

No looking back—Answering the Call of Jesus to “Follow Me”

Luke 9:51-62

Sermon Prepared for WellSpring Church

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Introduction: Today is Palm Sunday What will happen in this week is part of the plan of God and the obedience and resolve of Christ

The Commitment of Christ. The time had come, the days are drawing near. From this point onward to Chapter 19 and Palm Sunday Jesus is moving purposely toward his final hour in Jerusalem.

The time had come, the days were drawing near

He has predicted his death twice

Let these words sink into your ears—this is serious.

Ascension as being lifted to the cross only? (John 3:14, 8:28; 12:32) But also since this noun for ascension is used only here in the NT and because its verbal form is used to speak of Christ’s being taken into heaven (Acts. 1:2, 11, 22, I Tim. 3:16) “It seems that the term here encompasses the entire sequence of events from the cross, through the resurrection, (John MacArthur) to the actual ascension into glory (Acts. 1:9-11)

Set his face, strengthened his face.

What this is

set his course for Jerusalem

place of sacrifice

place of the temple i.e. presence of God

all the prophets killed in Jerusalem.

The next 10 chapters will see Jesus on this journey to the cross.

looked toward his purpose—the cross and all he would accomplish for us.

He was aware of his purpose and future work!

so he strengthened, made himself steadfast, set his face.

How are we strengthened in our own Resolve?

Strengthened in ourselves

James 5:8 “You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand”

Strengthened by others

Luke 22:32- but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turn

This was Jesus’ Charge to Peter—be a strengthener

Romans 1:11 For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen-

Paul’s Prayer for the Romans, that he might be involved in their strengthening

I Thess. 3:2- and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's coworker [HYPERLINK](http://www.gnpccb.org/esv/search/?q=1+Thess.+3%3A2)

"http://www.gnpccb.org/esv/search/?q=1+Thess.+3%3A2" \l "f1" [1] in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith,

Paul sent Timothy to the Thessalonian Church to strengthen—with the gospel  
Strengthened by God

I Thess. 3:11-13- Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, 12 and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, 13 so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

May the Lord establish and strengthen you

II Thess. 2:16-17— Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, 17 comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.

The Lord Strengthen you

II Thess. 3:3— But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.

the same

I Peter 5:10-- And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

Strengthened by the gospel

Romans 16:25— Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages

God who strengthens by the truth of the Gospel

II Peter 1:12— Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have be established in the truth

Why a resolve was necessary He looked to the end result and its joy Hebrews 12:1-3

How may my resolve in the way of Discipleship be seen as joyful?

I am reflecting Christ (savor of death and life)

I am a part of bringing others to Christ

There is great reward

Romans 8

I Cor. 3

Transition: The resolve of Christ is not all that there is.

The Mercy of Christ—

He goes through Samaria. This could be seen as part of his resolve—cutting straightway across country to get to his goal.

But there is a history of antagonism and hatred. Ryken says the Samaritans wouldn't have helped any Jew get to Jerusalem. And he is rejected, repulsed,

refused/ In Bethlehem, his Home town Nazareth, Capernaum his base of operations, and ultimately in Jerusalem

Mercy Shown by sending messengers

Messengers announcing the coming of the Messiah? (John the Baptist.)

Messengers to get a room.

Mercy shown by refusing to destroy

The response of James and John

They are referring back to an event in Elijah's life

Sons of Thunder

This is not the day of judgment, this is the day of mercy.

Mercy shown in his rebuke to the disciples—"you do not know what manner of Spirit you are of, for the Son of Man did not come to destroy people but to save them.) Mercy shown by continuing his journey to another village—someone else gets to hear

Mercy will not be extended forever. There must also be holiness and justice (Romans 3:21-26)

Ryken "We need more than good intentions; we need righteous actions. We need more than zeal for God's glory; we need hearts that are filled with the compassion of Christ. We need more than the knowledge of Scripture; we need spiritual insight to know how to apply it to our own situation. Never is thus more important than when we think we have a responsibility to defend the God's cause. We may be right about the sin in someone's life, or a problem in the church, or some ungodliness in government, or the prevailing errors of our culture. But are we responding in a way that demonstrates the kindness of God, the mercy of Christ, and the truth of the Spirit speaking in Scripture?" p. 500

Kent Hughes "Those on the road with Jesus, those who would pretend to share in his ministry, must be merciful. There is no room for the preacher who by his fierce preaching on Hell betrays a sick wish that people would end up there. "Turn or Burn! And I hope you Do!" IF we are on the road with Jesus, we must be compassionate and forgiving like him."

"Whenever people arouse our anger, we can ask the Holy Spirit to help us show them the love of God." (Hughes)

The mercy of Christ is being shown to everyone of us today.

