

Luke 9:51-62

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Preacher: Nick Lauer

[0 : 0 0] Luke. You thought I was going to say 2 Samuel, didn't you? The Gospel of Luke, chapter 9. We're starting a new sermon series tonight in Luke's Gospel. We're going to start in chapter 9, verse 51. If you're looking in the Pew Bible, that's page 868.

868, we're going to read Luke 59 through 61. These two paragraphs at the end of Luke chapter 9. Let me read these for us. When the days drew near for him to be taken up, Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem.

And he sent messengers ahead of him who went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make preparations for him. But the people did not receive him because his face was set toward Jerusalem.

And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them? But he turned and rebuked them. And they went on to another village.

As they were going along the road, someone said to him, I will follow you wherever you go. 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. To another, he said, follow me. But he said, Lord, let me first go and bury my father.

[1 : 2 4] Jesus said to him, leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God. Yet another said, I will follow you, Lord. But let me first say farewell to those at my home.

Jesus said to him, no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God. Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, we ask that you would bless the reading of your word, the hearing of your word, Lord, the preaching of your word tonight. As we turn our attention towards this narrative about you from the gospel of Luke, we pray that we would see you in fresh ways and that your spirit would do his work in our hearts. God, help us and shape us more and more into your image, we pray. Amen.

Well, so starting this spring and going through the summer, actually, what we're doing here in the evening service is focusing, we're going to be focusing on the topic of discipleship. What does it mean? What does it look like to be a follower of Jesus? You know, it's interesting if you're in the working world or even if you're in a school setting too, you can find lots and lots of resources or classes or seminars about how to grow in your leadership skills, about how to be a good leader.

And in fact, in the last five to 10 years, you can even find lots of literature and lots of help and lots of online stuff about how to grow as a good team member, how to be an effective member of a team and work well with others. But Christianity makes this incredibly counter-cultural claim that the path to real flourishing, not just spiritually, but really in the full dimension of what it means to be human, is found first and foremost, not necessarily in being a good leader, not necessarily in being a good team member, how all those things have their place, but it's found most fundamentally in being a follower, a disciple.

Now that sounds kind of strange to us. After all, who wants to be a follower, right? Trendsetter, yes. Entrepreneur, sure. Cutting edge, always. But follower, that doesn't sound very attractive.

[3 : 52] But the call of Christianity is the call to come follow Jesus. We see it in the second paragraph of our text tonight. Again and again and again, we find this language of following. Follow me, Jesus says.

But then again, who wants to be a mere follower? And yet think about, I think, think about a craft like woodworking or furniture design or architecture, even music. Think about one of these sort of robust human skills, human traditions, human crafts.

How do you go about becoming really great in that area of expertise, whatever it is? Well, the best way is to find someone who does it really, really well.

To find a master of the art, of the craft, and spend as much time with them as possible, right? To apprentice yourself to them, to become a learner in their school, to let them mentor you.

Because so much of what it means to become proficient and expert in a robust human skill or craft or art form can't be learned from books or from YouTube videos.

[5 : 10] You need to learn it in a relationship from someone who's mastered the craft. As many of you know, my wife and I bought our first home last summer.

So we now have to take up all sorts of crafts in our home, fixing things, repairing things. So I've tried to learn a lot of things from YouTube. I've learned that YouTube cannot teach you everything about how to fix your house.

But friends, this is what it meant to be a disciple in the ancient world. To be a student of a teacher. To be better an apprentice of a craftsman.

In fact, to enter into a relationship where you would begin, not just to learn how to do this or that skill, to learn a certain competency, but you would actually learn how to become the sort of person who really could master that art, that way of seeing and expressing yourself in the world.

Now imagine that there were someone to whom you could attach yourself that wasn't just a master at this or that particular technique or profession or skill.

[6 : 24] Imagine you could attach yourself to someone who was truly the master at the art of being human. Of living human life as it was meant to be lived in all of its dimensions.

Imagine you could attach yourself to that person, to be a learner at his feet, to be an apprentice to his craft. Imagine you could enter into a relationship with someone who through that relationship could actually cause you to become more fully human.

Who could cause you to come alive to who you were created to be. Well, when we talk about discipleship in Christianity, that's what we're talking about.

We're talking about entering into a vital relationship with Jesus Christ in the fellowship of his church and becoming in and through that relationship alive to who God created us to be.

