

Follow and Learn Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time/C June 30, 2019 1 Kgs
19:16b, 19-21; Gal 5:1, 13-18; **Lk 9:51-62** (When we love God with all that we are, we
lose our self-will so that we can love and serve others with God's love.)

“Let the dead bury the dead.”

This is a rather sharp and arresting comment. I remember as a boy hearing this gospel and thinking Jesus was saying that zombies should be digging graves. But we have to put this in the context of where it appears here, where **Jesus is calling people to follow him**. This man said, “Let me first bury my father.” **Now his father wasn't dead yet; he was saying that taking care of his father until he was gone was more important than following Jesus as a disciple.**

Now as we know or should know, **caring for others and being a disciple of Jesus are not in any way mutually exclusive**. Quite the contrary, **caring for others is a way of following Jesus**. When we love God with our whole heart, our whole mind, our whole being, we are not exhausted, but rather renewed and refreshed. **When we love God with all that we are, we lose our self-will**, which is what really wears us down. And God draws us into the infinite love that God is, **so that we can love and serve others with God's love**.

But all this requires balance, prudence, and self-care. But the major point is loving others is not a diversion from the love of God because **the love of God is all embracing, boundless energy itself**. But we all have to learn this, and be formed. **We can only be formed by Christ**. The man in this story was not ready to be formed and learn, so Jesus was frankly disappointed. We could see Jesus being disappointed at various places in the gospels. This reminds us of the story, it reminds me of the story of the wise and foolish virgins. Here were **good people who were not prepared, who were not ready to do their work**, bearing light for the groom. **Following God's plan and purpose requires vigilance and preparation** and, sadly, it is possible to blow it all off. So this gospel is inviting us to a moment of self-examination. **How ready are we to follow and learn?**