

An amazing experience, failure and insights

Luke 9:28-50

thought for the week

It says of Peter that he “did not know what he was saying”. I guess it’s easy to be hard on Peter as he enthusiastically blurted out a few thoughts triggered by the amazing spectacle of seeing Jesus, Moses and Elijah in the cloud, on the mountain top. If we were to reflect at what we say over the course of a day we might also be inclined to come to the same conclusion. How often in the heat of the moment in our everyday lives do we respond without really thinking or listening to what Jesus would have us say. However, in the journey to ‘Christ-likeness’ we endeavour to the activity of listening first and then speaking. Not being in a hurry and waiting on God’s word of response in each situation.

verse for the week

“This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.”

Luke 9 verse 35

prayer for the week

Lord in the clouds and darkness of
this World,
grant us a glimpse of your glory,
that we may set ourselves to share
in the bringing in of your kingdom.

As you refresh and restore us,
may we work for the renewal of the
World ;
though Christ our Lord.
Amen

image for the week



reflection for each day

day one

'As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.'

In a story that mirrors how Moses' face shone after encountering the living God on another mountain (Exodus 34:29), Jesus is 'transfigured' as he prays. How does prayer change us? Reflect upon the way that your life reflects something of the glory of God when you draw close to Him.

day two

'Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendour'

Moses represents the Jewish Law and Elijah the prophets. There is continuity between how God spoke in the past and how He now speaks through Jesus. Where do you see continuity with the past in your experience?

day three

'They spoke about his exodus'

Just as Moses led the people of Israel to the promised land in the Exodus so Jesus now leads us by his Spirit to a place of promise. Give thanks that you are a child of God with a secure future.

day four

'Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child'

A Father anxious about losing his only child – Jesus is ready to answer to answer your heartfelt prayer. Speak to him now and wait on his answer.

day five

'And they were all amazed at the greatness of God.'

How astonished are you are by the work of Jesus in your life. You may have become accustomed to this astonishing work in your life. Ask for new eyes to see his glory and be astonished once more.

day six

'whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.'

When you welcome Jesus you welcome the Father. When you agree with Jesus ways, the Father comes too, enabled by the Spirit. God is with you – be glad.

day seven

'for whoever is not against you is for you.'

Jesus took a very generous and welcoming approach to those he met. Reflect on how you might follow this way of Jesus today.

for the group

as you gather...

- Share the particular insights which have struck you this week
- Try and enter the life of Peter at the transfiguration – what was happening for him?
- Reflect on different ways in which you might obey God's command to 'listen to Jesus'.
- How much waiting is involved in hearing the voice of the Lord?
- What has been the meaning of carrying your cross this week?
- What do these stories mean for our own discipleship?

prayer for the group

*Ever-present God, source of all love, hope and life
God with us and God still to come*

We lift to you all who are waiting today to hear your voice as they pray.

*We rejoice with all those who are joyfully expectant of change or breakthrough
and mourn with all those for whom it seems distant,
or who are coping with the fear of bad news.*

*God with us a very-present help in trouble, delay and pain,
May your love and mercy be close - and active
for all who wait for you.*

Amen.

