

# The Danger of Looking Back

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## Grace Particular Baptist Church

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Let us pray.

*Dear heavenly Father, how glorious thy name is. Lord, I thank thee for this hour and the hour to come, for thy preserving grace, O Lord, to preserve this time, to preserve this place, to preserve the unity that only, Lord, you can give for they people, to bring them here, Lord, today. I pray that, Father, thou would indeed open our hearts, reveal that which is truth this day about ourselves and most importantly, Lord, about thee. Lord, I pray that you would give us the soberness of the hour and that thou would indeed come and visit us in our hearts. Lord, may thy people this day not hear the law and not hear the thunderings of the voice of other men but, Lord, may we hear thy voice. May thy love come to our souls this day to reveal that which is truth and may you be pleased and glorified. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

I think we'll begin this morning by going straight to our text and it's found in Luke 9:62. These are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ and I pray this morning that they be words of examination as the Holy Ghost would reveal in our souls what is true. "And Jesus said unto him, No man," that's absolutely no man. When Jesus said "no man" that meant no man.

"And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

I tell you, there are some very searching passages in the word of God. For the child of God who fights in this life and fights his flesh and fights the world and fights sin, when we come to passages like this, they can be very indicting, they can be very searching or they may not have any effect, it's all depending upon the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ. As we look at this verse this morning in this text and where it's seated, we're faced with three realities right at the beginning. As I stressed when I read the verse, Jesus says "no man." When he says "no man" immediately your thoughts and your understanding should be taken that we are all dead and that there is not a man upon this earth, I don't care how righteous he believes he is, I don't care how righteous he says he is or she is, there is "no man," none, that "having put his hand to the plough," and we have to ask ourselves that, that's the first question that's put right here in our face this morning: what is putting our hand to the plough? We have all made a profession of the Lord Jesus

Christ, we have all had at least I say that in here, I mean, I don't know how real that profession is in some of you but I know hearing it out of your mouth, I have heard these things that just as Ruth said to Naomi "your Lord will be my Lord, wherever you go I will go," that kind of profession is what I'm talking about this morning. Has the Lord come to your soul and said, "I am the Lord of your soul"? That you have no other God but him.

Now, think about that a moment: that is making an open profession whether you've done it with baptism; whether you've done it just in a profession of mouth. Whatever it is, the question here is: has that hand been put to the plough? Have you begun, so to speak? Has there been a walk of a Christian walk in your life? Not as the world tells you what a Christian walk is: of your works and your duty and the things that you have done. Because I want to start right now by quoting what Paul said in Philippians 1:6. This is where I'm coming from this morning. Paul said this, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." To those in this room and those that I believe that the Lord has opened their mind and their understanding and given them a new heart to understand him and given them the faith of the Son of God to apprehend him. That is the question: has the Lord begun a work in you? And can you stand with the Apostle Paul and say that I'm confident of this? I am confident that what Christ has begun in my soul, he will finish it. Not only will he finish it but he will lead me until the day of Christ which is the revelation of Christ in every one of my days. That is the man who has put his hand to the plough.

That's what I'm talking about this morning. That's what the Lord Jesus Christ is saying here, "Have you put your hand to the plough? Have you begun this life? Have you been called away from a life that was previous in your life?" This isn't about a walk and turning because I saw that this was evil or that was evil, I'm talking about something being done in your soul, a new heart. A new heart that you looked at things the way they used to be and you don't look at them that way anymore, putting your hand to the plough.

When I was younger and I was up on the farm, I did a lot of plowing. Well, that's a relative term. I really didn't do a lot of plowing but I did some plowing. The reason I didn't do a lot of plowing is because I couldn't walk a straight line with a plow. But you know what, in this life, the child of God doesn't walk a straight line. The life of the child of God has many ups and downs and valleys and peaks and truly the line in the walk in this life has times of backsliding. I understand all that but the question today is: is having put his hand to the plough. That is the question: have you begun in this walk that the Lord said? The Lord has said with all of his children, there is what we call a counting of the cost that takes place. This is what I was in the world; this is what I enjoyed in the world; this now is where I'm at. The Lord has taken me out of that and he's turned my back upon that. That's what I'm talking about. That's what having put his hand to the plough.

