

Proper 8

(Sunday between 28 June and 2 July inclusive) • Ordinary Time, week 13

Principal Service readings

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|------------------------|---|
| 1 Kings 19.15-16,19-21 | Elijah encounters God at Horeb |
| Psalms 16 | The Lord is my heritage |
| Galatians 5.1,13-25 | The guidance and fruit of the Holy Spirit |
| Luke 9.51-62 | Costs of discipleship |

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
speak to our hearts in the stillness,
keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken,
lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory;
and perfect our faith, now and always. Amen.

Society of Saint Francis

Gospel Reading

Jesus begins his journey to Jerusalem

⁵¹ When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. ⁵² And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; ⁵³ but they did not receive him, because his face was set towards Jerusalem.

⁵⁴ When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, 'Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?' ⁵⁵ But he turned and rebuked them. ⁵⁶ Then they went on to another village.

⁵⁷ As they were going along the road, someone said to him, 'I will follow you wherever you go.' ⁵⁸ And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.'

⁵⁹ To another Jesus said, 'Follow me.' But he said, 'Lord, first let me go and bury my father.' ⁶⁰ But Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.'

⁶¹ Another said, 'I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home.' ⁶² Jesus said to him, 'No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'

Luke 9.51-62 NRSV¹

¹ New Revised Standard Version Bible is copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the

Comments and Questions

Jesus sets out towards Jerusalem for his final journey; it will be a lengthy journey (although not geographically very far) as we are only at chapter 9 out of the 24 chapters in Luke's gospel. However, as he travels Jesus teaches his followers about discipleship. How does the context of journeying affect both Jesus and his disciples?

The Samaritans wouldn't welcome people who were heading for Jerusalem – they took it as an affront. When we are offended, we often respond forcefully. Did the disciples have good motives despite their rather aggressive words?

Jesus seems to be more intent on his journey than in being distracted by the rebuff of the Samaritan town. Do we get side-tracked by things that are irrelevant to true discipleship?

Jesus is a celebrity and seems to attract a crowd wherever he goes. It is attractive to be part of this scene, exciting to be a follower; but what are the implications?

The imperative of journeying is the setting for a collection of events that are to do with following Jesus. 'I will follow you wherever you go', says one would-be disciple, but would he follow to the extent of being homeless, or at least being unattached to a particular home? We are not told his response?

Another would-be has family responsibilities which restrict his ability to follow. It is good to take care of your parents, but Jesus is clear that for a follower proclaiming the kingdom of God must come first. Is he being unfair or unrealistic?

The third would-be follower also has family commitments. Jesus' response, again, is very challenging. Family life is important, but there is obviously something very committed about discipleship. Do you think Jesus is: (a) simply testing the level of commitment of enquirers; (b) trying to dissuade people from joining; or (c) indicating that a disciple needs a certain level of detachment from earthly things for the sake of the kingdom?

Quotations

1

To love God is to will what he wills.

Charles de Foucauld

2

If we were willing to learn the meaning of real discipleship and actually to become disciples, the Church in the West would be transformed, and the resultant impact on society would be staggering.

David Watson

3

When we have travelled all ways, we shall come to the End of all ways, who says, 'I am the way.'

St Ambrose

4

He who stops being better stops being good.

Oliver Cromwell

Related topics

For further study:

Paschal mystery; Christian witness; Discipleship; Suffering; Non-violence; Cross

Closing Prayer

God, our heritage,
grant to your people grace
always to keep you in their sight,
so that, being guided by the Spirit,
those who follow you
may do so without condition or compromise,
in the assurance of faith
and the gentleness of compassion.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Collect for Proper 8, Year C²