Toward Jerusalem

Luke 9:51-62

thought for the week

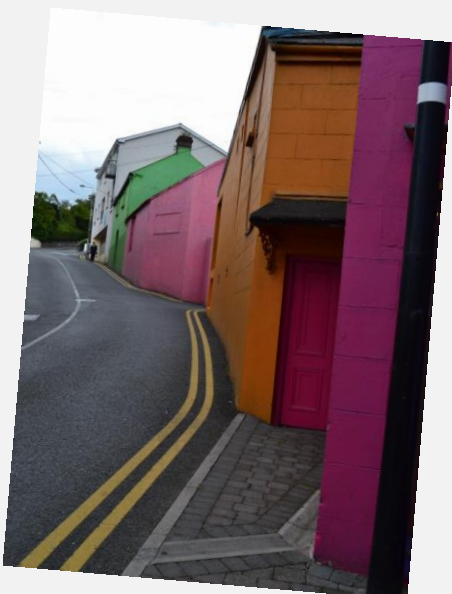
Jesus was not welcomed in the Samaritan town because, he was heading for Jerusalem (*not a popular city for Samaritans*). Jesus was pursuing his Father's desire on his life. This was not the first time of opposition as Peter had already made a bid to stop this "Jerusalem response". The Samaritan community may not have realised they were not co-operating with God's will. We may also encounter lack of co-operation as we seek to follow Jesus. However the appropriate response is not to call harm upon those involved but rather continue in God's will and leave any form of judgement to the one who is able to do so justly – Jesus . No fire to be called down from heaven (since the one who would baptise with fire is already here from heaven) - but a quiet determination to do God's will and entrust ourselves to that will.

verse for the week

Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.

Luke 9 verse 62

image for the week



prayer for the week

O God of burning cleansing flame
 Send the fire
 Your blood-bought gift today we claim
 Send the fire today
 Look down and see this waiting host
 And send the promised Holy Ghost we
 need another Pentecost
 Send the fire today
 Send the fire today
 AMEN

reflection for each day



Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.

Looking over the last month, year, check, as you are able, how resolutely you are following the path of God's personal call on your life. Make amends where necessary.



day two

He sent messengers on ahead

Jesus sent messengers ahead to prepare for his arrival. We too are messengers of Jesus who prepare for his arrival in the lives of those around us. Pray for his "arrival" in the lives of those around you



day five

But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

The intention behind this is that I have a duty which I must perform. It is a good duty for sure. What are the 'good things' that get in the way of delaying your obedience to Jesus? Pray for guidance with these.



day three

A man said to Jesus "I will follow you wherever you go".

This is a wonderful, but perhaps not an honest response as Jesus warns him of the consequences. Jesus is looking for honest responses from his people – check on your honesty with Jesus – promising too much or too little? Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you.



day six

Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the Kingdom of God."

On first hearing, this sounds cruel and callous. Jesus is referring to the dead as those who are "not following". Jesus knows our needs – he is the one we can trust with the whole of our lives. Pray for the required trust to follow.



day four

He said to another man, "Follow me."

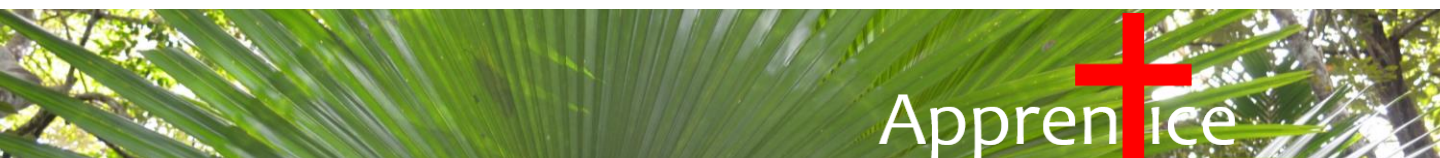
This of course is Jesus call on everybody – 'follow me'. As we align our lives to this call we have a simple response to people when they enquire of our direction in life. 'I am following Jesus – how about you?' Pray for opportunities to share this.



day seven

"first let me go back and say goodbye to my family."

There is no going back with Jesus but there is a going back without him. Acknowledge where and when this 'going back' has been true for you. Pray for strength to keep on track.



for the group

as you gather...

