**The Resurrection and Life Priorities**

***20****Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and had said, “Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?”****21****When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about this man?”****22****Jesus said to him, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!”****23****So the saying spread abroad among the brothers[*[*b*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=john+21&version=ESV#fen-ESV-26910b)*] that this disciple was not to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?” (John 21:20-23, ESV)*

 Our calling to follow Christ comes before everything else.

 Greetings to you dear brothers and sisters, as we take a look at an important correction from our Lord, directed at his apostle, and through him, at us. God has given each human being a unique mission. First, he or she must know God through Jesus, and after that they can walk the path or ministry that the Lord has prepared for them.

 There was a slight air of competition between Peter and the Beloved Disciple. That atmosphere between them began to grow and showed its fruit through the above episode. Today our topic is about priorities (related to the above) – just what things are important, and what things are the *most* important for us as believer-followers of Christ. Once again, I say that our calling to follow Christ comes before everything else.

 Our faith-walk comes before our ministry of caring for others. Peter and John had been present at a couple of important events. They had been there at Jesus’ Transfiguration, the empty tomb, and also when Jesus called to them from the shore after His Resurrection. Each time, it was as if John was running ahead or revealing to Peter that it was the Lord. One time, (it was the opposite, where) Peter signaled to John to ask Jesus as to who was going to betray Him, at the Last Supper. They were friends, but it almost seemed as if there was a bit of a loving competition between the two…

 Having this background, quite suddenly and after being reinstated by the Lord, Peter asks, “*So, what’s going to happen to him?*” The Lord, then, would say in today’s language, *“What’s it to you?” “So what if I come again a second time and he’s still alive?” “Why do you care?” “Just follow me (and forget about John’s assignment)[[1]](#footnote-1).”* In a way, Jesus shut down that competition between them, reminding Peter what his priority assignment was – namely, to follow Him as a disciple.

 There is a huge difference between following and simply believing (in Christ). To believe is cheap and costs us nothing. But to follow Christ is costly, and He asks us first to consider the great cost. I believe in Christ's work FOR me, but discipleship is the RESULT of His work IN us. Believers consider themselves first, but disciples consider Christ first. Believers (only) produce no perfect fruit, but disciples are known by their fruit. Belief saves my soul, but discipleship glorifies Christ. Believers (only) are not necessarily known as Christians, but disciples are known as Christians. Believers go to heaven, but disci­ples are greatly rewarded there.

 So why is another’s calling of concern to us? Let us love them, but let’s not forget that there is a call from Christ to follow Him. Very often, Christians fall into the temptation of caring for others more than taking care of their own business (the latter being required by the Lord). What Jesus did was to call us back to our correct spiritual focus. In other words, if we want to have a healthy ministry, we need to be healthy disciples. If we want to be good leaders or servants in the Lord, we need to be good followers and learners. We are called not to learn how to focus only on ourselves, but to glorify Christ instead, by following Him instead of trying to fix those around us. When we make our primary focus our own personal faith-walk, our mission of love will begin to give the genuine fruits of a follower of Christ. When we look to following Jesus, we leave others’ faith walks in the hands of the Lord, in effect.

 It is time to focus, then, on our faith-walk (our spiritual life). It is time not to worry about another’s ministry, but to be diligent with our assignment. Come and let us once again put our efforts into following the Lord with our whole heart, since the Lord is saying to each of us, “*What is it to you what the other person’s task is? You have a job to do – and that is, to follow Me.”* May following Jesus always be our first task. The Lord Bless you all, Amen.

1. My editorial comment – Jesus implies it if you read in context. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)