

3rd Sunday after Pentecost June 30, 2019

Proper 8 (13) or 2nd Sunday after Trinity

Year C – the Gospel of Luke

Lutheran

Living the ^ Lectionary

*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

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<http://victorylcms.org/2016/07/june-26-sermon-traveling-jesus-takes-luke-951-62/>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 688 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 421

“Come, follow me,” the Savior spake”

“In the weeks after Trinity there is a focus on how the Christian conducts himself. The Epistle readings often highlight Christian conduct while Our Lord speaks and acts in ways that show what the Christian Church is about. Hymns like “Come, Follow Me, the Savior Spake” fit perfectly into this time in the life of the Church. We sing the admonition of Christ and the Apostles to flee from darkness and whatever else would threaten our salvation and to walk with one another in kindness and love.

This shift in hymnody, from the sturdy, doctrinal hymns of Luther and the sixteenth century, to the hymns teaching the Christian life in the seventeenth century took place by the pen of writers such as Johann Scheffler...

The primary voice in this hymn is that of Jesus. He tells us what He does for us. While it may sound like we sing of what we must do, it is really what Our Lord does for us...”

https://www.epiphanydorr.org/uploads/1/1/7/4/117439470/come_follow_me.pdf

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Va38v_BJroo Piano
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wP0pAE-02w> Karaoke style with organ
[denis jacquiau](#)

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

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O.T.– “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

Psalm – “indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance”

Epistle – “If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.”

Gospel – “he (*Jesus*) set his face to go to Jerusalem.”

1 Kings 19:9b-21; RCL, 2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14 or 1 Kings 19:15-16, 19-21 (Next week: Isaiah 66:10-14; Revise Common Lectionary (RCL), RCL, 2 Kings 5:1-14 or 1 Kings 19:15-16, 19-21)

“This pericope presents Elijah’s encounter with Yahweh on Mount Horeb and his call of Elisha. Recently Elijah had been on another mountain, Carmel, where he challenged the prophets of Baal and demonstrated the truth about Yahweh (1 Kg 18). This infuriates Jezebel, so he runs for his life. Once he makes it to the desert, however, Elijah crawls under a tree and prays not for deliverance but for death. But just as God had sustained him once with ravens and again through the widow of Zarephath, now he sends an angel to feed him and send him on his way to Horeb, the mountain of God (19:1–8).

Once he arrives, the greeting is pointed. The Word of Yahweh comes to him: “What are you doing here, Elijah?” The first half of verse 9 reads: “And he entered there a cave and lodged there.” But God wants to know, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” The situation and these

adverbs suggest that we also could infer this: “and not where you are supposed to be.” (Later developments reinforce this suggestion.) Elijah explains that he has been very zealous for Yahweh; that of the prophets he alone remains alive; and that the people of Israel seek to kill him. But the response is simply the instruction to go and stand before Yahweh himself. As Yahweh approaches, the wind breaks rocks, the earth shakes, and a fire rages. But God was not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire. We might say that these come “before Yahweh,” that is, they signal his advent. But when Yahweh himself arrives, he arrives in quietness (v. 12). Elijah recognizes this and covers his face before God...”

➤ <https://concordiatheology.org/2010/05/proper-8-•-1-kings-199b-21-•-june-27-2010/> Joel Okamoto

The LORD Speaks to Elijah

⁹There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” ¹⁰He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.”

¹¹And he said, “Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD.” And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. ¹²And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper.^[a] ¹³And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” ¹⁴He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.” ¹⁵And the LORD said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. ¹⁶And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place. ¹⁷And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha put to death. ¹⁸Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

The Call of Elisha

¹⁹So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen in front of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and cast his cloak upon him. ²⁰And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, “Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.” And he said to him, “Go back again, for what have I done to you?” ²¹And he returned from following him and took the yoke of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and went after Elijah and assisted him.

a. [1 Kings 19:12](#) Or a sound, a thin silence

“First Kings 19 is the lowest point in Elijah’s career.

