



The ROAD LESS TRAVELED

The Road Less Traveled (Luke) **Aug 27: A Kingdom Opposed**

Series Summary: In the middle section of the Gospel of Luke, we see a unique aspect of Jesus' ministry- his life and ministry on the road. We see him interact with strangers, answer difficult questions, and teach with boldness. Along the way, Jesus teaches his disciples —and us as well —what the Kingdom of God is and what it means to follow Him.

Big Idea: Living for Jesus isn't always easy. There will be times when following Jesus means that we have to give something up. Are we willing to give up parts of our lives in order to follow Jesus?

Schedule:

- Live teaching
- Small group

LIVE TEACHING

Series Lead in: In the middle section of the Gospel of Luke, we see a unique aspect of Jesus' ministry, his life and ministry on the road. We see him interact with strangers, answer difficult questions, and teach with boldness. Along the way, Jesus teaches his disciples —and us as well —what the Kingdom of God is and what it means to follow Him.

Luke 9:51 As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.

Luke 9:52-53 And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem.

Racial divide: There was a sharp religious and racial divide between the Samaritans and the Jews, going back to the Assyrian invasion, when many Jews intermarried with the invaders, thus making Samaritan society. It was a deeply rooted hatred.

- Assyria- powerful nation that continually conflicted with Israel
- Samaritan- Jews looked down on Samaritans (a mixed-race of pagans)

Luke 9:54-55 When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" **55** But Jesus turned and rebuked them.

But why did the Apostles respond that way and need correction? Why did they lash out? Because they assumed that, since they were traveling with the long-awaited Messiah, the King of kings and Lord of Lords, no one would dare oppose them without facing the wrath of God. They wrongly assumed that Jesus would smite (strike down) these people. Would this be an appropriate punishment? Yes. But this was not the purpose of Jesus' ministry.

Why this matters today: This passage reminds us that people will misunderstand the message and teaching of Jesus. Therefore, we should be on guard against making the same mistake the disciples made. The disciples wanted to follow Jesus, but they assumed that it would be free of opposition. That is a dangerous assumption, but it is an assumption that is all too prevalent in the Church today.

JESUS'S CALL WITH ADDED PERSPECTIVE

Luke 10:3-4 Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

- Vs 3 - There are, in fact, wolves. Jesus made that clear. He did not try to deceive us. Instead, he was upfront and honest about the difficulty of ministering in his name (John 21:18-19).
- Vs 4 - Jesus sent them out with very little. Why? Because Jesus wanted to teach dependence on Him, he sent them out. He desires the same from us.
- You may ask "but what if people don't listen to me?" Look at Jesus's answer to this question...

Luke 10:8-12 "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure

of this: The kingdom of God has come near.' I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town."

- If people reject the Gospel, they are rejecting Jesus, not you (vs 16). We must separate our significance and feelings from that rejection. We grieve their rejection for their sake, not the harm they brought on us.

As the 72 followers of Jesus returned, they were so excited about the amazing work they had done. They cast out demons, healed the sick, and shared Jesus' message. However, Jesus took the time to ground them in what mattered most...

Luke 10:18-20 He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

- Doing ministry is not about you and me. It's about sharing and proclaiming the Truth.

Jesus has given us the authority to minister in His name. To go out as the 72 did and minister in his name. He commanded us to (Matt 28:19-20). But we should be cautious about rejoicing when ministry goes well and feeling discouraged when it doesn't. **Instead, we find joy (rejoice) in what can not be shaken or taken from us; our name is written in heaven.** It is this bedrock that enables us to minister in both the good times and the bad, whether welcomed or opposed.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Get them talking: What did Brooks say that stuck out to you?

What might following Jesus cost us today?

Possible answers: Friends, popularity, our own desires, worldly ways of living, living in the comfort of sin.

READ LUKE 9:57-62 AS A GROUP

Vs 58 - Why do you think Jesus responded to the request to follow Him with a warning about the hardship involved in doing so?

Leader Note: In the accompanying account in the Gospel of Matthew, we find out that this man was a teacher of religious law (Matt 8:19). Jesus wanted to ensure that the man understood that if Jesus himself faced opposition and discomfort along the way, His disciples could and should expect the same (Lk 6:40). Jesus later taught directly on the cost of being his disciples in Luke 14:25-35. Jesus never hid the fact that following Him would cost us something. He loved us far too much to lie to us.

Note- vs. 59 context (For the following question): The man in vs 59 likely meant that he was waiting for his father to die, and wanted to be there so that he would not miss out on the inheritance. For him, the choice was between the risk of missing out on a potentially large amount of money, and following Jesus- a life that Jesus had just stated was not a life of luxury (Vs 58).

What does Jesus' response to the man who wanted to first go and bury his father tell us about what is required to follow Jesus?

Leader Note: As God's Son, Jesus did not hesitate to demand complete loyalty. Even family loyalty was not to take priority over the demands of obedience to the command to go and preach the coming of the Kingdom of God. Does this mean that Jesus wants us to disregard our families? No... But Jesus's direct challenge forces believers to evaluate their priorities. The expectation is that nothing in our lives should come before Jesus.

What do you think Jesus meant when he said, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God"?

Leader Note: The key words are "Looks back". This means literally looking back at the things of the past. More specifically, sin lifestyles or parts of our lives that take us away from Jesus. Jesus was communicating that service in the Kingdom of God was of such vital importance that his followers must prioritize Him. They must choose to follow Him, without looking back.

What things might Christ be challenging us to prioritize Him over?

Leader Note: Most of the things that might be mentioned probably won't be "bad" things, but nonetheless shouldn't come first in our life. Don't be afraid to list some things that would challenge your students. Such as our time, sports, acceptance, friends, dating partners, social media, academics, etc. Challenge your students to evaluate these parts of their lives.

READ LUKE 9:57-62 AS A GROUP

What might it cost us to love people as Jesus commanded us to?

Note: One of the biggest things it might cost us to love others is a love based on pride. In other words, “I will only show love towards them if they show it to me first”...“I will show love towards them, but only if they deserve it”...”I would show them love, but they said this about me, therefore I won’t”.

PRAYER TIME

This time in prayer can have a unique focus on asking God to give us the boldness to follow Him when it costs us something. The prayer time can also be focused on loving those who have nothing to offer in return towards us.