

## 6-26-16 Sermon Luke 9:51-62

This is not your typical gospel passage. You may have heard the expression, ‘Jesus set his face toward Jerusalem’ which is a fancy way of saying Jesus is headed toward Jerusalem and there is no turning back. I believe Jesus knew what was waiting for him when he got there and while he was a unique mix of humanity and divinity I believe the human side was a little anxious.

Jesus sent out an advance party into a village in Samaria and it's no surprise they didn't get a warm welcome. Jerusalem was where the Jews worshipped and the Mt Gerizim was the holy place for the Samaritans. Polite conversation requires one inquire of a stranger – where are you going? The reception was no surprise to anyone. The level of love between the two peoples was akin to the love between Donald and Hillary – hope that helps.

The disciples are early in their training and it shows, as they return to Jesus from the Samaritan village and ask him, “*Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to consume them?*” Kind of an Elijah moment. A pretty self-righteous question for some rookie disciples and Jesus lets them have it – not the fire they asked for, but what for and it was time to head down the road.

Did you ever wonder **why Jesus didn't just vaporize the Samaritan village?** **Why might he not have done that?** Disciples had a lot to learn and if you vaporize someone or a village **what are the chances they will ever come to faith or believe in Jesus?** Besides it was just chapter 6 when Jesus had the ‘love your enemies and don't

judge' talk with the disciples. A lesson is still needs to be heard by some of us who call ourselves Christian.

Clearly the road to Jerusalem is not going to be an easy one and to follow Jesus is going to equally difficult as we learn in the following 3 encounters on the road. Some things never change and one of those is – You always want to get in good with the leader of a movement and the Jesus movement is now picking up momentum.

Jesus is approached by someone who pledges allegiance to Him and Jesus' response is a little on the harsh side. Not glad to have you on board – but I have nothing and no where to even sleep. No clue whether this someone continued on or left. Not exactly a warm welcome.

Jesus initiates the second encounter, inviting a different someone to, “***Follow Me!***” – a line which worked with the original 12 disciples. Wonder what you would say, if I asked you to do something or go somewhere on church business and I said what Jesus said? **How would that go over?** Doesn't sound very pastoral and not very Jesus like. I'm honestly not sure what to do with this. Could it be his dad is almost dead and he wants to wait. Could it be his dad or parents aren't dead or dying just old and in need of his care. Or could it be Jesus is telling him let those who have no sense of the Kingdom, not heart for God bury the physically dead? Or is Jesus saying there is nothing you can do for people when they are dead and let's focus on those whose lives we can change – the living? Just don't know. What I do know is this – a son't duty to his father was second to none, except God. Hmmmmmm.

Enter someone number 3 and it goes like this, *“I will follow you, Lord, but first let me say good-bye to those in my house.”* We shouldn’t be surprised by Jesus’ response. If you want to say goodbye to you family then don’t bother following me!

**What is Jesus trying to tell us with this passage?**

I think the part about the Samaritan village we covered pretty well with the possible exception of noting the path of discipleship and of following Jesus is bumpy and does involve rejection.

Back to the 3 someone’s. Is it as simple as follow Jesus no excuses or whining? If that’s the case, we need to take Moses off the “A List”. He gave God a litany of excuses why he was not the one including I don’t have a silver tongue and who am I anyway? Gideon also falls by the wayside along with Jeremiah who said, “I am only a boy.” And the list goes on. Yet in the end they played huge parts in helping the kingdom come. **Reluctant?** Yes. **Lost causes?** No way. (*Do you know the difference between an excuse and a reason? If I say it – it is clearly a reason – if anyone else says the same thing it is an excuse!*)

There must be more here than just an indictment of excuses and there is. The more is a sense of urgency and that Jesus had a place for each of the someones in the passage. Some he called from where they were and others had something internal that sent them his way. It seems this is Jesus’ answer to us when we say maybe next time – or next year – or when I get my life all straightened out or when we tell ourselves He really doesn’t need or want me . . . Amen.