Arrested by fear of Jezebel’s threats, he sinks deeper and deeper into the depths of unbelief, to such a degree that even a powerful theophany -- on par with the revelation Moses received on Sinai (see Exodus 34) -- does not move him from unbelief into faith. Jezebel’s threats (verse 2) -- not Yhwh’s¹ word -- motivate Elijah’s actions, to the point that Elijah’s career comes to a somewhat anticlimactic and tragic end...

As gloomy as it may sound, 1 Kings 19 is the story of Elijah’s *decommissioning*, and of God’s choice to use another more willing servant.

Key to understanding 1 Kings 19:9-18 is recognizing that Elijah walks an ancient path, one taken by Moses himself: After killing Jezebel’s prophets in Chapter 18, Elijah catches wind of the queen’s ire (1 Kings 19:2) and flees into the wilderness (cf. Exodus 2:11-15). While in the wilderness, Elijah is miraculously provisioned by an angel (1 Kings 19:3-8; cf. the wilderness narratives in Exodus 15:22-19:2).

He arrives at Horeb, another name for Sinai, and is then told by Yhwh to ascend the mountain (1 Kings 19:11; cf. Exodus 19:20). While on the mountain, the Mosaic parallels continue. For instance, Yhwh “passes by” (*v?br*) at a moment of revelation (1 Kings 19:11) just as Yhwh “passed” before (*v?br*) Moses in Exodus 34:6. As it was for Moses, Horeb becomes for Elijah a mountain of revelation.

Although cast in the image of Moses, Elijah quickly steps off the Mosaic path when Jezebel’s threats rob him of all faith: “Thus and more may the gods do if by this time tomorrow I have not made you like one of them” (1 Kings 19:2). Unlike Moses, who stood up to Pharaoh with all the power of God and creation at his back, Elijah cowers before Jezebel, unable to grasp the might available to him. Elijah makes two identical speeches (underlined below) that demonstrate how deeply paralyzed he has become by the queen’s words. These speeches frame Yhwh’s revelation on Horeb/Sinai...

Comparable to Job 38-41, Yhwh in verses 9-14 attempts to use powerful creational forces (wind, earthquake, and fire) to reorient his servant away from the words of Jezebel and toward the power of Yhwh. Although Yhwh is not found “*in*” any of these manifestations (a subtle anti-Baal polemic is likely at play here), they are nonetheless part of the dramatic theophanic event, which intends to snap Elijah out of his despondency. Remarkably, Elijah’s responses to Yhwh, both before and after the theophany, are identical...

Furthermore, unlike his penitent audience at Mt. Carmel, the fire of God does not move Elijah to repentance or loose him from the bonds of fear. The fact that Elijah’s two speeches are identical indicates that experiencing Yhwh’s demonstration of creational power had no effect on the prophet. He clings to Jezebel’s words rather than to Yhwh’s words.

Elijah’s life descends from fear into disobedience. We see this only too clearly when we examine Yhwh’s final instructions for Elijah in 1 Kings 19...

Elijah is given three charges: (1) anoint Hazael as king of Aram; (2) anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king of Israel (i.e., the Northern Kingdom); and (3) anoint Elisha son of Shaphat as Elijah’s replacement. This new wave of divine agents will finish the bloody religious crusade Elijah began in 1 Kings 18 (The problematic nature of these images should be acknowledged, especially in the current cultural and political environment).

But does Elijah actually obey God in these matters? Yes and no. To be sure, Elijah throws his mantle on Elisha, who becomes his attendant (1 Kings 19:19-21; cf. the alternate mantle account in 2 Kings 2:1-18, which likely comes from a different source that casts Elijah's departure from the prophetic office more positively). But it is *Elisha* who commissions Hazael (2 Kings 8:3-15), not Elijah, and Elisha who anoints Jehu (2 Kings 9:1-10), again, not Elijah....

The tasks to which Elijah was called are eventually accomplished, despite the resistance of Elijah, because Yhwh is able to find another, more willing prophet -- namely, Elisha, who wears the mantle Elijah no longer wanted.

