

1 Kings 19:15-16, 19-21
Psalm 16
Galatians 5:1, 13-25
Luke 9:51-62

Sermon June 26th, 2022

Jesus' Brutal Honesty

In our gospel this morning, Jesus is brutally honest with us. When we choose to follow Jesus. When we choose to put God first in our lives. We are choosing a life where we will be challenged on how we see the world. Where we will see that God's vision for our world is radically different from our own.

We are choosing a life that comes with sacrifice. That comes with giving up time, energy, money, and sometimes even relationships.

We are choosing a life where we are called to trudge up that steep hill to Golgotha carrying our crosses right along with Jesus.

The walk towards Jerusalem is hard. The disciples see this firsthand when people in a Samaritan village reject them. Jesus and the disciples are not welcome to stay there for the night to get some much-needed rest before continuing their journey towards Jerusalem.

This act of rejection enrages the disciples, as we can see by their reaction. Let's burn down the village. Make them pay for hurting us.

Unfortunately, we all have experienced rejection at one point or another when living out our faith. Whether it is someone not wanting our help, because they feel our help comes with a hidden agenda. Or someone tells us to shut-up at the dinner table when we start talking about what our church is doing. Whether it is people making fun of us when we choose to resist peer pressure. Or people shunning us for standing up for a friend who is being marginalized (**Image**). Whether it is a family member not understanding why we are unable to attend their special event due to a church commitment. Or a roommate who feels we are wasting our time reading that ancient book we call the Bible.

When we follow Jesus, we will come across rejection. And like the disciples, we too may feel comfort in the thought that these people who reject us will get what's coming to them.

Now, with that being said, the disciples are not only challenged to follow Jesus when facing rejection from this Samaritan community. The disciples are challenged to follow Jesus after Jesus rebukes them.

Jesus' ministry, God's kingdom, isn't like our world. Jesus doesn't use revenge or retribution to get even with those who reject him. Jesus chooses grace. Jesus chooses to forgive, as we will see when Jesus forgives those who stand at the foot of the cross mocking him. Jesus believes they are not ready yet to listen to what Jesus has to say. So, let's move on for now.

We will see near the end of Luke's gospel that Jesus does not forget the Samaritans. Jesus invites the disciples to proclaim the good news of repentance and forgiveness throughout Samaria, along with Jerusalem, and the ends of the earth.

So, by rebuking the disciples, Jesus challenges the way they see the world. Letting them know that if they are going to follow Jesus, they need to see the world through Jesus' eyes.

As our gospel continues, three different people come up to Jesus, and ask to follow him. In reply, Jesus reiterates the same message he stated to his disciples. If you want to follow me you are going to have to give up your current way of seeing how the world works. If you want to follow me you are going to have to make some sacrifices.

For example, you will need to learn how to depend on the hospitality of others. This can be a very difficult transition for us to make since we are constantly taught that we can only rely on ourselves for our wellbeing. If we are not able to take care of ourselves then we are a burden on society.

Unfortunately, this line of thinking has made it more difficult for us to transition from living on our own to living in an assisted living scenario when our health problems become too much for us to handle (**Image**). We struggle to depend on others, and yet, Jesus' ministry is all about us trusting in the hospitality offered by others.

Second, you will need to make some sacrifices. Your church commitments will take time away from other things you could be doing. For example, Saturdays is a perfect day to catch up on house work, yard work, homework, and spend time with family and friends. Yet, you volunteer at a soup kitchen or foodbank on Saturdays helping people in need get access to food (**Image**).

Or, your friends have a tradition of getting together on Thursday evenings throughout the year, but you are committed to a bible study for the next seven weeks.

Or, your grandchildren play soccer every Sunday morning, between 9:00am and 11:00am. Yet, you don't want to miss worship.

Or, you have a good friend who is being mistreated by some of your other friends, because of their race or their gender identity or their sexual orientation or their political views. And standing up for this friend means that your other friends are going to mistreat you as well.

Or, a student is being bullied at school, and by standing up for this student, you become bullied too.

There are sacrifices that come with following Jesus.

So, knowing the sacrifices we need to make, why do we even want to commit our time and energy to the ministries of the church? Why do we value putting God first in our lives?

Well, what we find out when we choose to follow Jesus. When we choose to put God first. Is that though we will need to make some sacrifices. Though the road to Jerusalem will be hard. Though we will experience rejection.

We will also experience God's hospitality, grace, healing, compassion, and new life. We will experience the empty tomb. We will experience the resurrected Christ. We will experience Pentecost.

The disciples bear witness to God's hospitality, grace, healing, compassion, and new life in many places as they follow Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem. The early believers continue to bear witness to God's hospitality, grace, healing, compassion, and new life through the gift of the Holy Spirit that inspires leaders like Paul to continue Christ's ministry.

In Paul's letter to the church in Galatia, Paul encourages them, as well, as all of us who listen to his words, to walk by the Spirit. To love our neighbour. To show hospitality, grace, healing, compassion, and new life to those we meet. To avoid those thoughts and actions that are inhospitable, unforgiving, harmful, and threatening to the new life Jesus has to offer us.

When we walk by the Spirit, we bear witness to God's hospitality, grace, healing, compassion, and new life, as well as, others who encounter us.

This makes it all worth it. To bear witness to what God can do in and through us to breathe new life into people (**Image**).

Jesus invites us to follow him. From our baptism to our death to our resurrected self.

Let us pray, gracious God, thank you for your honesty shown to us through Christ. Help us make time for you and your ministry. When we feel hardship from the sacrifices and transitions we need to make, reassure us of your grace. And encourage us to see that when we follow your Son. When we put you first. When we walk by your Spirit. We, and those we encounter, bear witness to your hospitality, grace, healing, compassion, and new life. **Amen.**

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