

Foxes have holes

In the New Testament both Matthew and Luke report that Jesus says

Matthew 8:18–20

- 18 Now when Jesus saw a crowd around Him, He gave orders to depart to the other side *of the sea*.
19 Then a scribe came and said to Him, “Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.”
20 Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes and the birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”

Luke 9:57–62

- 57 As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, “I will follow You wherever You go.”
58 And Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes and the birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”
59 And He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.”
60 But He said to him, “Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.”
61 Another also said, “I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home.”
62 But Jesus said to him, “No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

What do these passages mean? What is Jesus saying? Was He trying to dissuade potential followers? Or was He making a different point altogether?

If He was trying to dissuade followers, would He have said in v 59 “Follow Me”? So was He just saying No to the first guy?

Do foxes live in holes? Do birds live in nests? We know from other passages that Jesus did in fact have at least one house. Therefore He can't be saying that He has nowhere to live and He certainly wouldn't be lying. Do birds always use nests? No, they perch in trees. It is only when sitting on eggs or raising young that nests are involved. Do foxes live in their holes? No, that's where they raise their young. They do shelter from bad weather there but otherwise they live in the open. So then what is Jesus telling them/us? It must concern reproduction or child rearing. Is this hypothesis confirmed by the use of His “Son of Man” title rather than using say “The Vine”, “The Way” or “The Truth”?

What did He say to those He reproved? He said to the first “Go proclaim the kingdom of God”. To the second He effectively said “Go plant in the kingdom of God”. In summary He said “go grow the kingdom”.