That's the first question because the second one is equally as deep and it's equally not only as deep but it's very scary: looking back. When I hear those words and I say "looking back" I think immediately of what Christ said, "Remember Lot's wife." Why was it that Lot's wife looked back? Clearly the Scriptures teach us that her heart was not a

heart of grace, it was not a work of grace in her heart, she didn't have Christ as her preeminent one. There was idolatry in her heart. There was worldliness. There was earthly-mindedness there. And that's what we're faced with today as we look at these passages. As Jesus put this, because we're going to back-track here a little bit and talk about all three of these people that came to Christ with these reasons not to walk forward. With all of these reasons and why it is we say we left off and that's the other part. That passage in the Scriptures that say that many followed Christ no more.

That's a very scary proposition because there were some that followed him through all of his miracles and sat at his feet and watched his teaching and sat there and learned and then as he went on and on and on, as he got closer to that time, some of them started dropping off and some of them started not following him anymore. My prayer today is that the Holy Ghost searches our hearts and our souls and says that this is what's present in my life. Do I remember a time that faithfulness of the Lord to do that work in my soul, that I know that he's faithful to perform it unto the day of Christ but am I on this slippery slope? How do I view the world? How do I view Satan? How do I view sin in light of what Christ has done in my soul? Is there any difference or do I view it the same way I did before the Lord worked in my soul?

You say, "Well, how can that be?" That's my question: how can that be? How can it be that many didn't follow him anymore? Certainly those ones who followed him for a long time started to see things a different way. When they saw him teach, when they saw him do miracles, they said, "Hm, maybe this is the Son of God. Maybe we should be following him." You may be the same way. You may have seen your parents' profession or your grandparents' profession or your brother or sister's profession and said, "Surely this must be the way to go." But then life came and what I mean by life, I mean what we live down here every day. Now today, it's not that important anymore to walk the line that Christ's voice is leading. There is more of a plurality and a bigger understanding. This gate that used to be strait, Jesus said, has gotten a lot wider and is getting wider and wider. The more that I recognize things in this life, surely Jesus must not have meant that? Surely if I walk this way, then this person is going to say that. No, there is too much tolerance for sin. That's what we have in front of us; that's what Jesus said. As you look back, is that where your heart is because if it is, Jesus said you're not fit for the kingdom of God. You're not fit. You're not being readied for the kingdom of God. That's a sobering thought this morning. So, here's the passage, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Now, let's turn back a little bit and find out how we got here and we'll come back to this passage in a minute and make some more observations and look at a couple other Scriptures but let's go back to verse 57 and begin on how we got to these words. Look at verse 57, "And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way," Jesus and his disciples, they're walking in the way, "a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." Is that your profession today? Is that what our thoughts are? You can't tell me, "I will follow the Lord wherever he goes." I don't know about you but that sounds like presumption to me. Presumption, "Lord, I will follow you wherever you go." I was raised to make that profession. "I will follow the Lord anywhere that you go."

Then as the Lord started opening up these Scriptures to me and I saw kind of the way of the cross and knowing myself and my nature I say, "Well, you know, I don't know if that's what I want for me, a cross. I don't know if I want the persecution of man. It's hard when man doesn't like me. It really is. I want to fit in. I want people to speak highly of me." Are those your thoughts today?

The presumption is that we will follow Christ wherever he goes. That's what the presumption is. "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." James said this in James 4:15, he said, "For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil." Rejoicing in yourself and what you will do is evil. Do you understand that? And people like to say, "Well, no, I'm standing in the faith that I have and I say I will follow you, Christ, wherever you go." But if the Holy Spirit which is sovereign, which is faithful, if he's faithful in this hour to show us and to reveal to us in our lives how many times we haven't, how many times we haven't followed the way of the cross, how many times we haven't denied self, how many times we haven't taken up the cross. We like to think things and write things about ourselves that are better than they are at times. The people around us aren't that deceived because they see how we live.

But this is the sin of presumption. I want you to hold your finger there and I want you to go back to Psalm 30 for me. Every time I am brought to the sin of presumption, this passage is always impressed upon me and it was again this week. It's in Psalm 30:6. It's very astounding to me that David says this in verse 6 of Psalm 30, he says, "And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved." In our days of zeal, in our days of faith, we say those words, "We shall never be moved." Just as Peter, "Lord, thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. If you're going to the cross, I'm going to the cross. I'm going to follow you everywhere you go." Now we know that didn't work out well for Peter. David says the same thing, he says, "In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved." Then immediately in verse 7, like a total opposite occurs which we see this a lot in the Psalms. David will be saying, "Oh why is my soul this way? Why am I cast down? O, hope now in God." But that's the way it is in a child of God's life. We may be destitute, we may feel like it's a hopeless situation and then the Lord just comes in a moment and he lifts up our souls and we see him. That's the way this is.