Notes:

- 1 Out of respect for our Jewish sisters and brothers, I do not vocalize the divine name."
 - https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2061
[Michael J. Chan](#) Independent Scholar Kingman, Ariz.

Psalm 16; RCL, Psalm 77:1-2, 11-20 or Psalm 16 (Psalm 66:1-7; RCL, Psalm 77:1-2, 11-20 or Psalm 66:1-9)

"Psalm 16 opens with a verse that expresses its main theme: "Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge" (verse 1).

The plea for God to "protect me" is common in the Psalter (similar petitions appear in Psalms 17:8; 25:20; 86:2; 140:5; and 141:9). The word translated "protect" is elsewhere translated "keep," as in Psalm 121:3, 5, 7, and 8. There it refers to God keeping the psalmist from harm while in route to the place of worship.

The term also describes the Lord as "your keeper" (121:5) and thus serves as a label or title for God. Genesis 4 includes this word in Cain's denial that he is appointed to watch over his brother (his brother's "keeper"). Although there is no direct connection between Psalm 16 and Genesis 4, the use of the term is interesting because in the Psalter God clearly protects the psalmist in a way no human can do. Thus, the psalmist in Psalm 16 trusts in God as "keeper," and the psalmist recognizes God as the only one able to keep him or her from harm..."

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2028 [Jerome Creach](#) Robert C. Holland Professor of Old Testament , Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Penn.

You Will Not Abandon My Soul

*A Miktam^[a] of David.**

16 Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.

² I say to the LORD, "You are my Lord;

I have no good apart from you."

³ As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones,
in whom is all my delight.^[b]

⁴ The sorrows of those who run after^[c] another god shall multiply;
their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out
or take their names on my lips.

⁵ The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup;
you hold my lot.

⁶ The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.

⁷ I bless the LORD who gives me counsel;
in the night also my heart instructs me.^[d]

⁸ I have set the LORD always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. [Cited Acts 2:25-28](#))

⁹ Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being^[e] rejoices;
my flesh also dwells secure.

¹⁰ For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol,
or let your holy one see corruption.^[f] [Cited Acts 13:35](#)

¹¹ You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

- a. [Psalm 16:1](#) Probably a musical or liturgical term
- b. [Psalm 16:3](#) Or *To the saints in the land, the excellent in whom is all my delight, I say:*
- c. [Psalm 16:4](#) Or *who acquire*
- d. [Psalm 16:7](#) Hebrew *my kidneys instruct me*
- e. [Psalm 16:9](#) Hebrew *my glory*
- f. [Psalm 16:10](#) Or *see the pit*

*"...Psalm 16 begins by announcing that it's "A Miktam of David." There's not much scholarly agreement regarding what *miktam* means. In fact, what scholars do agree about is that the meaning of *miktam* is uncertain. It appears only six times in the Hebrew scriptures: here at the start of Psalm 16, as well as at the start of Psalms 56-60. If each of the psalms that are introduced by the phrase "A Miktam of David" had a common meter or pattern or theme, then one could come up with a decent guess about the meaning of *miktam*.

For now, *miktam*'s meaning remains hidden. Still, the word is part of Holy Scripture. Surely, there's something you can say about how not everything that's in the Bible has a clear, definitive meaning, can't you?"

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1501 [Hans Wiersma](#) Augsburg College, Minneapolis, MN

A Response to the First Reading

In the First Reading, when Elijah threw his mantle over Elisha to call him, Elisha, who is plowing twelve yoke of oxen, slaughtered his oxen, used the plow to cook them up, fed them to the people, kissed his parents goodbye, and followed the prophet as his servant (1 Kings 19:19-21). Elisha cannot return to his old life. As a response to this reading, Psalm 16, in which the psalmist entrusts his whole life to God--calling God his "refuge" and "good above all other" (16:1)--"is an intense, loving, joyful confession of trust" that makes the drastic action displayed by Elisha possible...

