

Matthew 19:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?

Analysis

Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee (ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν πάντα καὶ ἡκολουθήσαμέν σοι, idou hēmeis aphēkamen panta kai ēkolouthēsamen soi)—Peter's response reflects a mixture of genuine commitment and self-justifying comparison. The perfect tense of ἀφίημι (aphiēmi, to leave, forsake) emphasizes the completed action with continuing results: they had abandoned their livelihoods and remained in that state. Following (ἀκολούθεω, akoloutheō) implies continuous discipleship, not merely physical accompaniment.

What shall we have therefore? (τί ἄρα ἔσται ἡμῖν, ti ara estai hēmin)—Peter's question reveals lingering transactional thinking: we've paid the price, what's our reward? Jesus doesn't rebuke this but graciously promises abundant recompense (vv. 28-30). Yet His answer includes a sobering warning: many that are first shall be last (v. 30). Peter's comparison with the rich young ruler contains subtle spiritual pride that Jesus addresses through the following parable (20:1-16), where laborers hired last receive equal pay.

Historical Context

The disciples had indeed made significant sacrifices—Peter left his fishing business (4:20), Matthew abandoned tax-collecting (9:9), and all forsook family ties and economic security. In a culture where vocation and family ties defined identity and provided survival, their commitment was costly. Yet Jesus's response both affirms their sacrifice and warns against merit-based calculation of spiritual rewards.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How can Christians avoid Peter's subtle error of comparing our sacrifices favorably to others while still acknowledging the real costs of discipleship?
2. What does Jesus's gracious answer to Peter's self-focused question reveal about how God responds to mixed motives in His followers?
3. In what ways might we, like Peter, engage in spiritual scorekeeping that contradicts the grace-based nature of Kingdom rewards?

Interlinear Text

Τότε ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν αὐτῷ Ἰδού, ἡμεῖς
Then answered G3588 Peter and said unto him Behold we
G5119 G611 G4074 G2036 G846 G2400 G2249

ἀφήκαμεν πάντα καὶ ἡκολουθήσαμέν σοι· τί ἄρα
have forsaken all and followed thee what G687
G863 G3956 G2532 G190 G4671 G5101

ἔσται ἡμῖν;
have shall we
G2071 G2254

Additional Cross-References

Philippians 3:8 (Parallel theme): Yea doubtless, and I count all things but 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,

Luke 5:11 (Parallel theme): And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

Luke 18:28 (References Peter): Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee.

Mark 2:14 (Parallel theme): And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.

Mark 10:28 (References Peter): Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

Deuteronomy 33:9 (Parallel theme): Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant.

Luke 15:29 (Parallel theme): And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

Matthew 9:9 (Parallel theme): And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

Luke 14:33 (Parallel theme): So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

1 Corinthians 4:7 (Parallel theme): For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?