Discipleship just isn't about learning how to do Bible studies and going to prayer meetings and doing one-on-one coffee dates every once in a while with your pastor who keeps pestering you. It's about becoming alive in relationship with Jesus.

[7 : 35] Now, perhaps all this sounds a bit far-fetched to you. Of course, maybe you're hungry to become more authentically you, more fully human and alive. Who isn't after all, right? But maybe you're not so sure that becoming a follower of Jesus is really the road to get there.

Well, let me say, if that's you, why not at least come and listen? Why not at least in the coming weeks explore what Jesus has to offer?

Try it on. Give it a shot. What do you have to lose? And as we kind of embark on this exploration together, it makes sense for us to go to the Gospels.

Of course, in a sense, the whole of Scripture was actually given to us to shape us into disciples of Jesus. So I suppose we could have preached just about any part of the Bible in this series and said, we're doing a series on discipleship from the second half of Jeremiah or something like that.

But, you know, if we want to focus with laser-like intensity on what it means to follow Christ, it makes sense, doesn't it, to go to the Gospel accounts in the New Testament where we are shown face-to-face the person of Jesus and shown firsthand what it was like for those first disciples to actually follow Him.

[8 : 59] And the reason why we're sort of jumping into the middle of Luke's Gospel this spring and summer is because in Luke's Gospel, starting in chapter 9, verse 51, and going all the way to chapter 19, really, Luke uses almost a third of his Gospel account to take us on a journey of following Jesus.

In this part of Luke's narrative, the disciples are literally following Jesus on the way. Now, a bit of context in Luke.

At this part of the story, the disciples have already confessed their belief in Jesus as the Messiah. And now, as Jesus makes His way to Jerusalem, where He's going to complete His mission, He's going to, along the way, teach His disciples all about what it means to be His follower.

Roughly speaking, in Luke's Gospel, if you think of chapters 1 through 9 as a unit, they really kind of talk about who Jesus is in a broad way, the nature of His identity and mission. And then if you go ahead to chapters 20 through 24 in Luke's Gospel, that's kind of all about what Jesus has come to do, the climax of His death and resurrection.

And in the middle, from chapter 9 to 19, we're not so much shown who He is or what He's come to do, but what it means to follow Him. What does a life shaped by His person and work by faith in Him really look like?

[10 : 20] That's one of the major concerns that Luke takes up in this middle section of his Gospel as he takes us on this journey with Jesus to Jerusalem. So it's a good place for us to be for the next few months as we think about what it means for us to follow Jesus today.

And in the two paragraphs of our text tonight, real basically tonight, I just want us to see two lessons about discipleship. First, a lesson in mercy.

And second, a lesson in priority. So let's look first at this lesson in mercy. In verses 51 through 56, Jesus begins His journey to Jerusalem. And this is a real turning point in Luke's Gospel.

As we said, up till now, most of the action has been in the north, in Galilee. But in Jerusalem, Jesus' ministry is going to reach its climax in Luke's Gospel. There, He will accomplish the work He's come to do.

Which, if you look a little earlier in chapter 9, in the account of Jesus' transfiguration, it's described as His departure. Or literally, His exodus. That is, in Jesus' climactic event, what He's going to go and accomplish in Jerusalem, God is going to accomplish a new event of liberation and redemption for His people.

[11 : 39] So here Jesus sets out and begins. But, just as, back in chapter 4, where Jesus' ministry in Galilee begins, how do you remember how it begins in chapter 4?

Jesus being rejected in Nazareth. Jesus' public ministry in Luke's Gospel begins with a scene of rejection. And so it is here. At this turning point in Luke's Gospel, the journey to Jerusalem begins also with a story of rejection.

And this time, not in Nazareth, but in Samaria. Now, many of you are students of the Bible and you know that Samaria was this region sort of sandwiched in between Jerusalem in the south and Galilee in the north.

And historically, for all sorts of cultural and ethnic reasons, Jews and Samaritans utterly despised each other. But here, in Luke 9, notice what Jesus is doing.

Instead of taking the long route that he could have taken around Samaria to avoid all those Samaritans like most Jews of that day would have done, Jesus goes straight in.

[12 : 50] And he asks to stay in one of their villages. He extends an offer to them to be received, to be welcomed, to be embraced, yes, even by Samaritans.

And that fact in and of itself is saying something. Luke especially wants us to see that Jesus has come for all people, insiders and outsiders.

