



Grand Chaplain's Corner

By RW Grand Chaplain Pat Thompson

July 1, 2024



Jesus said to him, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62).

This is one of those pithy little sayings from the lips of Jesus that probably needs some explanation. If one reads the entire passage (vv. 51-62), one quickly notices that it contains two instances where Jesus' invitation to follow him is met with momentary objections. It is as if the ones being invited are trying to stall before having to jump in and *do something!*

Interestingly, if these two unnamed men had consented to follow Jesus, the cadre of disciples might have been *fourteen* instead of just the legendary twelve!

When Jesus speaks of "the Kingdom of God" in the gospels, he is not referring to some sort of alternate reality that exists beyond the heavens but to a real and present order in the here and now. Coming from the tradition of the ancient prophets, Jesus saw the reign of God to be the true order of things—an order that had become adulterated by human tendencies to construct false structures—but a reality that was no less valid.

For Jesus—and for many of the mystics who have lived since—the world has always been the province of God, all present appearances to the contrary. The Universe, having been set in motion by a wise and compassionate Heavenly Architect, has never been abandoned by that Benevolent Creator. In fact, the people of Israel have always affirmed God's constant watchfulness. Christians, like their Jewish brothers and sisters, are so bold as to declare the intimate involvement of God in the affairs of humans.

The realization of this God-consciousness drives all people of goodwill to collaborate with the Deity in the repair of this fractured Universe so that the palpable awareness of God's presence becomes a present reality—a set of circumstances that often resemble something other than God's Providence. In the Kingdom of God, there is only the God-ordained perfection that banishes all want, greed, hunger, and death.

The process of getting to such awareness is not unlike plowing a field in preparation for planting, and the one who begins the endeavor must see it to fruition. To begin and then to abandon such a holy undertaking is not only the worst kind of indecision, but according to Jesus, it renders that one *unfit* for the attendant glories!

Faithfully and fraternally,

Pat