



THE COMMUNITY

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What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

Luke 9:57-62

Introduction

In Luke 9:51 we read, “As the time approached for Jesus to be taken up into heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.” This is a theme marker in Luke’s gospel. From this passage through chapter 19, we have recorded Jesus’ final trip to Jerusalem as well as His last call for the nation to repent, respond to His teaching and receive Him as the Messiah.

Scan through the next several chapters and you’ll find numerous reminders that they were headed to Jerusalem. You might want to put a tick mark in your bible by these and share them with your group:

9:51, 9:53, 13:22, 13:33, 13:34, 17:11, 18:31, 19:11, 19:28, 19:41

If you do choose to do that however, save the last one, Luke 19:41, for the end of this study. I’ll show you why in a minute.

For now, though, just take note that Jesus isn’t meandering His way to Jerusalem. A more literal translation of Luke 9:51 is “Jesus set His face to go to Jerusalem.” That language harkens back to a Messianic passage in Isaiah 50 which says:

I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting. Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame.

Jesus knows that what awaits Him in Jerusalem is a cross. In Luke 9 He steels Himself for it and begins the long march to His execution. As He is making His commitment to us, this movement begins with His call for us to make a commitment to Him.

Luke 9:57-58

Like many of Jesus’ sayings, the phrase “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the son of man has no place to lay His head,” must be decoded. He is saying that anyone who would be His disciple must be willing to sacrifice. This is foundational to all commitments of love. For example, before becoming a parent

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What’s the Big Idea?

This begins a nine-part series in the gospel of Luke. Luke chapters 9-19 record Jesus’ final trip to Jerusalem. This series will examine some of Jesus’ key teachings on the journey to Jerusalem. This first study deals with Jesus’ call to discipleship and the commitments that accompany that call.

What’s the Problem?

If we don’t understand Jesus’ total commitment to us, we’ll never be able to make the total commitment He is asking us to make to Him.

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one needs to know that the decision necessarily involves sacrifice. Yet in a deep relationship, sacrifice does not often seem like sacrifice because it is done out of love. While it is true that parents must make sacrifices for their children, such sacrifice often holds a certain joy. So it is with Christ. There are sacrifices that we are called to make in following Jesus, but as long as our hearts are fixed on Him, there is a certain degree of joy in making these sacrifices.

To go a step further, true love is not only willing to sacrifice, but wants to do so. When you love someone passionately, you look for ways to demonstrate that love. often sacrifice presents itself as an opportunity to express love.

Luke 9:59,60

The aspect of commitment that Jesus is emphasizing in this passage is priority. The man asks if he can “first” bury his father. The key word is “first,” and Jesus uses it as a springboard to talk about this second component of discipleship.

For the man to not return home for his father’s funeral would have caused scandal within the family. People would have accused and projected all kinds of ill motives upon this man. This is a critical component of what it means to follow Jesus. We must place God’s feelings about us, and His approval, above the approval of others – including those closest to us. Jesus desires to have preeminence in our hearts and will tolerate no rivals. Jesus also emphasizes the priority of proclaiming the kingdom of God for His followers. In Mark 1:17 Jesus said, “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men,” making it clear that discipleship is, in many ways, synonymous with proclaiming the gospel.

There are many implications of making Jesus a priority in our hearts and lives. The study centers on the need to daily prioritize our time with the Lord (in prayer, ministry and fellowship) above other activities that so quickly crowd out our time with Him.

Luke 9:61,62

The last aspect of commitment is perseverance. Disciples are to keep following and never look back. The phrase “turning back” can either allude to turning back to our old habits and patterns before we were Christians or to the world and all that it offers. The Scripture is filled with many examples of men and women who started out with a hunger to follow God but over time turned back from that commitment. In Revelation, Jesus rebukes the church in ephesus for having lost their first love, and growing cold in their love and commitment to God. Jesus exhorts them to return to their “first love.” Disciples are distinguished – not so much by how they begin the Christian life, but by how they finish.

Marriage

The following are some common phrases often spoken in wedding vows: “in sickness and in health,” “to honor and cherish,” “forsaking all others,” “till death do you part.” What do these vows emphasize? “In sickness and in health” suggests a willingness to sacrifice. “To honor, cherish” and to “forsake all others” speaks of priority in our affections. “Till death do you part” expresses a commitment to persevere in love. love is measured by its willingness to sacrifice, by its priorities, and by its duration, or perseverance.