Trust as a Way of Acting and Living

Obviously, since this is a psalm, we are talking about trust in *God*. We are talking about *faith*. The psalmist makes it clear that trust in God is not a right belief, a warm feeling, or an impulse in times of trouble. Trust is a way of acting and living that opens the self to God as the most important reality in life. We do not take drastic action because we necessarily feel trust; our actions are a way of maintaining or cultivating our trust in God...

Trust that Flows from the Gospel

But there is more! In the appointed Gospel reading, Luke tells us that, while making his way to Jerusalem, Jesus said to someone, "Follow me." That person responded, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." But Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." 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 a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:59-62). It strikes me that these two potential followers only wanted to do what Elisha did, and that Jesus demands even more drastic action and even deeper trust...

Preaching Psalm 16

Rather than calling people to respond like Elisha or, even more, in the ways that the ones Jesus called could not, Psalm 16 invites the preacher to overwhelm the congregation with the good news that, in Christ, God does not abandon us to the grave but shows us the path of life in God's presence. Only then can the preacher help the congregation to emulate the psalmist in undertaking practices that cultivate the trust that flows from this good news. "

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=616 [Craig A. Satterlee](#) Bishop, North/West Lower Michigan Synod, Lansing, Mich.

Galatians 5:1, 13-25; RCL, the same reading (Galatians 6:1-10, 14-18; RCL, Galatians 6:1-6), 7-16)

"The first verse of our text for this week includes a reiteration of the great theme of Paul's letter to the Galatians: "For freedom Christ has set us free" (Galatians 5:1).

Then, verses 13-25 will set out the nature, meaning, and parameters of that freedom.

Freedom to love one another

Paul has already insisted that freedom in Christ is freedom from the requirements of the Jewish law. In the verses not included in the present pericope, Galatians 5:2-12, Paul has again insisted on one of his central points throughout the letter that Christian freedom is freedom from the requirement of male circumcision, as well as from the required keeping of the whole Jewish law. In fact, in 5:6 Paul announces what will be the theme of our pericope in the

subsequent verses 13-25: “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love.”

Now he sets parameters to this freedom: it is not freedom for self-indulgence (Greek “the flesh”), but rather “through love become slaves to one another” (Galatians 5:13)...

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2874 [Alicia Vargas](#) Dean for Academic Affairs, Assoc. Professor of Multicultural and Contextual Studies, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, Calif.

Galatians 5:1 Christ Has Set Us Free

5 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

Galatians 5:13-25

¹³ For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴ For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁵ But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

Keep in Step with the Spirit

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, ^[a] drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do ^[b] such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

- a. [Galatians 5:21](#) Some manuscripts add *murder*
- b. [Galatians 5:21](#) Or *make a practice of doing*

Cross references:

[Galatians 5:14](#) : [Cited from Lev. 19:18; \[ver. 22; ch. 6:2\]; See Matt. 19:19; John 13:34](#)

“The Lectionary Epistle reading offers us an amalgamation of verses from Galatians that begins in chapter 5 verse 1, skips 11 verses, and resumes in verse 13. The first verse of chapter 5 is treated variously by different translations and commentaries as either the climax of Paul’s

argument against the agitators or the beginning of an ethical exhortation to live out the implications of Paul's argument (compare for example the different treatments this verse receives in the NRSV and the NIV). The latter seems to be the leaning of the Lectionary given that it separates 5.1 from the preceding verses, skips over 5.2-12 and begins again with Paul's instructions that the Galatians become servants to one another through love. However, we should be wary of separating 5.1 from the preceding arguments. Without the proper context, and especially with this reading coming so close to the 4th of July holiday the congregation will be tempted to hear Paul speaking of freedom as autonomy or democracy rather than the freedom to be Church...