They are all invited to receive him, to enter into God's kingdom, to follow him. But as Jesus makes this surprising, shocking embrace, the story takes a different turn in verse 53.

Instead of receiving Jesus, what happens? The Samaritan village refuses him. And why? Because, Luke says, they knew that Jesus and his disciples were headed to Jerusalem. What does that mean?

Well, you see, this time of year, every year, Jews from Galilee would journey south to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. And where would those Jews have to do?

[13 : 54] They would have to either go through Samaria or go around. And Samaritans typically did not like helping Jewish pilgrims going to a feast at a place that they regarded as the wrong sanctuary.

For them, the temple in Jerusalem was a sham and a parody and they weren't going to help anyone get there, especially not Jews. You know, it would be kind of like showing up at a Microsoft convention proudly wearing your Apple t-shirt.

Here I am. Where can I find the iPhone booth? Yeah, you can't find that here. You've got to buy a Zoom at the corner or whatever. Oh wait, they don't make those anymore. Yeah, my bad. You're not going to get a warm reception, right?

People don't think you belong. You're playing for the wrong team. Now imagine that feeling times about one million and you can imagine how a typical Jew on his way to Jerusalem would have been received in a typical Samaritan village.

You don't belong here and we're certainly not going to help you. And what's the disciples' response to all this? Well, there's certainly no love lost, right?

[15 : 00] They want to call down fire from heaven to consume the whole village. James and John were told in Mark's gospel were known as the sons of thunder. father. And here, unfortunately, it seems they are living up to their nickname.

And actually, in doing this, the disciples are remembering a story from the Old Testament. A story where the prophet Elijah, when confronted by hostile armies, was able to call down fire from heaven and be protected.

In verse 54, the disciples are actually practically quoting that story from 1 Kings 1, verse 10. And if you look at the footnote of your Bible, some later sort of copyists of the New Testament actually gave us a little bit of an explanatory gloss there and said, as Elijah did.

But you know, more than just echoing some Old Testament scripture, don't you see that the disciples here, they're being kind of angry and maybe a little protective.

Their master has just been rejected, the one that they believe to be God's king and rejected by Samaritans, no less. How dare they? Would it not be right, after all, to bring swift judgment down from heaven?

[16 : 18] Isn't that what this village deserves? They're rejecting God's king. Wouldn't that teach all these Samaritans a lesson? Wouldn't that actually compel the other villages to submit? Hey, Jesus, if we burn up this village, you better believe that the next one we go to, they're probably going to receive you, right?

And of course, it's easy to see that the disciples are way off base and wrongheaded.

It's funny how they can quote a passage from 1 Kings on the spot to justify their anger and prejudice, and yet they have so quickly forgotten what Jesus himself has just taught them in recent days, to love their enemies and to be merciful as our Father in heaven is merciful.

But it's easy to point a finger at the disciples, isn't it? Aren't we so often the same way as them? In our own anger, in our own self-righteousness, when we get offended, when we get rejected, we lash out, don't we?

Maybe we don't literally call down fire from heaven, but in our hearts, there's kind of a low-grade sort of judgment and retribution that boils just the same.

[17 : 32] And of course, we can very easily justify our anger and justify our judgmental spirit. Maybe even we can quote a Bible verse or two in support of our own position. But what does Jesus do?

He turns and rebukes them and us. Rebukes them because that sort of violence has no place in his kingdom. This is not the kind of kingdom that's going to compel people to submit with fire from heaven.

Jesus rebukes our desire to judge our enemies. Instead, Jesus tells us to pray for our enemies, to love them and do good to them. You can see Jesus teaching this for yourself back in Luke chapter 6 if you want to turn there later.

And there we find and here we find that it's mercy that discipleship demands. Jesus is patient and long-suffering with those who would refuse him.

In his first coming, Jesus didn't come to judge his enemies but to save them. Jesus didn't come to call down fire upon them.

[18 : 40] Why did he come? He came to bear the fire for them. Remember that Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem after all. And what awaits Jesus there?

Not what the disciples are thinking. Military conquest, political victory, none of those things. Rather, it's the cross. Consider, here are James and John angry and judgmental because the Samaritans have refused to welcome their king.

And yet, in a few short weeks when they get to Jerusalem, are they going to end up any better? As the authorities in Jerusalem drag Jesus away to be condemned and crucified, the disciples too are going to deny him and refuse him and want nothing to do with him.