"And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. LORD, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong." By thy favor. All of a sudden it's not, "I shall never be moved." I'm a mountain because of the finished work of Christ. I'm a mountain because the prosperity in Christ Jesus. I am a mountain because I'm kept by the Lord Jesus Christ.

"LORD, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled." Look at what he says: now all of a sudden, "Lord, when you hide your face, that's when I'm troubled." Now, do you think it's trouble to say that "I will never be moved"? Oh no, we think it's trouble when we're on the other end of the spectrum and we're saying, "Oh, it's a hopeless situation." That's where trouble is but

listen, there is equal trouble on the other side that says, "I will never be moved and this can't touch me. This sin will not get toward me. I can live above this."

And that's what this first person came and said to Jesus, "I'll follow you wherever you go." David, in the midst of this is saying the same thing, "But Lord, when you hide your face, I was troubled. I cried to thee, O LORD; and unto the LORD I made supplication. What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit?" David just minutes ago, you were never going to be moved. But that's what I said; it spoke so powerfully to me. This is the story of my life also. I can be on the heights and riding the waves of the faith of Christ and then in my unbelief I can have the depths of saying, "When I go down to the pit, shall the dust praise thee? Shall it declare thy truth? Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me." We cry out to the Lord when we're brought down in the depths to cry out for mercy. But at the height when we don't think we need him, we sit there and say we're never going to be moved.

The days of prosperity. Solomon warns us about these days in Ecclesiastes. O, beware of these days. The Lord has set the two days against each other: the day of prosperity and the day of evil. Why? So that no man, no man, no child of God, will make this life and this world his residence. What if we didn't have any trouble? What if we didn't? What if this was always prosperity? There would be no need for heaven. There would be no need to have communion with our Lord. For the child of God, that's not the case. This is a trail of tears down here. It's a trial of our faith every day.

So let's go back to our text now. Listen to Jesus' answer, Luke 9:58, "And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes," yes they do. Who gave them those holes? "And birds of the air have nests," yes they do. "But the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Now, does that strike you as odd? That the Lord Jesus Christ who is preeminent over all things, who has created this world, who everything is in his hands, says to this one, "I have nowhere to lay my head"? What could he possibly mean? Is he talking about his mean estate down here? How he was born in a manger? How he was ridiculed in this life? How he didn't have a house to call his own? No. It does show how he came down and condescended down to us to be made flesh, yes it does. But there's a deeper meaning in this: the foxes have holes of the earth; the birds of the air have nests of the earth; but I have nowhere in this earth to lay my head. Why is that? Why is that so important for you and I today? The answer to presumption, the answer to this lack of humility in this one is the humility of Christ. Not only is it the humility of Christ but the point here is: I am not of this world. I provided for my beasts that are in this world. I have. The foxes will have holes, the birds will have nests but the Son of man and not only the Son of man but all of those in Christ, will not have anywhere to lay their head. You say, "Well, I've got a nice comfortable bed at home." I'm not talking physically here, I'm talking spiritually.

I'm talking about the depth of Christ's teaching here about what it is that's important in this life because this first problem, this first looking back is earthly-mindedness. That's what we look back to. Earthly-mindedness, our minds are too much on the things that we have in this life and Jesus' answer is, "I don't have a bed in this life because I don't care to have a bed in this life."

Hold your finger there and let's go to the witness of the saints and the witness of the Holy Ghost in Hebrews 11 real quick. We know this passage but I want to read it today for emphasis of this point. Let's just start in verse 13, "These all died in faith," we just heard about Abraham and Sarah and Enoch and Abel and this is the beginning of Hebrews 11 and he says, "These all died in faith not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off." What promises? The Christ in the flesh. "But they saw him afar off." You and I didn't see Christ in the flesh either. We see him by faith the same way they saw him by faith. "And were persuaded of them," which I think is a very mis-fortunate if you can say those words of putting "them" in there. I don't believe it's the promises they were persuaded of, they are persuaded of Christ. It should be him. "Persuaded of him and embraced him," that's what faith does. Now, you can pinpoint that and say the promise of Christ, I say it is Christ. It's the same thing. "And were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." How is it that the child of God can have this confession that he is a stranger and pilgrim? That he has nowhere to lay his head? It's by the faith of the Son of God. It's not by presumption and fleshly presumption of saying, "This is who I am. This is where I live. This is what I've chosen. This is the life that I have." No, it's the work of Christ in the soul. And the only way over earthly-mindedness is the faith of the Son of God.

