



Session Nine

The Gospel of Luke, Pt.6

Luke 9:51-11:13

Luke 9:51 begins a lengthy section (ending at 19:28) where Jesus makes his way toward Jerusalem and the last week of his life.

Questions to consider as you read Luke 9:51-11:13

1) A mere two verses after Jesus starts his journey to Jerusalem and what must occur there, he encounters opposition (9:53). In the face of Samaritan refusal to welcome Jesus, James and John offer to command fire to come down from heaven and destroy the town. We should pause a moment and remember that while Samaritans here reject Jesus, it will be a Samaritan who will model how we are to love and care for one another (11:30-37). That said, note Jesus' response to James and John's offer: he *rebukes* them—a strong response. This event provides the opportunity to reflect on this question: does being “right” or in pursuit of a holy cause justify the use of force? Is the use of violence ever justified?

2) Verses 9:57-62 provide further evidence of what discipleship to Jesus demands.

- a) What is the significance of the fact that these three encounters with would-be disciples occur as Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem and death?
- b) What do these encounters suggest about the responsibility we have in making the decision to follow Jesus?

3) The commissioning of the 70 (or 72 depending upon what translation you're reading) can be read any number of ways but clearly this is a passage with significant ramifications for how the church understands its mission. This is evident from the number, be it 70 or 72, which most likely does not refer to the literal number of people Jesus sent out but is a reference to the biblical number of nations (see Genesis 10), which means the commissioning here foreshadows the proactive spreading of the Gospel to all the world. Mindful of that, reflect on the following:

- a) If you were asked to define the mission of the church, what would you say?
- b) How do you understand your responsibility vis-à-vis the church's mission?
- c) How do you relate the church's mission to your daily life?

4) Look at 10:13-16. Do Jesus' words here have any impact on how you responded to 3a-c above?

5) Verses 10:17-24 give us the chance to think about two things near and dear to Presbyterian hearts: election and grace. In the Reformed Tradition we say that, through Christ, we are elected to both salvation and service. Such election is an act of grace we neither earn nor deserve; as such, it calls for a response from each of us in terms of how we live our lives. What does it mean to you that you've been elected to service?

6) For 10:25-37 you may find it helpful to refer to the attached, *The Parable of the Good Samaritan*.

7) Jesus' parable of the good Samaritan and the story of Martha and Mary (10:38-42) can profitably be read together.

a) Martha, "distracted by many things," is told by Jesus that "there is need of only one thing." Especially in light of the parable of the good Samaritan, what do you think Jesus means in saying this?

b) What is significant about the fact that Jesus uses a Samaritan to illustrate what it means to love your neighbor and a woman to illustrate love for God?

8) For 11:1-13 you may find it helpful to refer to the attached, *The Lord's Prayer*.