

## **Luke 9:43b-62 "The Posture, Priority & Power of Discipleship"**

In chapters 9 & 10 of Luke we find two predictions of Jesus' death that shape our understanding of what it means to follow Jesus. So first...

### **Read Luke 9:21-24; 43b-45**

1. What do you understand it to mean that we are to "pick up our cross" and follow him?

*The primary purpose of this connection is to suggest that the life of following Jesus is a cross-shaped life. Death to self, rising to the new life of the kingdom. Not grasping for power but laying it down for the sake of others. Not pushing for prominence but serving the least and the lowly.*

### **Read Luke 9:46-48**

2. What does this argument reveal about what the disciples believed about the kingdom?

*That the kingdom was about power. The re-establishment of the Kingdom of Israel and the destruction of the Romans. The disciples (James and John) argue about who will take the places of prominence at his left and at his right in this reconstituted kingdom.*

3. How does Jesus' use of the child help us to understand what it means to follow him? To be shaped by the cross?

*To care for and teach a child was considered one of the lowliest tasks in this culture. Jesus brings one who is "lowly" to stand at his side (likely his right for effect). Whoever welcomes this one in my name, welcomes me, welcomes the one who sent me. For the one who is the least among you is the greatest.*

*To be shaped by the cross then is to serve the least and the lowly.*

### **Read Luke 9: 49-50**

4. What does John's response reveal about his heart? Do you see such a heart present in the contemporary church?

*This is the response of pride. We had to stop him using your name for he doesn't follow with us. He doesn't know you as we know you, doesn't believe in you as we believe in you, hasn't experienced what we have experienced.*

*We have to stop them using your name. There is indeed such a heart alive and well today. We have likely heard / said – those right-wing evangelicals have walked away from the gospel of love and compassion – those left-wing progressives have rejected the truth of scripture – we have to stop them using your name.*

*One of the commentators pointed out – "The conviction that our beliefs and our method alone are correct has been the cause of more tragedy and distress in the church than almost any other thing.*

5. What posture towards others does Jesus' response invite?

*To welcome them in Jesus' name – for those who are not against us are for us.*

**Read Luke 9: 51-56; 2 Kings 1:1-10**

6. How does the story of Elijah help you understand the motivation of the disciples?

*The King of Samaria had sought to arrest and execute Elijah for an unfavourable prophecy. If you Jesus are the greater Elijah than we should call down fire to consume this town.*

7. How is Jesus inviting us to respond to the ones who have wronged us by his response?

*He rebukes their response and continues his journey to the next town, meaning that he is continuing his journey to the cross where he will respond to his enemies with self-giving love.*

*That means he rejects the posture of retaliation and embraces the posture of love. He invites us not to respond to hate with hate, but to respond to hate with self-giving love.*

**Read Luke 9: 57-62; 1 Kings 19:19-21; 2 Kings 2:9-14; Luke 24:45-49**

8. What do these three quick exchanges tell us about what it means to follow Jesus?

*Have we truly counted the cost? Yes – to follow Jesus is to do as he does, go as he goes, serve as he serves, love as he loves but have we counted the cost.*

*I will follow but let me first...*

*...bury my father. There was a cultural practice of a second burial after the flesh had wasted away from the bones. The decomposition was believed to atone for the sins of the deceased. Let the dead – those who believe such nonsense – bury the dead – you – go proclaim the kingdom – because this cultural practice does not.*

*...say farewell to those at home. Jesus' rejection of this is certainly hyperbole. In the same vein as saying – if you don't hate mother, father, brother, sister, spouse child for my sake you can't be my disciple. This was hyperbolic language to communicate that Jesus is to have primary allegiance, that our commitment to him should make our love of family appear as hate.*

*Jesus would not likely say the same thing to us. Not because he is not inviting us to give him the same priority – he is – but because we are not likely to place such priority on the honouring of family, or faithfulness to traditional cultural expectations. We are more likely to say – I'll follow you Jesus but let me first achieve financial independence, let me first establish my career, let me first secure a romantic partner.*

*I will follow you Jesus but let me first... Whatever we say next is our true God, our true priority.*

9. What do we learn from the connection between Jesus' last words and the call of Elijah? What do we learn from the connection between the ascension of Elijah and the descent of his cloak, and the ascension of Jesus and the descent of his Spirit?

*Jesus is wanting us to see that what he is doing here is linked to the ministry of Elijah. Not only that Jesus is now choosing and forming his disciples as did Elijah but is now setting us up to reflect on the reality that just as Elijah clothed Elisha with power from on high so to will Jesus clothe us with power from on high.*

### **Read John 16: 13-15**

10. What is the primary work of the Spirit according to Jesus, and how does that shape us as disciples?

*The primary work of the Spirit is to glorify Jesus. To glorify means to give weight. This means the Spirit's primary job is to make Jesus, to make his work for us, the weightiest, the most significant, the most cherished reality in our lives.*

*That the cross will fill our vision such that we align our posture to it.*

*That the love, beauty, joy, justice, mercy, and grace of Jesus would so infuse our reality that all else pales in comparison setting him / his kingdom as our highest priority.*