



Brown Community Group

Discussion Guide

The Peace of Jesus | Luke 9:51-62

I. Starter Thoughts:

As we walk the road of our lives with Jesus by our side, are we holding anything back as his disciples? Are we allowing our culture, our family or worldly time commitments to get in the way of our service to the kingdom of God? How have we prioritized our actions and decisions each and every day? If someone took time to look over them, would they conclude that “We lived every second for the Lord” or would they conclude “We were a weekend Christian without conviction”?

God has a powerful but very direct message for us today that is hard to fully grasp and apply, but certainly does not shy away from being specific. It sets some very demanding expectations if we are to truly live for the kingdom of God, are we ready to hear and follow?

II. Luke 9:51-56 - Rejected by the Samaritans:

⁵¹ As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. ⁵² And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; ⁵³ but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them^(b)?” ⁵⁵ But Jesus turned and rebuked them. ⁵⁶ Then he and his disciples went to another village.

Context: While many might consider Luke 19:10 (“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”) to be the thematic verse to the book of Luke, in Luke 9:51, the author shifts from Jesus’ ministry in Galilee to Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem and the cross. This journey lasts for approximately 10 Chapters and contains many stories of Jesus’ “seeking” while on his journey to accomplish the act of “salvation”.

Verse 51 makes a decisive turning point in Luke’s presentation of Jesus’ ministry. Jesus voluntarily accepts the divine imperative under which his life has been placed as he sets out to travel to Jerusalem. Luke, just as other new testament writers, were anxious to show that the death of Jesus did not mean a defeat for God and that man had taken over. God had always been in charge all along the way. The paradox of divine selection and human responsibility are now in plain sight for all to see.

Jesus chose to walk the road he took, fully aware of his upcoming destiny, but was also convinced that in losing his life, he would provide a path for all to regain it.

Hostility between the Jews and Samaritans was deep and long standing. Samaritans took special pains to manifest ill toward pilgrims who took the direct route through their territory to join in the Passover celebration. James and John only show this attitude against foreigners with such drastic measures recommended. They seem to take for granted that God and Jesus share their Jewish contempt of the Samaritans. They seem to not understand their mission is not to destroy but to transform and heal. Their evil attitude was directly rebuked by Jesus. Jesus' rebuke shows his attitude towards the age-old spirit of enmity between the two racial groups.

Discussion Questions:

1. In verse 51, what does Luke mean that the time drew near for him to be taken up?
2. Why did Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem? What does that mean and what do you think that entailed?
3. What did Jesus know was waiting for him at Jerusalem?
4. How did the Jews (and possibly the disciples) feel about Samaritans?
5. What does Luke give as the reason that the Samaritans did not receive Jesus? Why would that be?
6. Did anyone besides Jesus understand what he was going to endure in Jerusalem? Why did they think he was going to Jerusalem?
7. What was Jesus' response to James and John? What does this reveal to us about Jesus? What does it reveal about our own actions?

III. Luke 9:57-62 – The Cost of Following Jesus:

⁵⁷ As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." ⁵⁸ Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." ⁵⁹ He said to another man, "Follow me." But 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 proclaim the kingdom of God." ⁶¹ Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family." ⁶² Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

Context: Our call to discipleship is a call to share Jesus' commitment and the suffering inherent in it. We have three examples to demonstrate Jesus' demands of those who want to follow him. The first two have parallels to Matthew 8:19-22, but the third is only found in Luke.

The first volunteer did not seem to be aware of the implications of his decision. Jesus would have no superficial commitments. To follow Jesus means to share his homelessness in the world and ultimately rejection and death.

The second man is willing to follow Jesus, but only after a most sacred obligation. The highest duty in the Jewish culture of that time was to care his father in old age. Jesus reply was a shocking

contradiction of Jewish piety. There are people who are spiritually dead since they have not responded to the claims of God. The urgency of the hour and the task demands that those who have submitted to the rule of God must give of themselves. This task cannot have a second place to any other loyalty or responsibility.

The third man finds it difficult to cut ties from his past and his culture. He lacks the decisiveness and commitment that is required when God calls you to his service. Those called by God must choose a point of orientation, move forward and keep their eye fixed on the prize. The kingdom of God is all-consuming, all-absorbing, all-demanding and requires us to give of ourselves without reservation.

Discussion Questions:

8. Did the first individual offer to follow Jesus? What was Jesus' response and what did he mean by this?
9. Did the second individual offer to follow Jesus? What was the individual's response? What was Jesus' response and what did it mean?
10. Did the third individual offer to follow Jesus? What was the individual's specific statement? What was Jesus' response? Why do you think that Jesus responded that way?
11. What the primary takeaways of Jesus expectations for his followers from these three examples for us?

IV. Responding in Prayer:

Pray that our church and its members will serve each other and our community with the peaceful heart of Christ despite potential rejection or misunderstanding. Pray that we will grow in our hunger and love for Jesus and that this love will motivate us to desire Him more than what the world has to offer. Pray that we will grow in our desire to see others saved from the trappings of this world and will boldly and lovingly introduce them to Jesus.