Friends, we are all like this Samaritan village, aren't we? We see Jesus coming and we push him away and want nothing to do with him.

But instead of calling down rightful judgment upon us, what does Christ do? He undergoes the just judgment for us. And when you see what Jesus has done for us, that's what produces mercy in us as his disciples.

[20 : 10] After Jesus' death and resurrection, the church is going to take the gospel not just to Jerusalem and Judea, but where? To Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

It's as if the cross and resurrection of Jesus, that great act of mercy for them, is going to utterly break their self-righteousness and their racial pride.

And James and John will each, in their own way, lay down their lives for the sake of Jesus and the gospel. No longer calling down fire on their enemies, but loving them sacrificially, just as Jesus had done for them.

And friends, today, mercy is still the shape of true discipleship. In light of this passage, I think it's good to ask ourselves, how do we respond when we hear of people rejecting or refusing Christ?

What emotions run through our heart? Is it anger? Pride? A desire for judgment? Or do our hearts break because they're refusing the author of life?

[21 : 24] And do we remind ourselves that apart from God's grace, we too would still be rejecting and refusing Him? Following Jesus means responding with mercy, even and especially to those who reject and despise us.

Responding with mercy because we've received mercy. That's the first lesson, a lesson in mercy. The second lesson in our text tonight is a lesson about priorities.

In verses 57 through 62, three would-be disciples approach Jesus. And to each one, Jesus makes this startling claim that following Him has to take priority over every other commitment and every other desire.

Look at this first would-be disciple. He says, Jesus, I'll follow you wherever you go. You can almost hear His sort of overconfidence. Wherever you go, Jesus, I'm there.

But Jesus perhaps senses how sure this man is of himself and challenges him. The road ahead isn't going to be one of comfort and ease, Jesus says, but one of hardship and rejection. The Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.

[22 : 32] Is this would-be follower willing to put Jesus ahead of His desire for creature comforts? Is He willing to truly make Jesus first?

The second of these three guys is also willing to follow Jesus, we learned, but first He wants to go bury His father. Now, in first century culture, that was an incredibly important duty. It was almost unthinkable to leave undone.

But Jesus says that even this most important filial duty, burying your own father must come second to following Him. And finally, this third would-be disciple promises to follow Jesus.

If only first He can say farewell to His friends and family at home. Which seems like a reasonable request. And there's actually another echo here of the Old Testament stories of Elijah.

When Elijah goes and he calls Elisha to be his follower, to be his assistant, Elisha turns and says, okay, Elijah, let me first go home and say farewell first.

[23 : 34] Then I'll come and follow you. And what does Elijah say? Okay, go ahead. Sounds like a reasonable thing to do. But you see how different Jesus' response is?

This time, things have changed. God's plan at this point is unfolding with such importance and with such urgency. And Jesus Himself is so much greater than Elijah that not even the close bonds of family affection can override the call to come follow Him right now.

And of course, the overarching point in these three interactions is clear. Following Jesus' discipleship means making Him the uncontested priority in your life.

And notice that all these things that Jesus says must take second place to Him in these interactions are in themselves good things, right? A safe and comfortable home fulfilling your sort of traditional filial duties, family affection, and bonds.

These are good things. And even good things cannot and must not detract from putting Christ's uppermost uncontested in your allegiance.

[24 : 53] Let me first, the second and third would-be disciples say here, let me first go bury my father. Let me first go home and say goodbye to my family and friends.

Friends, I wonder how would you finish that sentence? Let me first. Maybe for you it's also a family obligation or bond. Maybe you're afraid of offending your family by becoming a Christian or maybe there's some duty that you feel you have to fulfill to them that keeps you from serving Christ as you ought to.

Maybe your spouse isn't a believer and you're not sure how he or she would respond if you started genuinely following Jesus. Let me first, you might say. Let me first figure things out with my family and then I'll come follow you, Jesus.

But maybe you'd fill in the blank another way. I'll follow you, Jesus, but let me first, let me first get back on my feet. Let me get my life together. Let me get my act together and then I'll follow you.

Let me first see where this relationship is going with my boyfriend or girlfriend. Let me first get that into a good place and then I'll come follow you.

[26 : 08] Let me first finish up my degree and get settled into a career and then I'll really follow you, Jesus. Let me first get some airtight answers to all my doubts and questions and really make sure that this thing is certain and then I'll follow you.

And in this text Jesus is saying you can't do it that way. You can't have a let me first and truly be his disciple.

