

Luke ch.9:51-end

In John's Gospel chapter 21 it records the incident where the disciples fished all night but caught nothing, and Jesus tells them to cast their nets on the right side. He then tells Peter "follow me"

In today's reading from Luke ch.9 Jesus enters a Samaritan village and says to the people "follow me", but they were reluctant to do it straight away, so Jesus says no-one who looks backwards when he has a hold of the plough can follow a straight furrow or is fit for service in the Kingdom of God.

In Luke's Gospel ch.5 v.27 we can read of Levi the tax collector. Now Levi was a Jew of course but he was not a very nice Jew, in fact his fellow Jews detested him for 3 reasons. Firstly he was a tax collector, and no-one likes them! Secondly he was a tax collector taking taxes from his fellow Jews and giving the money to the occupying Roman army. Thirdly he was a thief! Not only did he collect the taxes due but added a bit on for himself, he was diddling his fellow Jews! But one day in the market square Jesus tapped Levi on the shoulder and said "stop what you're doing and follow me". And Levi did, changed his name to Matthew and wrote Matthew's Gospel.

We can recall the account of Saul on the road to Damascus. God appeared to him and said "stop persecuting me and follow me"! And Saul did, changed his name to Paul, wrote nearly a half of the New Testament and became the greatest Apostle for Christ the World has ever seen.

Those two words "follow me". There can be no ambiguity, He doesn't say follow me part of the way, or follow me some of the time, or when you need me because you have a problem. Just follow me- continuously and consistently.

What He said to the Disciples then, He says to us today, and if any of us think "he doesn't mean me, because I've done nasty things, or I'm not good enough, or I don't know enough", we would be wrong. Because this call to follow him is to each and every one of us, irrespective of how we have lived our life or how good or bad we are, because Christ can see things in us that can be used to further his Kingdom on Earth.

If Christ could choose Levi and Saul, probably the last people we would have chosen, why wouldn't he choose any of us? The question is, when we feel that "tap on the shoulder", and we will, what will our response be? Will we obey

the call to follow him, to spread the good news of Christ and work to further his Kingdom on Earth? Or not?

Will we cast our net and become “Fishers of Men” or take the easy route and be keepers of an aquarium? To follow implies movement. Movement forwards, and the Samaritans learned that no-one follows by walking backwards. So In order to follow it’s obvious that someone must be leading! Christ has millions of followers all over the World, they can’t all be wrong, so if you haven’t already felt that tap on the shoulder, it’s undoubtedly on the way. And all of us can be motivated like the Samaritans to look forward on the path of Christ and enabled as Levi and Saul were, to do great things for Christ.

Amen