own the light of the day of His glory, that their faith may be strengthened in this world where they constantly meet with contrariety and testing. Thus they are enabled to move on in the way in fidelity of heart to Him, knowing that all will eventuate in triumph, blessing and glory.

Their rejected Lord, who suffered here, and for whom they too will suffer if they continue true to Him, will shortly be accorded His rights. So, in the confidence of "that day" with its blessed compensations, they bear the misjudgments and slights of this day. Everything shall be set right then, for all shall be set in relation to Christ. In such confidence the true disciple faces the opposition, and serenely asserts, "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; yea, I judge not mine own self . . . Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and *then* shall every man have praise of God" (1 Corinthians 4: 3-5).

He took the three disciples up into a mountain, the place of elevation — the great things of God belong to the heights. The plain is the place of testimony and service; the mountain is the place of display. He, who was at home in the mountain as in the plain, bowed Himself in prayer, manifesting that dependence and humility pave the way to glory. Such beautiful moral features are becoming in those who would be His disciples. All that is committed to our trust in testimony now, is destined to come out in glory shortly. In the meantime, if we would be faithful to that trust, let us emulate Him.

It may well be that the mountain scene is the answer, for the true disciple, to the desert scene of verse 10. Obscurity for the servant here as following his rejected Lord; glory there, when Christ is transfigured, when all the suffering gives place to the answering glory. He shall not be alone in that glory, even as He was not alone in the glory-mount; Moses and Elias were there, but they were there *with Him*.

These two Old Testament servants were representatives of the law and the prophets. How much

of trial and failure marked their days, but here is the indication that nothing that is of God shall fall to the ground. All will be gathered up and fulfilled in the manifested power and glory of the Kingdom of God.

"Who appeared in glory, and spake of *His decease*, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." The pillars of the world to come are securely founded in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We also view Moses and Elias in another way. Moses, who passed through death, is a type of those "who sleep through Jesus," and who shall be brought *with Him* when He comes to reign. Elias is a type of the living saints caught up together with those who are raised. This raising of the sleeping, and changing of the living saints shall take place at the rapture. Then, as 1 Thessalonians 4 reveals, "The Lord Himself" will come for His own, and translate them from earth to heaven with a view to bringing them with Him to share with Him in the Kingdom.

Then, too, the disciples may be viewed as representing Israel nationally, as the spectators and beneficiaries of His glory as the supreme Administrator in that coming day. "*When they were awake, they saw His glory!*" Israel shall awake from her long sleep amongst the nations to behold her glorious Lord.

The unwitting remark of Peter was silenced by the enveloping cloud. Moses and Elias were hidden; however blest none can stand on a level with the Christ of God. He must, in all things, have the pre-eminence. He shall fill that scene, for God shall "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (Ephesians 1: 10).

The Kingdom glory, as prefigured on the Mount of Transfiguration, shall be the consummation of all the ways of God. His will shall be accomplished there. Hence the cloud of glory, which departed from the Temple in Ezekiel's day because of Israel's sin, shall return in the day of Christ. The prophet saw in that vision of the glory, in the midst of the appearance of the throne, the likeness of a man. Here on the glory mount, the Man of God's counsel fills the scene, and the glory finds its complacent resting place. How encouraging to the faith of the disciples to know that in that glory there was a place for them.

Then too, the Father called their attention to His well beloved Son; "This is My beloved Son; hear Him." Beyond all the display of power and glory is the sweet retreat of divine and eternal affections where the Father and the Son are ever at home, and where we through grace, shall ever dwell. The Father reveals what the Son is to Him, "*My Beloved*," and desires that they give Him their undivided attention — "Hear Him."

What a prospect then for faith! The blessed light of it is given now during the day of discipleship, and in the apprehension and enjoyment of it we follow in diligent haste.

"Till then 'tis the path thou hast trod,  
Our delight and our comfort shall be;  
We're content with Thy staff and Thy rod,  
Till with Thee all Thy glory we see."

Verses 37-45. At the bottom of the hill the glorious power of that manifested kingdom will exercise itself, dispensationally, in needy Israel, delivering from the power of the unclean spirit (antichrist), and setting them up in the blessing of His own glorious presence, All this is here set forth pictorially, and ministers an encouragement to loyal-hearted discipleship. But that pathway has to be

trodden *here* and *now*, before the kingdom is actually brought in, so for Christ there must be the deliverance into the hands of men.

Verses 46-48. They evidenced the innate desire of the flesh for personal greatness and that, let us note, almost beneath the shadow of His cross.

Verses 49, 50. They boasted *their* position, "We forbid him, because he followeth not *with us*".

Grace rejoices whenever and wherever Christ's Name is honoured. Whilst our Lord did not recommend the twelve to go and join this man, yet He rebuked their disposition whilst graciously emphasizing their association with Himself, "Forbid him not; for he that is not against *us* is for *us*". May we recognize and value all that is done in His Name.

Verses 51-56 mark the true character of the present moment. As to the Samaritans, "they did not receive Him . . ." He was the rejected One. Consequently, insult and reproach belong to that path into which he called His own. Do we know what spirit we are of? A patient bearing of the insult and an exhibition of mercy befits those who are of the spirit of the Second Man.

Verses 57, 58. As there is no place here for the Master do we as His disciples covet fellowship with him? "The servant is not greater than his Lord" (John 13: 16).

Verses 59, 60. Discipleship is in the power of a life which delivers from this death-stricken scene and gives urgency to the present testimony.

Verses 61, 62. *Christ must be first*. He must in all things have the pre-eminence. "Consecrate me now to Thy service, Lord." May this be the willing-hearted response of all who read these words. The rigours of the path are real; the encouragements are abounding; the compensations are sure; and above all — Christ is worthy. Almost His last word to the individual was — "*Follow thou Me*" (John 21: 22).