

Luke 9:51-62 - Guide for Further Study

Rated R for Mature Themes

Some Key Points

Our passage represents a turning point in Jesus' earthly life, and in the gospel of Luke. It also provides a clear and challenging call to spiritual maturity.

In the first nine chapters of Luke, Jesus ministered in Galilee; now he begins his journey toward the religious "headquarters" in Jerusalem. There He will confront the temple system and political power structures of his day, who will crucify Him. The disciples follow Him there.

The journey begins with rejection by Samaritans (vv 51-56). Samaritans were religious enemies of Jews, yet Jesus deliberately entered their village. When James and John suggest violent revenge, Jesus refuses. His intention is to save, not destroy (v 56). Following Jesus means never using violence or revenge against those who oppose His message.

As Jesus continues the journey to Jerusalem, He spells out the cost. First, mature followers must be ready for discomfort and inconvenience (v 58). Second, they must not let traditions (even respectable ones) deter them (vv 59-60). Third, they must not be hindered by family or relationship loyalties (vv 61-62). Compare what Jesus said about family in Matthew 12: 46-50.

Notice that Jesus is not condemning the comforts of home, healthy tradition, or family loyalties. He is not asking us to abandon important responsibilities. However, in situations where any or all of these three influences become an easy excuse to not follow Him, maturity means choosing His way. If we make these hard choices to follow him, we experience a rich life.

For discussion:

1. What do you find meaningful in this teaching? What is troubling or disturbing?
2. What examples do you see in our world of Christians using violence or revenge (physically or verbally) against their enemies? What might be a better response?
3. The comforts of home. Beautiful tradition. Family or friends. At different times of your life, which have you needed to release in order to discover deeper life in Christ?
4. What are some hindrances that Bethany Chapel needs to address (as a church) in order to follow Jesus more faithfully in the days to come?

Moving forward:

This is not an easy teaching or "quick study". You or your small group may need to spend extended time applying this passage to your life. Be careful of two extremes: judging yourself too harshly, or letting yourself off the hook too easily. Pray that God would give wisdom. Seek the insight of mature Christians.