

### **THE QUESTION OF THE WEEK**

Jesus said: "Follow me!" The man replied: "Lord let me bury my father first and then I will come and follow you. "Let the dead bury their dead but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.

Had the man's father just died? Jesus sounds so uncaring in this response today. "Let the dead bury their dead." There is an urgency to Jesus' words and an urgency to what he is telling these young men to do. "Follow me." It certainly seems as if the man's father has not died. He is, in effect, saying to Jesus "as soon as my father dies and I have lived out my responsibilities to honor him then I will follow you." Perhaps for the first time the man is realizing he has responsibilities to his father.

What Jesus is doing is raising the ante in the game. Yes, you certainly have responsibilities toward your mother and your father. But you also have responsibilities to me. You have come out to me to listen to me, to see the great deeds of power I perform and to make a decision to be my disciple. I have called you and thereby accepted you as a disciple. But you want to do this on your own terms and in your own way and with your own timing. But that is not how things work in the kingdom of God. And that is not how Jesus works. Jesus breaks through in a person's life and that urgency replaces all others. His priorities replace all others. We can listen to this story from the distance of two thousand years and wonder what the fuss is all about. But the reason Jesus is here and the task he is to achieve must be done in this moment.

My friends, it is possible to put off our decisions to live as Jesus is calling us to live. We can make our own assessments and we can come to our own conclusions and act on the decisions we have chosen. But that does not make them right. That does not mean that we have made the response that Our God is asking of us. And we must be clear. Our God has given us life and everything else. Our God can certainly ask things of us with an expectation of a positive response. Just because we don't feel like it or it doesn't work with what we want to do does not let us off the hook of responsibility. You and I are here on this earth by God's design and for God's purpose. When he calls us on that we must respond. Not everyone realizes that. Did you? That is the question of the week.