That Christ has set us free to be Church can be seen in Paul's contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit. In verse 13 Paul explicitly states that the freedom Christ has won for us is not freedom for self-indulgence. Paul goes on to list the works of the flesh which include idolatry, hatred, and discord among others. All of these works of the flesh are destructive to life in community and the freedom to be Church. When Paul concludes with a warning that those who engage in such actions will not inherit the Kingdom of God, it can be read not so much a threat of punishment for such actions but rather as a statement of the obvious. Life in the Kingdom of God cannot be sustained by the acts of the sinful nature. There is simply no place for envy, ambition or hatred in the Kingdom to which the Church points.

In contrast to the destructive works of flesh, the freedom to be Church is sustained by the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Love, joy, peace, patience...these are the marks of individuals and communities who live in the freedom that only God can offer. That these gifts are fruits and not works reminds us that they are cultivated in us by the Holy Spirit and not achieved through our own efforts..."

- <http://www.ekklesiaproject.org/blog/2010/06/freedom-and-obedience/> Jake Wilson "The Ekklesia Project is a network of Christians who are discovering a uniting and empowering friendship rooted in our common love of God and the Church."



Luke 9:51-62; RCL, the same reading (Luke 10:1-20; RCL, Luke 10:1-11, 16-20)

“Apparently Jesus did not know that he was supposed to take the long way around Samaria. That was a rule of thumb observed by the Jews in his day to avoid all contact with those Samaritan “lowlifes” who had the temerity to believe, among other silly things, that they could worship God just as well from their temple as from the big Temple in Jerusalem. For their part, the Samaritans were happy to return the favor in taking the long way around Jerusalem when they traveled as well as being perfectly happy to have folks like Jesus and the disciples take the long way around so that they likewise would not have to encounter any Jews.

In framing this story the way he does, Luke is clever on many levels. First, he makes clear that Jesus has a growing sense of his destiny. When verse 51 famously tells us of Jesus’ resolute faceward turn toward Jerusalem, we know as readers that this is far more than some little itinerary detail from Jesus’ travels. Jesus is heading toward Jerusalem to save the world through his own sacrifice. Knowing that, we as readers likewise sense that the trek through Samaria is not merely a matter of expediency. Yes, Jesus has no time to take the long way around but it’s more than that. Jesus also needs to head through Samaria because his purpose includes those folks, too. How odd it would be if Jesus were to sense afresh his divine vocation only to skirt Samaria...”

➤ https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/proper-8c/?type=the_lectionary_gospel Scott Hoezee

“The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 9th Chapter”

A Samaritan Village Rejects Jesus

⁵¹ When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. ⁵² And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. ⁵³ But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ 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?”^[a] ⁵⁵ But he turned and rebuked them.^[b] ⁵⁶ And they went on to another village.

The Cost of Following Jesus

⁵⁷ As they were going along the road, someone said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” ⁵⁸ 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.”** ⁵⁹ To another he said, **“Follow me.”** But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” ⁶⁰ And Jesus^[c] said to him, **“Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.”** ⁶¹ Yet another said, “I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home.” ⁶² Jesus said to him, **“No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”**

“This is the Gospel of the Lord” **“Praise to You, O Christ”**

- a. [Luke 9:54](#) Some manuscripts add *as Elijah did*
- b. [Luke 9:55](#) Some manuscripts add *And he said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of; ⁵⁶for the Son of Man came not to destroy people's lives but to save them"*
- c. [Luke 9:60](#) Greek *he*

The Lukan travel narrative (chapters 9-19) begins with a notice of Jesus' resolve to go to Jerusalem and his inhospitable reception by a Samaritan village.

Luke sets the stage: "Now it happened that as the time was drawing near for him to be taken up, he firmly resolved to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51). The notice that "the time was drawing near" (literally, "as the days were being fulfilled") elsewhere in Luke/Acts suggests a fulfillment of prophecy (compare with the phrase in Acts 2:1 indicating that Pentecost is fulfilling Jesus' prediction in Luke 24:49) and sets the journey within the divine plan... The Greek is literally "he set his face" (*autos to prosopon esterisen*) and reflects a Hebraism¹ that suggests a "fixedness of purpose."²