He has to be your first. But why? Why is Jesus so demanding at this point? I mean when you compare these two episodes in this text, isn't it a wild juxtaposition?

Didn't we just see how Jesus is so merciful and patient and long-suffering in verse 51 through 56? Now he seems like a complete megalomaniac demanding nothing less than total commitment right now.

Why is this a legitimate claim for him to make? Why? Three things. First, notice the urgency. Isn't there an overriding sense of urgency in this paragraph?

[27 : 26] At this point in Jesus' earthly ministry, things are headed to their climax. Now is the time to decide. The kingdom of God is at hand, Jesus kept telling those who were around him. And friends, the same is true of us today.

There is urgency in the call of God's kingdom. at a very simple level, none of us knows how many days that we have left to live. Preachers, for some reason, love to talk about getting hit by buses when you leave church.

I don't know why that is. You never know. It could happen to you. But friends, on a serious note, you never know. You don't know how many days you have left.

this could be the moment that God is giving you to come and follow him. The time to decide is now.

But notice second why Jesus says this. Notice what we see of Jesus' identity in this passage. On the one hand, he calls himself the son of man, which on the surface, on the surface anyway, seems like a title of humility, but maybe we'll get a chance to come back to that title when we explore this series a little more.

[28 : 43] But you know, then, even if he sort of begins to present himself as one of humility without a place to lay his head, then look at his response to the second would-be disciple. Let the dead bury their own dead.

Which is to say, let the spiritually dead, all those people back home, bury the physically dead, your father. Okay, now that's a harsh thing to say, but do you see the claim that Jesus is making there?

He's saying that everyone who refuses to come follow him is still living in the realm of spiritual death. That apart from him, they have not and will not come alive to God.

That he's the source of real life. And then the last verse of our passage, Jesus implies that to follow him is to pursue God's kingdom.

To come after him with wholehearted devotion is the same thing as being a part of God's healing, righteous reign in the world. And when you take a step back, when Jesus says all this about following him, you must have given him complete, absolute priority over everything else, when Jesus says you've got to make me first and nothing else, he's making a claim that in the context for a faithful first century Jew belonged to no one else but God alone.

[30 : 16] There was only one who could claim that sort of devotion over all else and it was the Lord himself. And Jesus is saying you must put me first.

Jesus is pointing us to his identity here. He's pointing us to the fact that a relationship with him is a relationship with the God who made us. He must take first place.

Otherwise, you are out of joint with the one who made you and sustains you and the only one who can save you. But third, why does Jesus make such an uncompromising demand?

Third, consider that what Jesus is calling us to do here to make him our complete and utter priority is actually easier in a sense than what these men are trying to do.

No one puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God. What happens if you're plowing a field and constantly looking back? I can only guess because I've never plowed a field.

[31 : 35] But look, if you've got your hands on that plow and you're looking over your shoulder, you're not going to be digging nice straight rows in the field. They're going to be going all over the place.

and not only are your rows going to be curved and ugly, you might even strike a rock destroying not just your harvest but the very plow itself.

It's impractical and it's maybe even dangerous to plow when your attention is divided. C.S. Lewis captures this well toward the end of mere Christianity.

He says that how so many of us approach Christianity is that on the one hand, we do what we think is our duty to God. We keep our nose out of trouble. We show up for church.

We do some good deeds for our neighbors. We do all that all the while on the other hand, really hoping that there's some time and some energy and some money sort of left over that we can kind of spend on ourselves and our own things.

[32 : 39] We still want to have a little bit of time left over for what he calls our natural self, the things that we kind of want to do. We're like an honest man paying our taxes. We'll give what is due hoping that we've got a little treasure left to just kind of enjoy on ourselves.

But that's not going to work when it comes to following Jesus. The demands of discipleship are too great. Jesus' intention for his followers is not merely to improve this or that aspect of your personality, to do a little tweak here or a little nudge there, to just give you kind of a little push.

His intention is to remodel you from the inside out, to make you a new creation, to make us, as Lewis will say in another place, not nice people, but a new humanity.

And so if we approach discipleship like these three men with one foot in and one foot out, it's never going to work. Either we're going to end up miserable on the road to discipleship because we can never keep up with the demands and there's never anything left over, which is what we really want.

We'll either be totally miserable or we'll just give up altogether. So you see what Jesus is calling his disciples to do is on the one hand harder.

