

St. Barnabas' Episcopal Church, Florissant, MO
Pentecost 3 (C) - June 30, 2019
Luke 9:51-62
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What is really important to you? Think about that for a minute.

It is truly a good and wonderful feeling to know our God but even greater to love and serve our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He is the lily of the valley the bright and shining star.

Grace to you and peace from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our gospel lesson today opens with the sentence "he set his face toward Jerusalem. Do you ask why or does it matter to you? What is really important to you? Have you given that any thought lately?"

The answer to that question depends on the time, the situation or just what is happening at the time. Maybe you are a student waiting for your LSAT scores, did I get admitted to grad school? Am I going to get a summer job? It is now important that your children get into the right kindergarten or best nursery school, to insure admittance to Harvard or Yale! Absurd!

For some of us our health is important, for others it is family, children, wife, husband, our parents, just a myriad of things could be important or not important. What is more important than family and children?

Today's Gospel leads with Jesus' face pointed to Jerusalem (v. 53), he wasn't looking right or left, up or down there were no distractions nothing was going to stop him. He was on a mission and nothing or anybody was going to stop him. He was going to Jerusalem "come hell or high water."

Why was this mission important, Jesus was called and he was answering a call to die on a cross in Jerusalem for us, me and you. There are times when we face difficult times and do not want to confront or face them. What do you do? Make a move take a stand. There is no time for foolishness or jokes. This is serious business. Remember:

He set his face toward Jerusalem.

To those who give God first place in their lives, he offers not an easy life but a blessed life.

There are times in our lives when we have to face something or things very difficult when we would prefer to go to bed and pull the covers over our heads, that does not work. There are emergencies such as my open heart surgery but was told to go home take it easy and rest. Wait for the surgeon and that was two weeks. Don't pull the covers over your head. Take stand, in this case follow directions and remain positive.

It is said that a would be disciple fell in alongside the road with Jesus and said, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus responded:

"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests,

***But the son of man has no place to lay his head."* (58) Tough**

He invited another would be disciple to "follow me," the would be disciple said, "Lord allow me first to go and bury my father" Jesus' response was a bit calloused, ***"Leave the dead to bury their own dead, but you go and announce the kingdom of God."* 9(V.60)** A tough response!

Biblical scholars studying the customs of the day concluded that this man was probably asking permission to stay with his parents until they died. Then he would follow Jesus. Jesus was running out of time things are serious. If you are going to follow Jesus, he wants you to be serious. Jesus wants disciples whose faces are set on faithful discipleship. Not asking much!

Lets go back to where we started to meander through verses 51- 62 and asked the question, what really is important to you? I'm sure many of you answered "Family" and that is a good choice. Jesus said to his three would be disciples along the road, "there is something even more important than family, and that is a life dedicated to God. A face set to go where God leads.

A family led by parents who give their first loyalty to God are not impoverished but blessed.

The children of parents who give their first loyalty to God are also blessed.

The children of families who give their first loyalty to God have a much better foundation under their lives than the children whose parents were and are determined to gain entry to the best kindergarten and universities.

Jesus calls us to put God first in our lives. He never promised a rose garden, but he promised blessed lives, lives that are anything but a farce. Open your ears to hearing God's call. Open your heart to giving him your life. And set your face toward the place that he leads.

He who offers to God a second place

Offers him no place

AMEN