

## Scripture Reading

### **A Reading of the Gospel according to Luke (Luke 9:59-62)**

Jesus said to another man, "Follow Me." But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family." Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God." The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Reflection – God comes first. Not myself, not my family.**

**All righteousness is from God alone (cf. Philippians 3:9).** We have no righteousness of our own. We can only stand in God's righteousness when we do what He commands us to do (cf. 1 John 2:29). Everyone is a sinner and has fallen short of the glory of God (cf. Romans 3:23). Jesus shows His righteousness when He instructs us to put God first (cf. Matthew 22:37). In the divine order, God comes first. When God is given His rightful place of sole dominion in our hearts, lives and society, all sin and evil would have completely disappeared from the face of the earth. Once this order is reversed, confusion, error and sin result. Thus, we see the fundamental problem of the world today: the denial of the existence of God and the rightful place that should be accorded to Him in our hearts, our lives, in our homes and families, in our society and nations, in the world.

**Jesus shows His righteousness when He instructs us to put God first.** Jesus teaches very clearly that God must always come first in everything. *Jesus replied: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind (Matthew 22:37).* To those who do not have a complete understanding of this teaching, Jesus said: *No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God (Luke 9:62).* Jesus is able to teach with great conviction and authority not like the Scribes (cf. Matthew 7:29) because Jesus is a living example of what He teaches. Due to His love for God the Father's will, Jesus made Himself nothing by coming to earth as a human being, as a servant, divesting Himself of all glory due to Himself as Son of God (cf. Philippians 2:7).

**When we put God first we can respond to God's call to love others with the fullness of His love.** Far from competing with our love for our families, God wants us to love our families with the fullness of His love. This is only possible when we put God first in everything that we do. When we love others for the sake of God, our love for them becomes unconditional. We are no longer operating on a mere human plane but through the grace of God which strengthens us from within (cf. Philippians 4:13). Accordingly, we are empowered to love the ungrateful, the hateful, the betrayer, our enemies and all those who, by any human standard, would be difficult to love. We cannot claim the love as ours. It is poured into our hearts by the action of the Holy Spirit (cf. Romans 5:5).

**Don't you know I have to be in My Father's house (Luke 2:49).** The child Jesus travelled to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Passover with His parents. After the celebration, He stayed behind in the temple whilst His parents went home, unknowingly. After three days when Jesus was missing, the parents found Him in the temple conversing with the teachers. When they asked why He subjected them to such anxiety, Jesus said: Don't you know I have to be in My Father's house? (Luke 2:49). Jesus is telling them He needs to put God first even when at the cost of great anxiety to His earthly parents.

**Seek first the Kingdom of God then all things will be given unto us (cf. Matthew 6:33).** God knows how important our family is. God does not make us individuals but as members of a family. Jesus did not come to earth as an individual but as a member of a human family. God's grand purpose for us is to make us members of His royal family (cf. Ephesians 1:5). When we truly love God, we have love and peace in our souls, and we can love unconditionally even those members of our families who are difficult to love because of their behavior. It is said God will never be out-done in generosity. This is the promise of Jesus for those who truly love Him: Seek first the Kingdom of God then all things will be given unto you (cf. Matthew 6:33).

### **Conversation with Jesus**

Precious Lord, You said: if you love Me, keep My commands (cf. John 14:15). By Your life on earth, You give me a great lesson on how to love. By having true love for God, we are given peace and love in our souls. We are then empowered to love others with a pure, unconditional love because it is for Your sake, and You said "whatever you do to the least of My brothers and sisters, you do to Me." Lord, help me put You first in everything in my life by following Your teachings in every aspect of my life. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. [www.twohearts.hk](http://www.twohearts.hk)