That's what he says here, "and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly," get this part, "And truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out," that's the world, that's the earthly-mindedness. If we are minded of the earthly things in this life, listen to what he says, "they might have had opportunity to have returned." Be careful that you don't look back. If you're mindful of those earthly things, your tendency will always be to look back and this is just the first one, the earthly-mindedness, the things of this world. What are those things that you gave up and do you lust to go back to them? My biggest challenge as a parent is living through my children once again and going back to be challenged in the things that they're now getting into that I know because the Lord has taught me maybe I was there once before, but he has ridded me of that. I have no desire to go back to that but yet what is it that pulls me back to my children? It's my love for my children, inordinate love for my children. Let's make the distinction here because all of this today is about inordinate affection. Inordinate affection of loving the things of the world, loving the things of this earth, loving family but we're going to get to that.

"And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country," that's because of the faith of the Son of God. "That is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." You know, I thought about that this morning in like of this shame thing. We have a lot of shame in this life of following Christ. Do you know that? That is the hardest thing of following the way of the cross in Christ. When we take inventory of it, it's shame. We don't want others to think that you're a legalist. You don't want somebody else to think that you're just being opposite of the group. These are the things that plague the child of God in this life and it's

hard enough when it's somebody outside of the faith that's labeling you. Actually, that's not too hard for me but for others it might be in this world, as the world says, "You're different." And sometimes we shrink back at that and say, "I don't want to be different. I want to be just like you." There's shame in that. There will be shame in that for the child of God.

I don't know. It's a very hard walk and that's why I say I'm not standing up here today as somebody beating you over the head with the law telling you what you have to do. I'm telling you if Christ doesn't do it, if he hasn't been the faithful one to perform it unto the day of Christ, you're in trouble. That's what I'm asking today. I'm asking the Holy Spirit to search our souls today and say, "Is this really Christ's work in my soul? Has he called me away from a life?" Because my tendency is to go back to these things and if I'm left there, I'm going to perish and do you know what's going to be proved out? You're not fit for the kingdom of God. Who's the fitter? It's the one who's going to put that garment upon us, it's the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's go back now to our text again in Luke 9. "And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." You see, the Lord is void of earthly-mindedness. His mind is heavenly. Those ones we just read about with the faith of the Son of God, that's what it produces in the mind of the child of God. Heavenly-mindedness, not earthly-mindedness. And you just deceive in yourself if you believe you can mix the two, to live on this earth and to have an earthly mind. I can have an earthly mind when I want to have an earthly mind and I can have a heavenly mind when I want to have a heavenly mind. Those are the ones that followed Christ for a time and they didn't follow anymore. Those are the ones that said, "I'm going to leave Sodom and when I get out there, I'm going to turn around and I'm going to look back." And that pillar of salt was a memorial. It was a memorial to every child of God from then until the end of time to understand what the penalty is for not following the way of the Lord Jesus Christ and for turning your back on Christ and following the world. That's a fact. I'm not telling you what you have to do, I'm not telling you what you must do, I'm telling you what the child of God does through Christ Jesus who leads the way out of that wilderness and away from the world.

That's the first one. The first one that came to him came with earthly-mindedness but now here comes the other, the second one. "And he said unto another, Follow me." Now, how different is this "follow me" than the one that he said to Matthew? When he said to Matthew "follow me," Matthew got up, he left his job, he left everything behind him and he got up and followed Christ. So now, think about it. Now you're sitting there going, "Well, wait a minute. If Jesus says to me 'follow me' wouldn't that mean it has to be power in his voice?" Listen, we all pick up this word, right? Aren't these the words of Christ? Can't we all read these words? But without the power of Christ, the words aren't going to mean anything to us. They aren't going to mean a thing to us.

"And he said unto another, Follow me." A little different here because let's see the withholding power from it. It's not effectual. It's a trial. It's a test and that test then comes and he says, "But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." The idea here

is split down the middle, it depends on who you read. Either the dad is already dead and he needs to be buried or he's at the end of his life and one is saying, "Listen, I need to take care of my dad until my dad passes off the scene and then I'll come and follow you." You see why a lot of people like that rendition because all of this is pointing to what now is in the way of the preeminence of Christ. This one, if you have family which all of us in here do, it's going to hit you right between the eyes because it's that family relation. It's that thing that's more important than Christ. Looking at this duty, so to speak, of burying your dead or making sure...listen, looking at that in itself is not evil. That's not what Jesus is saying so he's not telling us to leave carcasses out in the street. Nope, bury them, do whatever you've got to do but listen to what this is: follow me. Well, the answer is, "I can't. I can't right now because of this. Because I do have family. Because I do have something else to do that's more important," and that something else is the family.