- What are you resolutely setting out to do in this next week, month, or year?
- What might it look like in your life to turn back and 'bury your dead' or to say 'good-bye'?
- What has it meant for you this week to *follow Jesus*?
- Discuss what it meant for Jesus to have nowhere to lay his head.
- What do you believe the Holy Spirit is saying to you through this week's bible reading?

prayer for the group

Dear Lord,

*Thank you for the challenges in life that help to build my strength.
Thank you for the mysterious people who confound, frustrate and annoy me,
teaching me patience and the art of forgiveness.*

*Thank you for the moments when I am in desperate need of a miracle,
and at the very last moment, from an unexpected source, one arrives.*

*Thank you for the moments of courage that you give me
so that I can live a life of meaning, not comfort.*

*Thank you for the moments when I am aware of my many faults,
not so that I can wallow in guilt,
but so that I can tap into your grace and mercy.*

*Thank you for sending angels to wrestle with me,
building my resilience and teaching me to hold on to what is good.*

*I pray that you would give me a strong heart for the times when pain would
otherwise break my spirit.*

*And I pray that even in the darkest night,
I will be looking to the light that's coming.*

Amen.

Sharing the mission

Luke 10:1-24

thought for the week

Jesus sent his disciples out two by two with the instruction 'Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road'. These were the very instructions that pilgrims were given on their way to the temple mount to meet with the living God in his house –the Temple. The symbolism is clear. The future of the people of God and the dwelling place of God were no longer around a building but in the households of Jerusalem and beyond to the far corners of the Earth. As they were engaging in mission the disciples were expecting to *meet the living God in those households.*

verse for the week

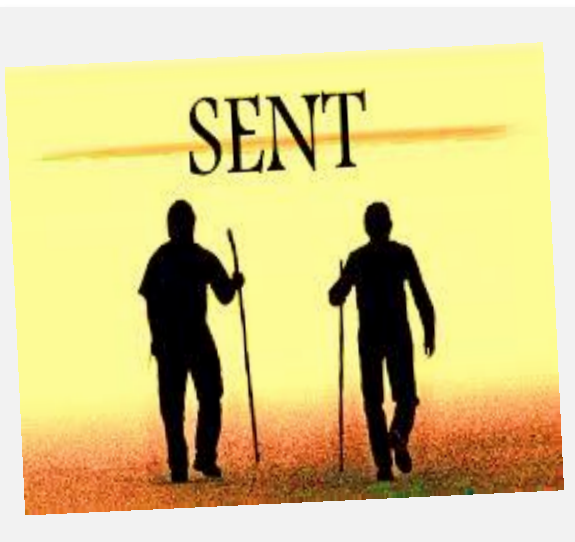
*When you enter a house, first say,
'Peace to this house'*

Luke 10 verse 5

prayer for the week

*Almighty God
who sent your Holy Spirit to be the
life and light of your church
open our hearts to the riches of your
grace
that we may bring forth the fruit of
the Spirit in love joy and peace.*

image for the week



reflection for each day

day one

'Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.'

Reflect for a few moments on the dangers that you may face in engaging on Jesus style mission. Pray to be delivered from any danger that you may face.

day two

'do not greet anyone on the road.'

This task is urgent it is not (apparently) for those who are content to take a relaxed attitude to life. Reflect on your urgency in communicating the good news of Kingdom in word and deed.

day three

'Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages.'

Do not move around from house to house.' Jesus calls his disciples to be dependent on the provision and hospitality of others. How easy do you find this is in your own context ?

day four

The seventy-two returned with joy

This mission probably represents the nations of the earth. Reflect on your own sense of mission. Is it both local and global or more one than the other? Pray that the ability to act locally but think globally will be berthed in you.

day five

'Whoever listens to you listens to me'

Reflect on the joy that those listening to us will also be listening to the Kingdom message of Jesus. Give thanks for this truth.

day six

'but rejoice that your names are written in heaven'

Spend a little time today rejoicing that you are in the community of faith, that you carry the mark of the cross and you have been given the right to be called a child of God.

day seven

'Blessed are the eyes that see what you see'

Jesus has revealed the truth to us - those who follow him. Give thanks for this.

for the group

as you gather...

