



**Preparing for Small Group:** Read the passage below, and answer the following questions.

- (1) What do these verses tell me about God?
- (2) What do these verses tell me about sinful humanity?
- (3) What do these verses tell me about Jesus?
- (4) What does God want me to know?
- (5) What does God want me to do?

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**“Totally Committed?”**

*Matthew 8:18-22*

**Main Point:** Disciples must be totally committed to Jesus the Son of Man.

Two facts related to being a disciple of Jesus the Son of Man:

**For a disciple, Jesus must be enough (18-20).**

Today, we associate the success of many things (concerts, games, festivals, churches, etc.) by the size of the crowd. If a lot of people showed up, then the event was a success! However, Jesus had a different measure of success than the crowd. In fact, Mt. 8:18 reminds us that Jesus was not focused on the crowds as much as He was individuals. Jesus was interested in His disciples and in making true disciples. He was interested in those who truly followed him in order to have relationship with Him and to have participation with Him in His work. In Mt. 8:19, a scribe approached Jesus to offer to do this very thing: Be a disciple of Jesus. His statement sounded great as he told Jesus that he would follow Jesus anywhere! We would think that Jesus would jump on the offer from this scribe; instead, Jesus responded in an unusual way. In His response, Jesus made it clear that following Him came with no guarantee of creature comforts and securities in this world. In fact, Jesus made it clear that following Him would require a cost. Ultimately, the response of Jesus left the scribe with a question, and the question still has to be answered by those who want to follow Jesus today: If all you get for following Jesus is Jesus, would He be enough? Jesus is the Son of Man, and He demands that His disciples always make Him enough in their lives.

1. In thinking about the 1st century Jewish perspective of the Messiah, what might have been some of the hoped for rewards that could have motivated this scribe’s statement about following Jesus?
2. What are some of the reasons that people want to follow Jesus today? Can these things and reasons ever become more important or more of a focus than Jesus Himself? Why, or why not?
3. Why did Jesus tell this scribe that if he followed Him, the scribe might be homeless?
4. Consider the question “if all you get for following Jesus is Jesus, would He be enough?” Take some time to be open and honest in answering that question in your life today.
5. How should these words of Jesus impact the way that the church — and you — approach sharing the Gospel and leading others to make a commitment to follow Jesus in their lives?

**For a disciple, Jesus must be the priority (21-22).**

As the story continues, we realize that the scribe was a disciple from the opening words of Mt. 8:21: "Another disciple..." This second disciple came to Jesus with an interesting request. While also desiring to follow Jesus, the disciple asked Jesus for permission to delay His commitment to follow Jesus in order to bury his father. Commentators differ on whether or not this meant that the man's father had already passed away, or if the man's request meant that his father was yet to pass away, which would have implied that the man wanted to stay behind in order to get his inheritance from his father. Regardless, Jesus' response is powerful and provocative: "Leave the dead to bury their own dead!" The response of Jesus seemed cold and heartless. It certainly wasn't what was expected, but it was the response that was needed to address the issue in the heart of the disciple. Jesus is the Son of Man who demands that His disciples prioritize His work above everyone/thing else. Jesus confronted this disciple with a question that still must be resolved in the hearts of His disciples today: If you had to make a choice between Jesus and someone or something else, would Jesus always be your choice? Jesus is the Son of Man, and He demands that His disciples always make Him the first priority in their lives.

1. Examine the response of Jesus. Share your reactions, questions, and concerns related to what Jesus told this man.
2. In an extreme way, what do the words of Jesus in Mt. 8:22 reveal about the importance and urgency of the work of Jesus?
3. At an individual level, if you had to make a choice between Jesus and someone or something else, would Jesus always be your choice? Discuss, and then pray for hearts that always prioritize Jesus and His work in your lives.
4. Read Mt. 16:24-28. Discuss what these verses say. How do these verses connect to the words of Jesus in Mt. 8:18-22?
5. Do you know someone who has a lot of competing priorities in front of Jesus in their lives? How can you talk to them this week and share with them this week this challenge from the heart and mouth of Jesus in Matthew 8. Pray for the individuals you identified, and commit to go and to invite them to join you in your small group next Sunday.