Now, this is a dad. We in here, we have children, we have wives, we have husbands. All of us in here have certain relationships depending on how you are in your home: you could be a son, you could be a daughter, you could be a brother, a sister, whatever it is you are. Jesus' words here say, "Let the dead bury their dead." What does that mean? Some people say, "Well, that's a harsh thing." I've heard that myself. I've quoted these words. I've quoted these words and I was told I was the meanest person and the most heartless person. Well, if that's true, then Jesus was too. Heartless, he must have been just heartless. Is Jesus saying there's no love for your dad? No, that's not what he's saying. But love for him is preeminent just as we just talked about, the reasons for looking back could be earthly-mindedness, now we come to the second reason of being family for looking back. The family. That example I gave you earlier about me being a dad and sometimes that feeling, lust, whatever it is that you want to call it, to be my child's friend, to get with them on this level that they're on so that we can enjoy it together even though the Lord called me away from that a long time ago. When I was a child, I did those childish things but now, not any more. But then sometimes you get those by your children and they'll say, "Well, Dad, what about this? Why don't we do this? Why don't we go there?" Now, I will say this about the children the Lord has given me: when I tell them that the Lord has showed me a different path, they usually don't get...they might be thinking something but I usually don't get hammered to continue to do it.

Listen, Paul said this in 2 Timothy 2:4, "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." Soldier here is in reference to the fighting that we do in this life and that was taken in a passage that Paul was talking about being a soldier of Christ, being someone who has constant warfare in this life. But that warfare that we have, Paul said to Timothy, he said, "Listen, one of the biggest problems is entangling yourself with the things in this life. Entangling yourself with the things and the loved ones with the things in this life." That's a deep saying. I'm not up here pointing fingers at anybody and I certainly point them at myself but I want you to understand that what the Lord has said here is that he must have the preeminence even over the things we call so dearly. Even over the things that seem to be the most dear thing in our lives, the family relations that we hold so dear. And I know as tight as we all are, we hold them very dear. I understand that.



What an answer to this observation. "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." But go thou and preach. Do you know what the word for "preach" there is? It's "announce." I read some notes by different people on this and some leaned toward in this passage Jesus was talking to preachers and this was supposed to be for preachers and because of this verse right here "but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." The Greek there says "announce." I take that because we're not all preachers of the word of God, I do take that to say to me, "What is preeminent? Is the gospel preeminent?" That's what he says, "But go thou and announce the kingdom of God." Do you want to know what the antithesis of following your family is? The gospel. If the family is that important to you and it has set up residence in your life and has become the idol in your life, the answer to that is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what his answer is, "Let the dead bury their dead but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." Announce the kingdom of God. Announce that it's the kingdom of God. Announce that it's the Lord Jesus Christ that's in your life, that is preeminent in your life.

Once again, I would tell you to stand fast as Paul said. Stand fast in that liberty that you are called. What is that liberty? To be a Christian, to walk the way of the Lord Jesus Christ. The problem with that is the Holy Spirit has to reveal to you that it's a liberty. He has to reveal to you that it's not bondage. I thought about that this morning. As sad as it is for me to say this, I read a headline this morning about something my kids were looking forward to seeing in the theaters and once again, because of the movement that's out there, it's been ruined. And I sat and I saw their heartbrokenness over it as I told them what had happened and I sat there and I was thinking, "Wow, this world gets worse and it gets worse and it gets worse." And I thought about that and I thought about how many people will still say, "Well, that doesn't matter, I'm going to do it anyway." Even though knowing the evil that's in there and that's a temptation for the child of God to go, "You know what? I'm not going to let the evil of this world take things away from me. I'm not going to let the evilness of this world to come into my freedom." The problem with that is: do you have a conscience? Do you have a conscience before the Lord? And does it say to you that I can't take part in this now? I can't take part in this activity now because the world and this movement has claimed it as its own and now with me being light, being associated with that, am I to have fellowship with darkness?

