

Jesus asks for commitment, the Church wants convenience

Week of September 19, 2021

Opening Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we come to you as we are, with our distractions, and concerns, and doubts, and we ask that you would quiet our hearts and minds allowing us to meaningfully connect with the people right here in our midst so that we can grow to know them, and you, more fully. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Historical Context:

This section explains where the passage we are about to read lives in the Bible and how it fits into the overall story of God working in our world.

Luke 9 begins with Jesus commissioning the 12 disciples. In the previous chapter we see that Jesus was able to cast out demons (8:26-39) and cure diseases (8:40-56), and now the 12 disciples receive power to continue Jesus' ministry by performing the same miracles (v. 1). As Jesus was rejected by his own people (4:14–30; cf. 7:30–35), these disciples will also suffer the same fate (v. 5). Later in chapter 9 (vv. 57-62), after a Samaritan village rejects Jesus, he again reminds his disciples of the cost (v. 58) and the commitment required (vv. 59-62) to follow him.

Read Aloud:

Luke 9:1-6; 57-62 (CEB)

The Twelve sent out

1 Jesus called the Twelve together and he gave them power and authority over all demons and to heal sicknesses. **2** He sent them out to proclaim God's kingdom and to heal the sick. **3** He told them, "Take nothing for the journey—no walking stick, no bag, no bread, no money, not even an extra shirt. **4** Whatever house you enter, remain there until you leave that place. **5** Wherever they don't welcome you, as you leave that city, shake the dust off your feet as a witness against them." **6** They departed and went through the villages proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere.

Following Jesus

57 As Jesus and his disciples traveled along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go."

58 Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and the birds in the sky have nests, but the Human One^[e] has no place to lay his head."

59 Then Jesus said to someone else, "Follow me."

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 spread the news of God's kingdom."*

61 Someone else said to Jesus, *"I will follow you, Lord, but first let me say good-bye to those in my house."*

62 Jesus said to him, *"No one who puts a hand on the plow and looks back is fit for God's kingdom."*

Engaging Scripture:

Let's pause before we think about how this passage makes us feel or how it applies to our context. This section can help ground your group in talking about what is written and consider its impact on the original audience.

1. In verses 1-6, the passage doesn't record any conversation between Jesus and the disciples as he gives them their assignment and instructions. Based on what you know about them from scripture, what might they have said to him and to each other? What questions might they have asked? What fears could they have had?
2. The second half of the scripture selection this week kind of reads like paparazzi firing questions at a celebrity only to hear answers that didn't fit the expectation. They wanted to follow him to a point, but struggled with giving up the familiar rhythms of life on Earth. In what other ways was Jesus different from what they expected? Why do you think Jesus demanded commitment?

Application Questions:

It is one thing to follow Jesus, it is another to be a follower. This week's sermon focused on the important difference between the two. It is easy to follow Jesus when it is convenient for us. What makes us a follower is our commitment when things get difficult. Without this commitment to Christ we may have an easier life, but we will also miss out on the transformation that comes with being a follower.

1. *Trust.* We see Jesus command commitment from his followers in the readings this week. He said "follow me" and give me your full trust. Jesus tells his followers not to worry about food, clothing, family, or anything else; they had their job: to share the word of God.

Reflect on a time where you had to give up control and fully trust God. When have you taken a risk, blindly committed, or received horrible, uncontrollable news.

2. *Relationship.* In the readings this week Jesus is asking A LOT. He is asking for a massive amount of trust. But he is also providing a lot. He is giving those who commit to be followers of Christ the strength and power to heal, he is giving them bravery and audacity to travel on foot and spread the good news. We don't see it play out this week, but our assumption is that his followers do just that; they trust, give, travel, heal, and teach.

Take a minute to think about relationships in your life. What constitutes a relationship? Give and take? Trust? Communication?

What are you doing (or what can you do) on a daily basis to participate in your relationship with Christ?

3. *Temptation.* Doing the work is hard. It takes time, energy and a big commitment. What is it like for you to wrestle between the “easy way” (maybe going to church on Sundays and calling it good) and putting in the work and showing up on a daily basis as a true follower? Have you ever given into the temptation and neglected your discipleship so that you could have less stress/commitment/tasks? How do you resist the temptation to only follow vs being a follower?

Closing Prayer:

God, we pray that in the week ahead you would give us opportunities to truly be followers of Jesus even when it is not convenient. Prompt us to desire the transformation that comes only when we commit to following no matter our circumstances and despite the cost. May we be an encouragement to those you have entrusted us with, both in this group and beyond, to be followers of Jesus alongside us as we grow together in wisdom and understanding. In your holy name, Jesus, amen.

Taking it Further:

Check these out (additional scripture, book, podcast, video etc.) to take the heart of this series and our discussion further this week.

In 2013, a Canadian sculptor named Timothy Schmalz released a bronze casting that depicted a homeless man sleeping on a park bench. Upon close examination, it was revealed that the statue had pierced feet and the man laying down was Jesus. It was an image that sparked mixed reviews. Some thought the image was insightful while others decried it's presence saying that it was demeaning, insulting, or creepy. The blog highlighted here chose the insightful route and offered a thoughtful perspective. What thoughts or feelings does this invoke in you?

<https://matts bibleblog.wordpress.com/2016/04/25/homeless-jesus/>



HOW CAN I BE A FOLLOWER OF JESUS THIS WEEK?

<i>Act</i>	<i>Go</i>	<i>Be</i>
Loving	Help someone	A disciple
kind	teach	A teacher
inclusive	study the bible	A follower
open	serve	
growth focused	commit	
welcoming	proclaim	
humble	heal	
show loyalty	trust	
sacrifice	prioritize	

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3 He told them, "Take nothing for the journey—no walking stick, no bag, no bread, no money, not even an extra shirt... 5 Wherever they don't welcome you, as you leave that city, shake the dust off your feet as a witness against them." *Luke 9: 1-5*

THE GOSPEL OF *Luke*

supplemental, guided readings through Jesus vs Christianity

<i>week 1</i>	<i>Luke chapters 1-6</i>
<i>week 2</i>	<i>Luke chapters 7- 11</i>
<i>week 3</i>	<i>Luke chapters 12-14</i>
<i>week 4</i>	<i>Luke chapters 15-20</i>
<i>week 5</i>	<i>Luke chapters 21-24</i>