The journey to Jerusalem has a less than auspicious beginning... Given the animosity between Jews and Samaritans (see 10:25-37), it is not surprising that the Samaritans refuse to show hospitality to the traveling prophet, Jesus, and his followers. The disciples, James and John, offer an immediate remedy that they believe has scriptural warrant: "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and wipe them out?" (Luke 9:53). They are perhaps echoing Elijah's summoning heavenly fire to consume some soldiers (2 Kings 1:9-12), as surmised by some scribes who added "as Elijah did" at the end of v. 54. Jesus' response is no less decisive: "But he turned and rebuked them..."... The judgment on the disciples' prejudice against these Samaritans will come into sharper focus very soon when Jesus tells the parable of a "good" Samaritan who is held up as the model of hospitality and philanthropy (compare with Luke 10:25-37; also 17:11-19).

What follows is a series of three *chreiae*. A *chreia* is "a brief saying or action making a point, attributed to some specified person."⁵ These are "apocritic *chreiae*"⁶ which are embedded *chreiae* spoken in response to another's statement. The first two *chreiae* are familiar to the authorial audience, which recognizes them from other versions (Matthew 8:18-22/ Q 9:57-60)... In Luke's version, by eliminating the reference to Jesus as "Teacher" (Matthew 8:18), the statements that elicit the *chreia* begin with a form of *akoloutheo* ("I will follow"; "follow me"), which introduces the theme of discipleship. To follow Jesus, the "Son of Man" who -- unlike "foxes" and "birds of the sky" -- has no place to lay his head, is to embark on a journey that may involve alienation; indeed it already has in the preceding rejection by a Samaritan village (Luke 9:51-56)! Further, the call to follow Jesus on the journey of "proclaiming the kingdom of God" is a call to radical commitment, whether the dead who are left to bury the dead are understood literally as referring to those who deal with corpses (e.g., grave diggers) or metaphorically as referring to those who are spiritually dead and who refuse to take up this challenge. In this regard, the call to follow Jesus is a call to participate in a "prophetic drama" that, like Jeremiah's or Ezekiel's refusal to mourn the dead, underscores the crisis at hand (compare with Jeremiah 16:5-9; Ezekiel 24:16-24).

The third statement, a responsive *chreia*, is unique to Luke. Notice first that this third would-be disciple combines elements from the first two: “I will follow you (compare with v. 57) Lord, but first allow me (compare with v. 59) to say goodbye to those in my household” (Luke 9:61). Missing in this excuse is any sense of urgency (“I will follow you anywhere!”; “let me first bury my father”); rather the request is simply to return home to say good-bye to family (as Elijah did; compare with 1 Kings 19:19-21). Jesus’ response functions to provide a rationale for why the would-be disciple must leave the dead and cannot return to his family... The logic of the Lukan Jesus can be reconstructed as follows:

First premise: No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God

(Missing) **Second premise:** You wish to be fit for the kingdom of God

Conclusion: Therefore, leave the dead to bury the dead, and go, proclaim the kingdom of God.

Furthermore, the new *chreia* is a gnomic saying in form⁸ that is, it attributes to Jesus a saying that would have been rather well-known in the ancient Mediterranean world. For example, in Hesiod’s *Works and Days*, a plowman is described as one “who attends to his work and drives a straight furrow and no longer gapes after his comrades, but keeps his mind on his work.”⁹ In other words, to look back from the plow (whether to family living or dead) was to risk cutting a crooked or shallow furrow and thus ruining the work altogether! There is no place for looking back or even trying to look in two directions at once (being “two-faced”); rather, would-be disciples must be single-minded in purpose, setting their faces like Jesus on the task at hand.”

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2911 Material adapted from Luke. *Paideia Commentary Series*. Eds. Mikeal C. Parsons, Charles H. Talbert, and Bruce Longenecker. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic (a division of **Baker Publishing Group**), 2015. Used by permission. Mikeal C. Parsons Professor and Kidd L. and Buna Hitchcock Macon Chair of Religion, Baylor University, Waco, Texas



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