

6-26-22

Sermon- "Can We Follow Where He Leads? Yes, But..."

Scripture- Luke 9: 51-62, CTW- Psalm 77:1-2, 11-20

Hymns- 552, 468, 470

Theme- The disciples did not have a clue who Jesus was, they did not have a clue where they were going, they did not have a clue of what waited in store for them. All they knew was that this was the man with the plan. He is on journey here, and they wanted to go with him. "Whatever you say Jesus. Whatever you say." Is that what we say?

I. Have you ever been in a hurry to get where you are going? How about... when you are only an hour out from your destination... on a 12 hour trip... with the kids screaming in the back... your head pounding... your patience running thin... and your destination just can't come quickly enough.

Minutes feel like hours on a trip like that don't they? You get to the point where you become determined just to make it. Perhaps we can sympathize a little bit with Jesus in our scripture text this morning. He was determined to make his destination... although the way the NIV puts it, Jesus "resolutely" set out for Jerusalem.

A. In the literal Greek, Luke mentions this journey 6 times. This is obviously important to the story. Jesus is going somewhere. He is not a drifter. He is not a vagrant. He is not a wanderer.

Jesus is the man with the plan. He is moving forward. He is on the 11th hour of a 12-hour trip and he is determined to accomplish his final goal. And what is the goal? What awaits for him at Jerusalem?

The Journey is not a literal Point A to Point B following Mapquest's handy dandy instructions. The journey that Jesus is resolutely following is the journey to the cross.

As far as geography, we could assume that Jesus was following a broken GPS because following these verses he goes over here, then over here, then over here, then over here again. Jesus is on a journey towards the cross, and there is no time to lose.

Yet, there is still some time to stop and gather more followers! He would save everyone who followed him soon enough on the cross... but first he needed more to follow him. And we hear about his first stop in Samaria. And what happens?

B. Jesus hears a response that God hears far... far... too often. No thank you! Why? Because he was going to Jerusalem. Now it could be that Samaria just hated Jerusalem the way we hate Ohio State the week of the PSU-OSU football game... but I believe it goes so much deeper than that.

Remember, Jesus was not only going to Jerusalem as a physical location... he was also going to the cross. Jesus is inviting the Samaritans to follow him on a path of pain, and trial.

They know that Jesus teaches it will be worth it, but that it won't be easy! And their response? Keep moving. We're not buying. Have fun on your little pain and suffering Journey.

They, like so many others, like the **idea** of following Christ, but are not willing to pay the **price** of following Christ.

II. Now before Jesus can leave this town in the dust, before he takes a single step... the disciples step up to prove once again how "not ready for prime-time" they are.

A. The indignant disciples who are "Oh So Ready" to condemn the Samaritans... the outsiders... the ignorant... the stubborn... These disciples show us how even Jesus closest followers sometimes aren't always the sharpest tools in the shed.

James and John personally go to Jesus, probably with noses high in the air, and say "let's call fire down from heaven and nuke these ingrates!"

It's interesting how they phrase this "request"... "let US call down fire." Scripture says that Jesus rebuked them.

But can't you imagine how that conversation could have gone:

"Oh... Let US call down fire." Sure James, you launch the first fireball...

In fact... someone here SHOULD be getting a fireball but it is NOT the Samaritans.

I can picture Jesus saying: "In fact if you don't get back there and be quiet and STOP touching your brother, I will bring down fireballs on you BOTH."

I know how those long trips go. Scripture says, "Jesus rebuked them." Then it says Jesus continues on his journey. **Resolutely.**

Instead of raining down fire, Jesus shows us the way that God responds to people who are not interested in him. He has nothing to do with the people who want nothing to do with him. He does not stop... he does not beg... he does not punish them.

He just says, okay, if that's the way you want it for now, so be it... and he keeps right on going. **Why?** Remember, we are on a journey here. Jesus is the man with the plan. He is not going to beat the door down to go where he is not wanted. He will wait for the door to be opened for him. That also means it is up to us to open the door.

