

## Sermon – Sunday, June 26, 2022 - Follow me: Luke 9:51-62

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing to you O Lord.

In today's text what we hear is the beginning of the story of Jesus' journey to the cross. Jesus' journey to the cross will be full of parables and other such stories. The stories lead the people to a fuller understanding of who Jesus is and why he is the Son of God. This is a pivotal moment on his journey.

James and John were already with Jesus and they're not too pleased when their leader was turned away from a Samaritan village. Onward they go. While on the road to another town new people want to become Jesus' followers. The first says, "I will follow you wherever you go. And Jesus says, "Are you ready to rough it. We are not staying in the best inns you know."

Then Jesus invites another saying, "Follow me."

BUT the individual replies, "Lord, first let me bury my father."

Jesus replied, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Sure sounds a little cold.

Then another said, "I will follow you Lord BUT, let me first say farewell to those at my home." Another BUT. The word BUT negates what comes before it. It is not good Jesus' followers are using this word.

These are the BUT followers. I will follow, but. How many of us are the same? I will follow, BUT I have something else to do first – something other than living our faith.<sup>1</sup>

Remember Jesus is calling us to look forward. "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

There are demands that are part of following Jesus, a reality he does not hide from us. In the transparency of love, He lets us know that following him will bring us into places that challenge our ideas about what is of most importance. It will challenge us to think differently about our responsibilities and the opportunities that come before us. We will find ourselves reworking life, reassessing our choices and actions through the lens of the gospel.

At times we will be called into work that we find uncomfortable, challenged in our views, moved beyond the status quo. This is especially true for those of us who are people of privilege, who live in the centre of life rather than the margins. As we do so, we begin the work of allowing God to change us. We make space for the Spirit to reveal the assumptions and

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<sup>1</sup> Idea from Working Preacher, Sermon Brainwave June 26 2022

understandings that hold us back on the journey. Then we are ready to step into the journey, on to the pilgrimage path with all, including those on the margins.

Jesus might be imagined as always facing Jerusalem, always facing head on what stands in the way of community, of love, of life. Facing Jerusalem, he refuses to give up on any of us, willing to take love to its furthest on the cross.<sup>2</sup>

Today we are recognizing National Indigenous Peoples' Day (which was on June 21 the day of the summer solstice). I'm sure you've heard about some of the atrocities committed towards indigenous people, removing children from their homes and parents; the 60s scoop, the lack of clean water, and so on.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is not just about reconciliation. It is about truth telling. We must share and listen to the truth. We as a church may not been involved in the residential schools but we as Canadians still need to listen to the truth of what happened and hold ourselves accountable to our forefathers.

For those of you that don't know, the ZLW this month hosted the Kairos<sup>3</sup> Blanket Exercise. If you ever get a chance to attend one please do so. You won't regret it. The story of colonialism and the oppression against indigenous people is told through an interactive method. We lived the experience of the indigenous in ways we never would have otherwise. At the end during the debriefing many people were in tears. They lived right next to indigenous people while growing up and they never talked to those people. They never stopped while driving through the reserve. Some people know of others who lived in the schools. It was very emotional. In the end I think everyone left ready to share and speak the truth of what we learned in a loving manner how we might change our perspectives. As followers of Christ we have to be willing to proclaim the gospel and seek justice for all. As Canadians we need to be open to hearing the truth of the oppression before we can be reconciled with our indigenous friends.

As God's people today we will have to do what Jesus is talking about. Following Jesus will mean living lives that are reorientated from what they have been before, which really is a resurrection. Resurrection is life restored as we...

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<sup>2</sup> Bishop Kathy Martin, ELCIC Summer Sermon Series.

<sup>3</sup>Kairos is an ecumenical organization seeking justice for all.

Let go of the past.

Bury what is dead and move on.

Leave the comforts of home. And get moving.

I kind of look at it from this perspective:

I ask you rhetorically, what is the difference between involvement and commitment?

Perhaps I can explain it by way of an analogy:

In bacon and egg, hen is involved and pig is committed.

Every moment counts. Along the way we are never alone. In this Pentecost season we are fueled by the Holy Spirit and travel together. This Holy Spirit enables us to be the church today for the sake of the world and all creation. There is no journey like it, it is exciting, exhilarating and challenging all at the same time. Thanks be to God. AMEN