

062622 **"Walking with Jesus"** Luke 9:51-62

A father and son arrived in a small western town looking for an uncle whom they had never seen. Suddenly, the father, pointing across the square to a man who was walking away from them, exclaimed, "There goes my uncle!"

His son asked, "How do you know when you have not seen him before?"

"Son, I know him because he walks exactly like my father!"

If we walk in the Holy Spirit, the world should know us by our walk.

Today's Bible verses speak about "discipleship" or walking with Jesus. The passage that begins on Luke 9:51 recounts Jesus' path towards Jerusalem to complete God's plan of salvation. The path was full of contempt, suffering, and eventually death – but a necessary one for the sake of eternal life for all of us – so Jesus set his face and went to Jerusalem willingly and graciously. Look closely. In today's scripture reading, there is a contrast between Jesus, who moves forward without wavering toward his destination, and those who do not.

In verses 52 and 53, Jesus sent his disciples to a Samaritan village to prepare a place to eat and sleep for Himself and his disciples. But the Samaritans refuse to receive Him on the basis that He is on the way to Jerusalem. The conflict between the Jews and Samaritans centered on their difference in opinion on the place of worship. While Jerusalem was understood as the only proper location for Jewish worship, Samaritans worshiped at Mount Gerizim.

Anyway, hearing the Samaritans' rejection of Jesus, the disciples react in fury. James and John are captured by the enthusiasm to lift Jesus up, asking Jesus if He would like them to "command fire to come down from heaven and consume them"

(v.54). "Sons of Thunder" was the nickname Jesus gave James and John. The nickname described the two brothers well. They were very quick-tempered. But Jesus in turn rebuked them, and urged them to have a merciful mind; He teaches us that we need to be gentle with even those who don't treat us well. In His first coming, Jesus came not as a judge, but as a savior.

We need to be mindful that our passion for Jesus never leads us to ways or behavior that are not in line with His will. Treating those with different opinions with an aggressive attitude is a trap we fall into often; but to wish those who disagree to die in fire is not only arrogant selfishness, but also a worldly heart not aligned with the Lord's. There are things we all need to pay attention to every day as we live as Christians: arrogance masked by passion, haste masked by religiosity, and self-centeredness that prevents us from distinguishing the Lord's will from ours.

Earlier, we looked at the Samaritans in a village who did not accept the Lord, and the disciples who claimed to follow the Lord, but eventually followed Jesus with their own blood and not Jesus' way. And from Luke 9:57, we see three types of people who want to follow Jesus.

First are those who respond to His call immediately. Their faith must be commended, but they are so eager that they are not thoughtful. Remember, Jesus was very popular at the time of Jesus! Even the 12 disciples of Jesus were trying to figure out who was the greatest in the Lord's kingdom. Verse 58 says, And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." Walking with Jesus is not always easy and

may require one to toil and suffer. When walking with Jesus, one will not partake in "worldly pleasure" or achieve "fame." Then and now, many people who commit in a haste actually mean they will follow only on pleasant days; at the first sign of suffering, they give up and go back. He is asking us to check what kind of expectations we have to follow Jesus.

Second, there are those who ask Jesus to wait in verse 59. This verse should not be interpreted as a discouragement to conduct funerals for deceased parents. What this person said was that he'd wait until his father died, so that he may carry out his funeral. But Jesus says He must not put it off, and make the decision right now.

Third, there are those who want to follow Jesus but have other priorities – like the person who wants to say farewell to his family first. Again, this verse ought not to be read to say that following Jesus means we can disregard our families. People who fall into this category are those who will turn back from Jesus for other things. We know, as we begin to focus more closely on our daily planners, that time fills up fast with duties, meetings, organizations, and just generally getting back into the swing of things. There are thousands of reasons not to follow Jesus now.

Verse 62 says, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." Jesus tells us that once we commit, we shall not look back. We should not delay dedicating ourselves to God. When there is an opportunity and calling to do so, He asks that we do it now. In summary, what's problematic is being lukewarm in following Jesus. Recall how the Lord rebuked the Laodicea church from the book of Revelation for being neither cold nor hot.

Then, I had to ask myself while preparing for the sermon today whether I am someone suitable for the Kingdom of God. First, I thought, I am a pastor who gave up on the riches of the world to follow Christ... but then, I saw the contrast between Jesus' firm willingness on His path to Jerusalem and my own disappointing lack of will. When the Samaritans refused to receive Christ, I might have thought, "Why should he go through all this hassle for people like them?" But Jesus didn't think this way. Our Lord didn't stop on his tracks to the Cross, to Jerusalem, for you and for me.

One of Korean Gospel song writers wrote a song called, "For whom did he carry the cross?" [For whom did He wear the crown of thrones](#)

[For whom did He shed blood at the whip](#)

[For whom was He despised, mocked, and ridiculed](#)

[For whom did He walk the walk of suffering and death](#)

[Jesus, oh Jesus, my Lord who saved me from sin](#)

[Shed His last drop of blood for me](#)

Dear beloved sisters and brothers in Christ, our Lord came to the Earth to restore the bond between us and God that was broken by our sin. For this holy purpose, Jesus never hesitated on His path to Jerusalem. Even though his own followers were ignorant and selfish sometimes, He didn't get discouraged and He didn't give up on them – He will never give up on us, either. And then He shed every last drop of his blood for you and me. There is no way for us to repay His love, but I pray that we will all live accordingly as His disciples, walk with Jesus with loving and obedient hearts. Fairfield Grace, may God's grace, peace, goodness, and mercy be with you and your family, and your business, and your studies, and with the lives of your children. Amen.