

Decisiveness

Luke 9:51-62

Today we start a new sermon series that will take us to Easter. Starting at Luke 9:51, a new phase in Jesus' ministry begins, as he sets his face toward Jerusalem for the final climax and conflict. Today we note Jesus' decisiveness— and his call for us to do likewise.

Being decisive— it's not easy.

- Caesar crossing the Rubicon: similarities and dissimilarities to Jesus setting his face toward Jerusalem? (Luke 9:51)

(1) Jesus' decisiveness

- Said twice— He set his face to go to Jerusalem. (9:51, 53)
 - A huge transition— from preaching and healing through all of Israel, to turning toward the eventual climax conflict in Jerusalem.
 - Note what happened earlier Luke 9... a lot!
- The Samaritans are offended by this mission. *You're just passing through??*
 - First for the Jew then for the Gentile. (Rom 1:16; cf. Matt 15:26). In other words, Jerusalem first— and Samaria not yet. (Acts 1:8)
- James and John want to call down fire— and Jesus rebukes them. (9:54-55)
 - They offered a shortcut to make things easy (just mow down your enemies), which reflects a correct understanding of Jesus' power and glory but not his mission. Note Jesus' decisiveness and clarity: he knows his mission.

(2) Our decisiveness

- This passage, especially verses 60 and 62, are often considered 'hard sayings' of Jesus.
- Leaving home: Jesus says, 'I am homeless, and so will you be.' (9:58)
- Leaving family... *immediately!*
 - "Let the dead bury their own dead"?! (9:60) Most explanations for this saying focus on the *man* or the *moment*:
 - *The man.* Something wrong with this guy's intentions? Maybe securing an inheritance?
 - *The moment.* Taking care of parents is good (fifth commandment), but something more urgent is here. It's like an urgent call to war.
 - Let the dead bury their dead— this means all of us are as good as dead. Which also means that the Kingdom of God is not a place of death— Jesus is hinting at his mission and what he will do!
 - Want to say goodbye to family? "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." (9:62)

What's in these words of Jesus for us to apply today?

For Further Reflection and Application:

1. Are you decisive by nature? If so, does that sometimes tempt you to make rash decisions? If you're not decisive, why not?
2. Read Luke 9 and reflect on the enormous importance of everything that happened in this great chapter. What stands out to you?

Jesus challenges his would-be disciples at the end of the passage. How can you apply Luke 9:62 in your life? Is Jesus saying we need to be decisive about *everything*? What kind of commitment is he describing, practically speaking?