

Luke 9:51-56

When the days were approaching for his ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem; 52 and He sent messengers on ahead of Him, and they went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make arrangements for Him. 53 But they did not receive Him, because they were traveling toward Jerusalem. 54 When His disciples James and John saw this 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, and said, “You do not know what spirit you are of; 56 for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.” And they went on to another village.

Luke 9:57-62

As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, “I will follow you wherever You go.” 58 And Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nest, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” 59 And He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.” 60 But He said to him, “Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.” 61 Another also said, “I will follow You, but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home.” 62 But Jesus said to him, “No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Gabrielle Douglas spent the first year of her life with her homeless family that lived in the back of a van. Eventually her family was taken in by relatives and as things began to look up her father decided it was time to abandon the family. This left her mother alone to raise four young children. As Gabrielle grew, she took an interest in gymnastics. As one of the few African Americans in the sport of gymnastics, she said she was taunted by team mates and her coach in Virginia. Gabrielle said she put her heart into the sport and pushed herself every day regardless of her circumstances. Her vision was on Olympic dreams. Her vision began to come into reality when she caught the attention of an Olympic coach. At the age of 14 she moved to Iowa. In 2011 she felt she had hit a brick wall and wanted to give up on her dreams. She applied to Chick-Fil-A however nothing could bring her the satisfaction she had known when she trained. She refocused on her goals, threw herself into her training and in London she grabbed gold in both the team and individual all-around competitions. Gabby Douglas says, "...Never give up. Times may be tough but sacrifices, they do pay off. If you give up, you will always have regrets that you didn't push through..."

The Spirit

This Passage that we're looking at today in this section of Luke is called the travel narrative. It begins Jesus is March toward Calvary. It is a walk Toward his purpose for our Salvation. Jesus had no need to go to Calvary to face the rejection, the persecution, the betrayal, the cruelty, the death of Calvary. And yet he faced it for you and me. Jesus walked with the purpose toward Calvary so that we could walk with a purpose toward him.

As we read the beginning scriptures, we see that Jesus is heading toward Jerusalem. He sends James and John into the village to find lodging for the night. There are a lot of things going on in these scriptures that I often I looked over. in the past when I would read the scriptures, I would always see James and John going into the village being rejected and then wanting to call the fire down from heaven to destroy the village. People have not come far from James and John. We aren't calling fire from heaven, but we are burning each other with our attitudes and our words. Turn on the news. Hatred spewed from the mouths of men and women, from politicians, from neighbor against neighbor, we are divided and we are angry...***Galatians 5:14-15*** ¹⁴*For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."* ¹⁵*If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.* We are destroying ourselves because we are not in the same spirit as Jesus. WWJD is a novel idea, one that needs to become a way of life.

Jesus sent James and John into a village where he knew they would be rejected. I found it interesting to see Jesus stretching them beyond their comfort zone in such a way. They were going to a Samaritan village. It is common knowledge that the Jews in the Samaritans did not get along. This went back to the Old Testament days. Jesus was proving the point that he did not come for just those of certain social standings but for all men. Not just those that we like or those that look like us.

I remember Jesus being outside a Samaritan village one other time and a woman came to the well to draw water for her family. Jesus met her at the well that day to bring her the message of grace. To bring her to the place of salvation. He did not reject her when she was at the well. Instead he offered her a drink of living water. No condemnation but new life in Him.

James and John were sent into a village where they would be rejected. I believe Jesus sent James and John into the village to see how they would handle the rejection. Would they persevere, would they continue forward in their walk. Rejection hurts. Jesus would suffer many rejections on his walk toward Calvary.

Luke 9:51-56 is an opportunity for James and John to walk in the spirit of Jesus. To walk in grace and to show grace in the midst of the rejection. Scripture reads they came back and said, "Lord they offer us no lodging." Should we call fire from heaven and destroy them?" Jesus said to them you don't know what manner of spirit you're speaking from. I didn't come to destroy man, I came to save man.

I asked myself, "Do I allow rejection to stop the purpose God has placed inside of me?" Do I stop my witness and destroy my neighbor because my feeling are hurt. Or do I walk in the spirit of Jesus and move on to what God has in store for me...We all have a purpose, God has something great for all of us... Let us walk in it, and let us invite others along the way....

Gabrielle, in our beginning story had a talent and she almost let the rejection stop her. She was almost devoured by the words of anger and

rejection. Rejected by her father, society, her coach, and her team mates she was going to quit her training and settle for a career at Chic-fil-A. She was rejected because of prejudice. But she rose above and moved forward to become a world champion. I know it is a small comparison, but how many times have we allowed rejection, or world views to stop us from serving God. How many times have we allowed the cancer of indifference come into our churches and quench the Spirit of God? How many times has society altered our God given purpose? Gabrielle is quoted as saying, ***“I am a Christian, I believe in God. He is the secret of my success. He gives people talent”, and “... I love sharing about my faith. God has given me this amazing God-given talent, so I'm going to go out and glorify His name.”*** Gabrielle walked with a purpose, she celebrated her God given talent and allowed her abilities to be a great witness for the Lord. A young woman who could be angry walked with the spirit of Jesus.

The Cost

The cost is a giving of your all....Giving half-effort while swimming means that you drown and die.

Giving half-effort when running away from a wild bear results in you being eaten.

Giving half-effort when walking is going to trip you up, and never get where you are going.

Wearing half of your shoes makes for an awkward day with you hobbling

along.

Only working half the amount of hours you should means you lose money and you will get fired.

There are some things in life that we should never do half-way because the normal thought is that “you finish what you start.” The normal thought is that when doing something, we should give “our best effort” all the time. There is a reward in serving God in the fulness of heart...*Colossians 3:23-24 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.*

There is also a cost in serving God in fullness of heart....Billy Graham has said, “Salvation is free, but discipleship costs everything we have” The term “Follow” in the New Testament is reserved for the subject of Discipleship, and it implies total commitment on the part of the disciple to Jesus as Lord. “General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, was asked the secret of his amazing Christian life. Booth answered, ‘I told the Lord that He could have all that there is of William Booth’ To be His Disciple I must: “Deny myself, take up my cross, and follow Him.

Are we willing to follow that closely behind Jesus, that no matter what it cost us, we continue to walk with him? Luke 9:57-58 reads *As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, “I will follow you wherever You go.” 58 And Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nest, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”*

Scripture never states that this man followed Jesus. Maybe the thought of not having the comforts of life were more than he could handle. Whatever his reason Jesus continued on and asked others to join him. Each had their own excuse.

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There is an urgency to the call of Jesus. People are around him. They have seen the miracles. He has spoken of the Kingdom of God. He has a purpose, he is walking to the purpose and he is asking others to join him, to be his disciples. They offer excuses. What is our excuse today to not be a disciple of Jesus Christ? He has done the hard work. He has called us to continue in the work that he started. To continue his ministry.

We are not to be as James and John and destroy those who reject us. Or those we disagree with. We are called to serve him in fulness. That means we are not to make excuses about what we need to do first. But serve him as he served us. Completely laying our life down so that we might receive new life in him... There are a lot of Gabrielles out there who just need to be loved....

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