

# Matthew 8:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

## Analysis

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The command 'let the dead bury their dead' uses 'dead' in two senses: the spiritually dead (unbelievers) can care for the physically dead, but the disciple must prioritize spiritual life and kingdom work. This doesn't advocate irresponsibility but establishes hierarchy—Christ's call takes absolute priority over even legitimate earthly obligations. The call to 'follow me' is present, urgent, demanding immediate response without delay for earthly concerns, however pressing they may seem.

## Historical Context

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This harsh-sounding statement shocked hearers in a culture that valued family honor and proper burial rites. Yet Jesus consistently taught that kingdom priorities supersede earthly loyalties (Luke 14:26). The disciple's calling was to proclaim life to the spiritually dead, not attend to burial of the physically dead.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

## Study Questions

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1. What does this passage teach about the absolute priority and urgency of following Christ's call?
2. How do you distinguish between faithfulness to legitimate responsibilities and using them as excuses to delay whole-hearted discipleship?

## Interlinear Text

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ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτῷ ἀκολούθει μοι καὶ ἄφες  
G3588 But Jesus said unto him Follow me and let  
G1161 G2424 G2036 G846 G190 G3427 G2532 G863

τοὺς νεκρούς θάψαι τοὺς ἑαυτῶν νεκρούς  
G3588 dead bury G3588 their dead  
G3498 G2290 G1438 G3498

## Additional Cross-References

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**Luke 15:32** (Parallel theme): It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

**Colossians 2:13** (Parallel theme): And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

**Ephesians 5:14** (Parallel theme): Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

**Ephesians 2:1** (Parallel theme): And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

**Ephesians 2:5** (Parallel theme): Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

**John 1:43** (References Jesus): The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

**1 Timothy 5:6** (Parallel theme): But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.

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