Every blessing

Every withholding of just desserts

The preaching of the Word

Transition: The mercy of Christ is what motivates our second move here, the call.

The Call of Christ: Follow Me. Used three times in this passage.

The call was given repeatedly

Some responded immediately and stayed

Other responded and then later left

Some rejected it outright

What is the word and its connotation? The word that Jesus always used mean to follow, to accompany, to be a disciple or follower. It is always used by Jesus in a verb tense that “indicate[s] He was not seeking a momentary following, but a continuous, lifelong commitment. (JMac, Luke, 316).

You are continuously being called to follow Christ—You are also continuously being called to walk away from him by the world around you, your own desires, and the temptations of the Evil One.

“Notice how the call of Christ is different than much of what we know in contemporary evangelism which views becoming a Christian as an emotional and even impulsive decision; a feeling –induced act to which people are led by fiery preaching, heart-rending stories, and emotion-stirring music. The goal of contemporary evangelistic methodology is to induce people to seize the moment, pray a prayer and make a decision to accept Christ. But Jesus never tried to move people emotionally into a moment of crisis in which they would accept Him. There is not record in the New Testament of Jesus or the apostles counseling someone to make such a momentary choice, or pray a prayer in order to be saved. When the Lord invited a person to receive forgiveness and salvation by faith in Him, He did not want the emotion of a moment’s feeling of guilt, fear, or desire for a better life, but a carefully thought out lifetime commitment to Himself as Lord. To Jesus and the apostles as well, following Christ salvifically was not an event was a way of life.” John MacArthur, Commentary Luke 6-10, page 316)

The Demands of Christ. We have seen that the call of discipleship is one of self-denial and suffering. it is more.

The Demand of hardship, Sacrifice, homelessness, and a new citizenship.

The Scribe

Jesus’ Response

What it does not mean (Homelessness, starvation and begging)

What it does mean

We must be willing to say farewell to comforts, the way the cross and the way of discipleship is sacrifice and self-denial.

We must see ourselves as citizens of another world.

The Demand of Urgency “First” Before I follow you...“First”

I need to bury my father→J.A. Alexander, “Theology on Fire” I:354

This looks like a reasonable request

The man’s father was not yet dead!

Is this a matter of obeying the commandment to honor parents?

“What hinders us from following Jesus is not always something sinful; sometimes it is something good in itself that nevertheless gets in the way of what God really wants us to do.

there are some other people who can carry out many other functions

“If Jesus is God’s Son, our first duty is towards him. A man who considers that he has a prior duty to fulfill before he is free to become a follower of Christ, has not concept of who Christ is.” (David Gooding) “We must never let a sense of duty get in the way of our real duty to Christ.” (Ryken)

What does it mean?

Spiritually dead

The impossibility of the dead burying the dead

The Demand of Single-mindedness and Focus “First I need to say goodbye I need to say good-bye... another first—he is not wanting to wait till Dad dies, but still he is not ready to follow

Relationships more important than Jesus

divided heart

Billy Boy—she’s a young thing and cannot leave her mother—ad it up, she’s 85 years old!

Elisha went home, said goodbye, burned his plow and slaughtered his oxen—there was no looking back, he was done with farming forever.

Here is the saying that should ring in our ears regarding our following—No one after putting his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God

Plowing a straight line means looking ahead

Lot’s wife

The necessity of continuing to the end—Where are you in this story?

have you heard the call to follow

Have you put your hand to the plow

Discipleship

Marriage

Service

Are you wavering?

Goods keeping you from answering the call?

Money, even a sense of duty?

Family, relationships?

Once saved always saved...no those who persevere to the end will be saved.

Jesus kept going. Will You.

We learn from this saying that it is impossible to serve Christ with a divided heart. If we are looking back to anything in this world we are not fit to be disciples. Those who look back, like Lot’s wife, want to go back. Jesus will not share His throne with anyone--no, not with our dearest relatives. He must have

all our heart, or none. No doubt we are to honor father and mother, and love all around us. But when love to Christ and love to relatives come in collision, Christ must have the preference. We must be ready, like Abraham, if needs be, to come out from kindred and father's house for Christ's sake. We must be prepared in case of necessity, like Moses, to turn our backs even on those who have brought us up, if God calls us, and the path is plain.

Such decided conduct may entail sore trials on our affections. It may crush our hearts to go contrary to the opinions of those we love. But such conduct may sometimes be positively necessary to our salvation, and without it, when it becomes necessary, we are unfit for the kingdom of God... Let us leave the whole passage with many searchings of heart... There is still need for thorough, unflinching, whole-hearted decision, if we would reach heaven. Let us aim at nothing less than this decision, Let us be willing to do anything, and suffer anything, and give up everything for Christ's sake. It may cost us something for a few years, but great will be the reward in eternity. (J.C. Ryle)