Final Journey – Luke 9:51-62

When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.
Luke 9:51

This week we will turn to the gospels as Jesus makes His final journey to Jerusalem. Luke's gospel reveals the determination of Jesus to head to Jerusalem and the cross. Traveling to Jerusalem through Samaria was an unpopular decision with the Samaritans and, as Jesus sent teams to make preparations, they rejected Him. Why did they reject Jesus? Because He was headed to Jerusalem.

Two disciples, James and John (who had the fitting nickname *The Sons of Thunder*), were upset by this rejection and suggested calling out for fire from heaven to consume the village. Jesus rebuked His disciples and simply traveled to another village.

Two encouragements come to me as I read this story. First, when God calls us to a task – as Jesus was called to Jerusalem – do not become sidetracked by opposition. The cross of Christ was too important to become frustrated, discouraged, or vindictive by the unwillingness of one village to show Jesus hospitality. He kept moving forward to Jerusalem.

Has Jesus called you to a task? Perhaps He has placed a lost friend in your path and a door opens to share the love of God demonstrated by the cross of Jesus. Do not be sidetracked by how others might respond. Speak God's truth with grace and mercy.

Second, when I become frustrated, vindictive, or respond inappropriately to opposition, I am in the wrong. Jesus rebuked James and John, not the village folks. These two men responded with fury instead of faith, by lashing out instead of loving.

Experience has taught me that hurting people and lost people act like hurting people and lost people. There will be times when individuals misjudge your heart. Love them anyway. There will be times when society rejects your beliefs and actions because you are determined to follow Jesus. Love them anyway. Today, let the love of Jesus be reflected in your words, attitudes, and actions.