Seen in this light, it is apparent that Jesus is calling for a commitment from His followers that is tantamount to a marriage commitment. Basically, He is saying, “Will you marry me?” At first glance some of the things that Jesus requires from “would-be” followers seem overly steep and perhaps even harsh. But now take a look at luke 9:41. Having finally made it to Jerusalem where He will be nailed to a cross, Jesus weeps. . . for Jerusalem. Not for Himself, but for the people who are about to reject Him. He is totally committed to His people and He prioritizes their good over His own. Jesus is the ultimate husband.

He asks us to commit our lives to Him because He’s totally committed to us. Help your group see both sides. The total surrender due of them, and the safety of making that commitment to someone whose primary concern is for you, even on the eve of His own agonizing death.

What’s Our Response?

In this study you want to help your group understand the commitment that Jesus has made to them, and the commitment He is demanding of them. Following the metaphor of the study, you want your group to renew their vows to Jesus. For those who have never understood what is involved in following Christ, it is an opportunity to express their desire to follow Jesus unreservedly.

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What Are the Questions?

John 4:4-42

Launch

What have you noticed about your parents' commitment to each other? How has that affected the quality of their marriage?

Explore

Read 9:51.

1. This verse starts the next major section in which Jesus marches toward Jerusalem where a cross is waiting for Him. Scan through the next 10 chapters and look for Luke's reminders that this is where He's headed.

2. Why does Luke say Jesus "set His face" for Jerusalem?"

Read 9:57-62.

3. Reread 9:57,58. Jesus addresses three components of what it means to follow Him. What aspect of commitment is Jesus describing here?

4. What does it mean to follow Christ?

Passion has been described as not only the willingness to sacrifice, but the desire to sacrifice for someone or something you love; your commitment is so intense that you desire some sort of opportunity to demonstrate it.

5. In what ways have you had to sacrifice for Jesus? How have you experienced this sense of passion in your sacrifice?

6. Read 9:59-60. What aspect of commitment is Jesus requiring?

7. What sorts of problems and issues might this young man face if he didn't show up at the family funeral?

8. The young man wanted to put family commitments first. What does Jesus say must be the priority for His disciples? Does this seem unfair? Why or why not?

9. How does Jesus relate His call to discipleship with proclaiming the gospel?

10. Evaluate your priorities. How many hours you spend studying, watching TV, playing video games, reading your Bible, sharing your faith, praying?

11. How does the way you spend your time reflect the priority Jesus has in your life?

Read 9:61-62.

12. What aspect of commitment is Jesus emphasizing?

13. What things have you noticed that seem to cause Christians to turn back on their commitment to Christ? What calls you to turn back?

14. What are some common phrases spoken in wedding vows: What similarities do you see between these vows and this passage? What is Jesus really asking?

Apply

15. Given the challenges Jesus describes about following Him, what would make someone want to follow Him in this way?

16. As you consider if you can make that commitment, take a look at Luke 19:41. What strikes you about His reaction to finally making it to the city where He will be killed?

17. Can you make the commitment that Jesus is asking of you?

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What Are the Answers?

1. You'll find them in 9:51, 9:53, 13:22, 13:33, 13:34, 17:11, 18:31, 19:11, 19:28.
2. See "What Do I Need to Know About this Passage?" You might take them to Isaiah 50 to give background.
3. Jesus is emphasizing a willingness to sacrifice.
4. It means to live for His will and for the establishment of His kingdom on earth.
5. Allow the group to share. The issue of passion is meant to underscore the truth that, within the context of a deep love relationship, there is often a certain degree of joy in making sacrifices.
6. The man says that he must "first" bury his father. Jesus focuses on the issue of priority. Following Jesus must come first.
7. It would have caused scandal within his family. People would have accused and projected all kinds of ill motives upon this man.
8. The priority must be following Jesus and proclaiming the kingdom.
9. In Mark 1:17 Jesus says "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." There is a clear parallel between the two.
10. Allow the group to discuss.
11. This question is designed to get people to evaluate their priorities, and to share some ways they have tried to prioritize Jesus in their daily lives.
12. Perseverance. Love is measured by its endurance.
13. Often old patterns and habits of sin, as well as worldliness.
14. "In sickness and in health, "to honor and cherish," "forsaking all others," "till death do you part." These parallel Jesus' call to sacrifice, priority and perseverance.
15. Allow the group to discuss.
16. His concern (and commitment) is for Jerusalem, not Himself.
17. Allow the group to discuss. Help them see the wisdom and worthiness of making an all out commitment to Jesus.

Memorize

No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.

Luke 9:62



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