

Matthew 8:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

Analysis

The disciple's request to 'first go and bury my father' likely doesn't mean his father had just died (in which case he'd be at the burial, not following Jesus), but rather asking to delay discipleship until after his father's eventual death and burial—possibly years away. This request, though seemingly reasonable and honoring to parents, places family obligation above immediate response to Christ's call. Jesus' shocking reply reveals that following Him takes precedence even over legitimate family responsibilities.

Historical Context

In Jewish culture, caring for parents and ensuring proper burial was a sacred duty. Delaying other commitments for this purpose would be considered honorable and pious. Jesus' radical response therefore shocked His hearers, demonstrating that kingdom demands supersede even the most sacred family obligations.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' teaching that discipleship supersedes family obligations relate to the fifth commandment to honor parents?
2. What legitimate but lesser responsibilities might you be allowing to delay wholehearted obedience to Christ's call?

Interlinear Text

Ἐτερος δὲ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτῷ εἶπεν αὐτῷ Κύριε
another And G3588 disciples of his said of his Lord
G2087 G1161 G3101 G846 G2036 G846 G2962

ἐπίτρεψόν μοι πρῶτον ἀπελθεῖν καὶ θάψαι τὸν πατέρα
suffer me first to go and bury G3588 father
G2010 G3427 G4412 G565 G2532 G2290 G3962

μου
my
G3450

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 19:29 (Parallel theme): And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

Haggai 1:2 (References Lord): Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built.