

Was Jesus radical in his teaching?

Some see Jesus as a radical person and his teaching was difficult to receive and comprehend. (Find Text: Who can receive this?) Especially in the areas of family and the relationship between men and women.

“Let me bury my father”

A man came to Jesus and said I would like to follow you but let me go and bury my father first. (Find text). Many have criticized Jesus for such an action. What is wrong with allowing this poor man to bury his father and finish with the funeral service and come follow Jesus? Others have described Jesus as uncompassionate and inconsiderate to this man and his family obligations. Others have seen Jesus disrespectful to the culture. This scripture can only be understood in the Byzantine culture. At the age of eighteen I ran away from home and unsatisfied with the culture and life in general. So my father made the same statement, “bury me first and then go.” Obviously, my father was not dead and he was not asking me to kill him. What my father was saying to me was wait until I die and bury me and then you are free to go anywhere. I did not take that advice and I did what I wanted to do, I ran away. I wanted to run away from responsibility. You see my friends, I am the oldest son and according to the culture once my father dies or grows old, sick or disabled and is not longer able to support the family, that responsibility is transferred to me. I knew that one day I would find myself burdened with the families’ responsibilities. That means that as the oldest son, I am responsible to give education to all my siblings, make sure they are able to marry, pay for the weddings, and finally at that point I will be free to fulfill my dreams. I have watched many oldest sons, go through this whole cultural scenario and responsibilities. After helping everyone, they are too old to pursue their dreams and visions. By the time he is forty or fifty, who is going to marry him and bear children for him? He will be dead before he can see his grandchildren. While all his siblings, got almost everything they desired. I am not saying that I did the right thing but at the age of eighteen, I was selfish and I only wanted to pursue my dreams. It is interesting to know that my father died fifteen years later. Thank God that he allowed me to receive a good education and gave me the opportunity to pursue my dreams and help my siblings. I was able to get a good job and because of that I was able to help my siblings. As we go back to this man, who told Jesus let me bury my father first, Jesus was not against the idea of going home to wait until his father died. Jesus was trying to tell the man to be more realistic. As if he is telling him, “you don’t know when your father is going to die. You don’t know many years you will continue to live. Be realistic because you don’t know what will happen years from now. Will you be able to serve me after your father passes away? Or are you going to be more involved with the family that you won’t be able to get into the ministry?” Jesus was trying to tell the man to stop and continue his family obligation. That was what Jesus meant when he said to pick your cross. He did not mean that the cross was your problems but that it was the reality of life. Jesus did not want him to leave his family and live in a cave. How true it is that when you live in a cave you will not be able to serve the Lord. Jesus prayers were asking the father not to take them from this world. In fact Jesus brought us to this world. You can

be more effective in serving God when we live in this world. It is very hard to do both, caring for family and serving God. That is what Jesus meant when he is saying by carrying the cross to continue to be part of the world and serve God. So let me tell you today that your cross is not your wife. My father told me we are like ships in the water.