[34 : 01] Give me all of you. Give me, make me first over everything else. But what Jesus is calling us to do is easier. Give me all of you and stop trying to live with divided attention and divided loyalties.

Give me your whole self and let me take care of the rest. This is what discipleship means. The Samaritans who reject Jesus, Jesus moves on.

But to those who open the door to him, like these three men, Jesus wants to come the whole way in. He wants to push in, take control, and be first. That's what it means to be his disciple, to let him displace every other thing that might compete for priority in our lives.

And of course, that doesn't mean that we all quit our jobs and become hermits or overseas missionaries. But it does mean that whatever we do, it's done through the lens of making Jesus first, of following him and obeying him, even if it means losing comfort and security, like this first one.

Even if it means offending family and tradition, like the second one. Even if it means missing our loved ones. But in order to understand this call to priority, in order to really put it in perspective, I think we need to see two final things.

[35 : 42] First, we need to see that what Jesus is calling us into, as we said in the very beginning tonight, is a life where we become who we were created to be.

In other words, what we stand to lose in following Jesus is nothing compared to what we gain. I remember years ago visiting a museum in Florence, Italy, the museum where Michelangelo's sculpture of David is on display.

It's kind of a funny little museum. There's like a bunch of junk there, and then you turn the corner and there's this huge statue. It's like kind of the only thing they have, which isn't true, but it feels like it's the only thing they have there.

But flanking both sides of this gallery, as you kind of turn the corner and look, and there's the David, flanking both sides of this gallery are sculptures by Michelangelo that aren't finished.

They were sculptures in process, and the curators of the museum, in a brilliant move, put them, and they just placed them along the sides of the hall, and there was the David. David. And you could still see the chisel marks all around each one of those figures, and it looked as if this sort of beautiful figure was emerging from a block of stone.

[37 : 05] And that's often what discipleship feels like. God progressively just chiseling away at our old life, which no doubt can be painful and challenging.

Is this a priority in your life? Chisel it away. Is this competing with me? Chisel it away. But the end that he has in view in all of that rigorous work is glorious.

I think they call those statues the prisoners or something like that because they look like they're sort of trapped in stone. And yet another way of looking at it is that they're being liberated.

they're coming out. And at the head of that gallery stands the David, one of the most stunning works of human sculpture ever created.

And through the chisel marks, we're being liberated from stone, friends. And we're being made into the image of the true and better David. The one who is truly human.

[38 : 09] The Lord Jesus Christ. What we stand to lose in following Jesus is nothing compared to what we gain. He's setting us free with each hit of the chisel.

people. But lastly, consider what Jesus is calling us to do to make him our utter priority, to let nothing distract us from following him.

Friends, that's exactly the road that he's traveled for us. Luke opens this whole section of his gospel in verse 51 by saying that Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem.

He set his face with uncompromising priority and determination to go to Jerusalem. Why? For you.

The phrase set his face is actually an echo of Isaiah. It's a brilliant little expression by Luke there. In Isaiah chapter 50 verse 7 describing the redeeming work of the suffering servant Isaiah says that he set his face like flint.

[39 : 26] To suffer and die in the place of God's people so that God could bring about a new exodus and so that God could take his people into the new creation. And here Luke with one little turn of phrase is calling forth all of that Old Testament theology and pouring it right into Jesus just as Jesus had taught his disciples and saying Jesus set his face.

Jesus put the saving plan of the father first. Jesus made that his priority no matter the cost for you.

And friends if he did that for you then you need not fear to put him first in your life. He will liberate you from the stone and he will make you fit for the kingdom of God.

So this then is the beginning of the journey of discipleship. To see, to receive, and to live his mercy and to acknowledge, receive, and embrace him as your priority.

Friends where are you at on this road of discipleship? The risen Jesus continues to say to us today follow me. follow me.

[40 : 48] Let's pray. Lord, we confess that when we hear your challenge to put all things in second place to you, Lord, we acknowledge that that's often a move that we can't make in our own power.

Lord, we feel trapped by these old allegiances and these old things that have gripped our life. So, Lord, we pray that by your spirit you would do a liberating work.

Lord, we thank you that you, in your wisdom and inspiring scripture, left these stories open. Lord, that you didn't tell us how these men responded so that we would be set on the cusp with them to respond.

So help us, Lord, by your spirit to receive your mercy and to put you first in our lives and help us as a community to encourage one another on this road of discipleship, we pray.

Amen.