

Luke 9:62

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

Jesus responds to a would-be disciple: 'No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.' The plowing metaphor illustrates single-minded devotion—a plowman looking back makes crooked furrows. 'Looking back' (Greek 'blepōn eis ta opisō,' βλέπων εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω) means focusing on what's behind rather than forward. Kingdom work requires undistracted commitment, not divided loyalty. The statement 'is fit' (Greek 'euthe tos,' εὐθετός) means suitable, useful—divided hearts are useless for kingdom purposes. Discipleship demands wholehearted, forward-focused commitment.

Historical Context

This was the third in a series of discipleship encounters (vv. 57-62). A man wanted to follow Jesus but first bury his father (v. 59-60), another wanted to say goodbye to family (v. 61). Jesus' responses seem harsh by cultural standards—honoring parents and proper burial were sacred duties. Yet Jesus demands priority over even legitimate obligations. Plowing was common agricultural work in first-century Palestine, requiring focused attention to create straight furrows for planting. A plowman constantly looking back produced unusable, crooked rows. The metaphor of 'looking back' may allude to Lot's wife (Genesis 19:26), who looked back on what she was leaving and became a pillar of salt.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does the plowing metaphor illustrate the necessity of wholehearted, undivided commitment in discipleship?
2. What does Jesus' demand for priority over legitimate family obligations teach about the radical nature of kingdom commitment?

Interlinear Text

εἶπεν	δὲ	πρὸς	αὐτοῦ	ὁ	Ἰησοῦς	Οὐδεὶς	ἐπιβαλὼν	τὴν
said	And	unto	him	G3588	Jesus	No man	having put	G3588
G2036	G1161	G4314	G846		G2424	G3762	G1911	
χεῖρα	αὐτοῦ	ἐπ'	ἄροτρον	καὶ	βλέπων	εἰς	τὰ	ὀπίσω
hand	him	to	the plough	and	looking	back	G3588	G3694
G5495	G846	G1909	G723	G2532	G991	G1519		
εὐθετός	ἐστιν	εἰς	τὴν	βασιλείαν	τοῦ	θεοῦ		
fit	is	back	G3588	the kingdom	G3588	of God		
G2111	G2076	G1519		G932		G2316		

Additional Cross-References

Philippians 3:13 (Parallel theme): Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

Hebrews 10:38 (Parallel theme): Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

2 Timothy 4:10 (Parallel theme): For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

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