B. As he continues toward the next town, Jesus gets buffeted by several people all at once and here we have three people back to back who are challenged by Christ to "follow him." Now, it seems that we also have three people with

very reasonable requests in our scripture text, and three completely unreasonable responses from Jesus.

The first guy comes along and Jesus says, "Following me will leave you with no earthly possessions." And he says "Yes, but..." and Jesus keeps moving forward.

The second guy comes along, and Jesus says "Follow me." His response, "Yes, but... let me go bury my father." And Jesus keeps moving forward.

The third guy comes along, "Yeah, but... let me go say goodbye to my family." And Jesus keeps moving forward... **leaving all three men behind... sitting on their "Yes, buts!"**

Remember, we are on a journey here. There is a time table. Jesus is the man with the plan. Are you in or out? "Yes but."

"Yes but" is not good enough even if it is for a great reason. You notice that all three of our yes buts in this story had excellent reasons to resist, yet, what do we find? Jesus is consistent! Your "yes but" gets you a "don't bother."

III. I think God is trying to tell us something here. He is not interested in our excuses. He is not interested in **our** agenda. He is interested in our obedience. He will take care of the rest of the details if we will just let him.

A. Imagine this story if they said yes? The guy who was unwilling to give up his possessions should follow Christ and learn what REAL wealth is.

The guy who wanted to bury his dad should follow Christ and who knows... maybe he'd follow you to your dad's. Wouldn't that be something? You know dead people had a habit of doing very odd things around Jesus... like NOT staying dead.

How about the guy who wanted to say goodbye to his family? He should follow Christ to find that his family will follow him because of his example! How about that?

Now, what do those "Yes Buts" look like? They are stumbling blocks! We know what Jesus thinks about someone who puts a stumbling block in front of a person who is trying to follow Him!

This really is a story of people approaching and wanting to follow Jesus, but they are unable, or unwilling, to trust and obey. How can you follow someone if you are not willing to do what they ask of you? It doesn't work.

Jesus is the one on the journey. He is the man with the plan. Do you want to come along or not? **Let your yes be yes or your no be no.** God does not want to hear an excuse, even if it is a great one. God wants our obedience and trust. He will figure out the details.

B. That my friends, is the difference between a follower and a disciple. A follower is willing to give God a **little bit** of their lives, a disciple is willing to **give it all**.

Now, to their credit, even though they are not in perfect line with what Jesus would want, the disciples who follow Christ gave up everything to trust and obey.

They may not understand perfectly who Jesus is, or what he is up to, or be able to give a perfect theological response to even 1% of the stuff they have personally witnessed... but that doesn't matter.

Truth be told, these men following Jesus kind of prove to be bumbling fools most of the time don't they? "They said NO, let's call down fire." No guys, that's not what were about!

And how many times after Jesus told a parable did they walk behind him. "Yeah, that's right. Hey James, what was that about? I don't know, I don't think that was in the syllabus."

Why on earth would Jesus surround himself with this band of doubters?

C. We have already heard the answer several times this morning. To be a disciple, a true follower of Christ, we are not asked to be great thinkers or theologians, **we are not asked to be perfect, we are asked to be obedient.**

The disciples did not have a clue who Jesus was, they did not have a clue where they were going, they did not have a clue of what waited in store for them. All they knew was that this was the man with the plan.

He is on journey here, and they wanted to go with him. "Whatever you say Jesus. Whatever you say." That's the right answer..."wither thou goest, I will go!"

That is what our scripture text challenges us to do today, and every day.

Will we follow where Christ leads? Will we follow his will? Will we follow his path? Will we be like true disciples... and trust God in our lives **for all things?**

Is there anyone who will follow? Is there anyone who is willing to look into the eyes of Jesus and say to him... **"Whatever you say Lord, I will follow."**

I urge you all to pray about these questions for your life. Where is your weak spot? Yes, we all have them! What changes should you be making?

Jesus will be patient with you but a flat-out refusal for no good reason will just not work!

Amen? Let us pray