- Discuss the command of Jesus to ‘*Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house*’ (verse 7). Is this just too counter cultural in your situations – if so what might it mean for you?
- In verse 16 we read about the significance of the Kingdom. Those who accept it will be welcomed by Jesus and therefore also by the Father. Reflect in the group about what it means to speak and live out the understanding that that the awaiting Kingdom rule of God is berthed in ministry of Jesus.
- Verse 22 speaks about Jesus revealing the Father to those whom he chooses. Discuss in the group what Jesus has revealed to you about the Father.
- In verse 18 Jesus speaks about the authority that he has given his disciples. Discuss in the group what this means for you.

prayer for the group

Lord God we pray for the power of the Holy Spirit
to speak and act in agreement with Jesus’ message of the Kingdom.
Protect us from being caught up in the distractions that may keep us from
the urgency you call us to
and keep us focussed and listening to your guidance.
Help us to celebrate being your children and enjoying the blessings that come
from your provision and life in this world.
AMEN.

The parable of the good Samaritan *Luke 10:25-37.*

thought for the week

In this (probably) most well known of all Jesus parables, he identifies different characters in the story but the character who is least well defined is the victim of a crime – the man lying half dead in the road. In this carefully crafted story, we can therefore only deduce that the person is a ‘human being’. This person is in immediate need of attention and is neither identified as family, nor in terms of creed and nationality – simply a person in need. It is in this framework, that the challenge of Jesus is made - who is my neighbour and how am I called to display the love of God towards them?

verse for the week

“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

Luke 10 verse 28

prayer for the week

Lord, make me an instrument of your
 peace;
 where there is hatred,
 let me sow love;
 where there is injury,
 pardon;
 where there is doubt,
 faith;
 where there is despair,
 hope;
 where there is darkness,
 light;
 and where there is sadness,
 joy.

image for the week



reflection for each day

day one

‘What is written in the Law?’ he replied. “How do you read it?”

Jesus affirms the Torah but demonstrates in the parable how to interpret it. Ask Jesus to help you to interpret his teaching today and how to apply it in your life.

day two

‘A Priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side’

A priest was not allowed to risk defilement and so walks by. Examine your heart for what might prevent you from being a neighbour to someone in distress.

day three

‘But a Samaritan’

After the priest and the Levite passed by the Samaritan came. This was THE twist in the story – the despised Samaritan. This revealed the prejudice that lay in the heart of the Pharisee. Who do you try to avoid in your circles of life and why? Enquire of Jesus what you might do about this

day four

‘he took pity on him’

It would have been so easy to have carried on but he took pity and had enormous patience in helping him back onto his feet. This speaks of the compassion that God has for us. Spend some time giving thanks for God’s patience and compassion for you.

day five

‘Then he put the man on his own donkey’

Not only did the Samaritan spend time and show compassion, but he also used his own resources to help the man. What is the ‘donkey’ of your possessions that you are prepared to share in the Kingdom life of Jesus. Give thanks for how God has equipped you to show compassion.

day six

‘Which of these three do you think was a neighbour’

Jesus teases out the prejudice in the heart of the Pharisees. Pray to identify any who may view you as a ‘Samaritan’. Pray that you may forgive them and release yourself in the service of Jesus.

day seven

‘Jesus told him, Go and do likewise’

Pray that you too may be able to go and do likewise in this and other examples of Jesus teaching.

for the group

as you gather...

- Jesus says “do this and you will live “ – outline a few meanings that these words of Jesus convey
- This parable is very concrete and practical. How do you respond to the practicality of the parable i.e to bring benefit to others using our own resources? Is it attractive or possibly invasive in some way?
- The word neighbour conveys the sense of living close by. Clearly Jesus did not imply that in his parable. Discuss how individually and corporately members of your group can be good neighbours when this seems to mean everyone.
- As a group re write the parable in the modern context. Who would be the Priest, Levite and Samaritan?

prayer for the group

God of love,
give us a deep love for you,
so that we can see the world as you see it,
feel the compassion you feel,
and be a people whose lives mediate your love to others.
So open our eyes that we might see what the Good Samaritan saw.
Grant us the insight to see the need in others,
the wisdom to know what to do, and the will to do it.



continue the conversation
[here](#)