



Journey to Jerusalem

LENT 2022

Growth Group Curriculum

Week 1 – March 6, 2022 – Luke 9:51-62

Growth groups are one of the best and easiest ways to find community at church. Thank you for loving and caring for each other.

This week we begin a new sermon series that will take us to Easter. Over the next seven weeks we will be considering the final Passover journey that Jesus makes as it is recorded in the gospel of Luke. Though Matthew and Mark tell of this journey from Galilee to Jerusalem in approximately two chapters each, the gospel of Luke takes ten chapters. Along the way we hear ten parables of Jesus that are unique to the gospel of Luke.

The transfiguration happens in Luke 9:28-36 and soon after that Luke tells us that Jesus “sets his face” or “resolves” to make the trip to Jerusalem knowing what awaits him. The arrest, the trial, the anguish of the cross and the resurrection. Even though Jesus knows full well what must happen, the disciples simply cannot comprehend what he is talking about. They have no concept of a suffering Messiah.

In Luke 9:51 Jesus sets his face toward Jerusalem. He would follow God’s plan and initiated the events that would lead to his arrest, death, resurrection and ascension. It is interesting that he decides to take the shortest route which was through Samaria. Jews were not well liked by Samaritans and the Jews felt the same way about Samaritans. There were other routes that were used by Jewish people making their way to Jerusalem, but Jesus intentionally makes his way through Samaria where he faces immediate rejection. James and John want to be like Elijah, from 2 Kings 1:10-12, but Jesus tells them that their behavior is inappropriate, they then journey on to the next village.

As Jesus continues to make his way, he talks about the cost of discipleship with people who say they want to follow him. Jesus makes it very clear that he must be the number one priority for anyone who wants to follow him. Family, friends, work and other commitments must be secondary. As Jesus invites them to follow him, they all come up with excuses about “why” they cannot follow him right now.

Jesus wants people who will follow him and not spend their lives looking back. The promise that comes with following Jesus is that he will meet the needs and concerns that arise in our lives. He simply wants us to give him our allegiance and stay on the path with him.

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Exploring the Text

Luke 9:51-62

⁵¹ As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. ⁵² And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; ⁵³ but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?” ⁵⁵ But Jesus turned and rebuked them. ⁵⁶ Then he and his disciples went to another village. ⁵⁷ As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” ⁵⁸ Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.” ⁵⁹ He said to another man, “Follow me.” But he replied, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.” ⁶⁰ Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” ⁶¹ Still another said, “I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family.” ⁶² Jesus replied, “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”

Questions

If you are answering these questions alone, we would urge you to try journaling. Rather than just pondering the answers, try writing them out along with a prayer to the Lord.

- 1) Did you decide to take on a new discipline for the season of Lent, or give up something for Lent? If so, what?
- 2) The NIV says that Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. The ESV says that Jesus set his face toward Jerusalem. Both imply that Jesus made a very focused, intentional decision to actively make his way to Jerusalem. When was the last time you resolved to do something? How did it go, or how is it going?
- 3) Why do you think that Jesus chose to intentionally take the route that went through Samaria when there were other options available? Do you think he was trying to teach the disciples something?
- 4) The Samaritan people and Jewish people did not get along. Most of the time they despised each other. James and John respond in a pretty dramatic fashion to the Samaritans lack of hospitality. Why do you think they responded the way they did? Is it ever appropriate for followers of Jesus to respond like this?
- 5) James and John were upset because they felt as though they had been rejected. How do you deal with rejection? How do you respond when things don't go your way, or the way you had planned? Do you just roll with it? Do you respond in anger and frustration like James and John? Or, somewhere in between?
- 6) Luke has three accounts around the theme of following Jesus. What does it mean to you to follow Christ? What are the “marks” or “characteristics” of someone who follows Jesus?
- 7) Jesus is very concerned about how things get prioritized in our lives. He very clearly wants to be first in our lives. Do you struggle with any of the images he uses in verses 57-62 to make his point?
- 8) Is there something that you feel like you need to be prioritizing in your life, or do you need to do some re-prioritizing in your life? If so, share about that.