That's the question and that's what I'm talking about when Jesus said: Is the gospel that important? Is it preeminent? Is the gospel set up in your life? The gospel of Christ? Is that where the walk is? Or are there so many influences bringing you to look back? "Oh, I've got to do this. Oh, I've got to have this." The liberty for the child of God is the liberty to live unto Christ. But that has to come by the power because you aren't going to do it by duty and you aren't going to do it by "ought" because all that's going to turn into is nasty bitterness. I've seen that enough too.

"Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." Announce the kingdom of God. You want to know what's important? You think death? That's a very important thing, especially to the Jews but listen, that was a very important life event but is it to have preeminence over Christ? No.

Then we come to the last one. “And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee,” presumption again, but what keeps him back? “But let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.” Who is at home at your house? Well, I have earthly relations; I have business affairs to take care of; I’ve got things that trouble me. Think about that. I’m the head of a home so I understand this one tremendously that there are things, when I’m sitting in my house there are so many things that cumber me. I’ll be thinking about the week that’s coming; I’ll be thinking about my job; I’ll be thinking about all the things that cumber around me that are in my life today. These are the things that when looking back, they are so easy to look back at. “Well, I’ve got to tend to this. Business is more important right now. I’m called to do this. I’m called to do that.” Are you? Are you? That’s the excuse once again. “I have household matters to take care of. I’ve got to take care of my future. I’ve got to take care of this event. I’ve got to take care of that because they’re certainly not going to take care of themselves.”

But isn’t that what Jesus said? We don’t consider the lilies. We don’t consider the birds. We don’t consider how they don’t toil. We’re too busy spinning ourselves. This excuse, this one too should hit us right between the eyes. “Let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.” There’s no words in the word of God that are accidents. That home and house thing, you think about where you’re most comfortable, you think about where your familiarity is, you think about all the things that flood in your mind when you’re sitting there in your home, in your house. You think about the people you have over, you think about the things you’re cumbered to do and you think about this one saying, “I can’t follow you, Lord. I’ve got to go and take care of this first.”

And then Jesus answered our text, “And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back,” no man that says “I will follow you, Lord,” and looks back to earthly-mindedness, looks back to earthly relations, family relations, looks back to the affairs of this life, the affections of whatever it is that you do, “is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Two more passages and then we’ll be done. The first one I want to take you to is James 4. I’ll tell you what, this one’s powerful too. James was always straight and to the point. People like to look at his work and say, “Oh, he’s full of works.” He wasn’t full of works, he was full of truth, the gospel truth. James 4, look at verse 4. Like I said, it’s pretty rough but may the Holy Spirit open our eyes. “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?” No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back. Looking back to what? All of those things we just mentioned can be summed up in this: friendship of the world. But listen to the label that James puts out there, adulterers, adulteresses, you’re betrothed to Christ. When you go and you take friendship with the world, that’s enmity with Christ. It’s enmity with God. When you do that, you are turning your back upon Christ. You have chosen another way, another Lord, so to speak.

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

Straight words out of the word of God. “Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?” Do you think it's a vanity thing that the flesh wars against the Spirit? Do you think all that is vanity? Do you think it's all a lie? Do you really don't believe there is a struggle in the child of God because maybe you don't have that struggle? And if you don't, you're going to be right there and not fit for the kingdom of God.

“Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?” You say, “Man, James, that's just powerful stuff. Don't you have anything good to say?” Certainly he does, “But he giveth more grace.” Praise be to God that he does because we need it. “Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” Humbled. Humbled in the school of Christ, at the feet of Christ and the power of Christ. Humbled. That's who he giveth more grace to. If you want to raise your head and tell us how powerful you are, how mighty you are, how you don't have a struggle, how you don't have any of this going on in your life? He giveth grace to the humble.

The last place I'll take you is just flipping back a little bit to Hebrews 10. We will end with these words, Hebrews 10:38, “Now the just shall live by faith,” it's the faith of the Son of God, “but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.” Any man look back, any man follow the world, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. Here comes the glorious verse and that's my question: can you say you're in the “we”? Can you believe in the power of the Holy Ghost and revealing in your life: are you one of the “we” here? “But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.” That's the question of the hour: are you one who draws back unto perdition? Are you one that the Lord has kept and has started a great work and will be faithful to finish it?

We'll read our text one more time,

“And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

*Dear heavenly Father, most gracious and holy Lord, may you visit us with thy power and clarity and search our hearts this day. Lord, remove the dross, bring forth thy repentance and, Lord, may you be glorified. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*