

'On the road'

Luke's account of the life and ministry of Jesus

Luke is up front about his intention in writing his gospel record: it was to help a man called Theophilus to have the confidence to trust in Jesus as Lord and Saviour. He wanted to bolster the embryonic faith of this man in the face of both the hostility he was likely to face and the adversity which almost certainly would be his experience.

The aim of this study of Luke's gospel, therefore, is to help us all "*fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith*", to the end that we "*run with perseverance the race marked out for us*" (see Heb.12.1-2)

You can find the background to this series [here](#).

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16. Luke 9.51-62 [w/b Sunday 9th September 2018]

“.. He said to another man, ‘Follow Me ..”

The passage we'll be looking at in this study marks the start of what is sometimes called the 'Travel Narrative': it's an extended narrative (covering some 10 chapters), most of which is largely exclusive to Luke, recording Jesus moving from the north of the country (Galilee - where His ministry has been centred around the synagogues) to the south (Jerusalem - where His ministry will be centred around the temple).

This move involved travelling through Samaria, between whose people and the Jews there was no love lost! It was, if not always an 'hostile' territory, certainly not a 'friendly' context. As a result we're given an insight in these chapters into how Jesus went about ministering the gospel in the sort of environment in which we today very often find ourselves - a society and culture often openly hostile to the Christian faith, and generally suspicious and on the defensive.

[Despite your best intentions, there may not be time for all the questions to be addressed in your Community Group! Try and ensure that in this study you cover questions 4, 5, and 7. As always try to leave good time for shared prayer!]

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1. Read Luke 9.51-62. These verses briefly set the scene for the whole central section of Luke's gospel. Both the grace of the gospel, and the costliness of its summons are highlighted.

How would you articulate the message of these verses in a single sentence?

What have you found challenging about following Jesus?

What do you find most difficult about living 'in the world' between your weekly gathering with other Christians for Sunday worship?

2. Read Luke 9.51. This short verse contains a treasury of truth! Luke here explains what was going on in the move from Jesus' essentially 'Galilean' ministry to His ministry in Jerusalem.

Why do you think Luke prefaces the 'travel narrative' by reference to the approach of the time '*.. for Him (Jesus) to be taken up to heaven*'?

Jerusalem will be where the clash between Jesus and the authorities will reach its climax, and where He will end up crucified: what are we to understand by the statement that "*Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem*"?

3. Read Luke 9.52-53. There was a long-standing, centuries-old animosity between Jews and Samaritans: this animosity had deep roots which were both doctrinal and political.

Why was it Jesus' going to Jerusalem, in particular, that led to the Samaritans not welcoming Him?

What similar experience(s) have you had of not being welcomed on account of your faith?

What have you found most difficult about such situations?

4. Read Luke 9.54-56. James and John are elsewhere called the 'sons of thunder' (Mk.3.17): true to character, they rather 'over-react' to the lack of welcome on the part of the Samaritans.

Why do you think they wanted to respond in this sort of way?

How do you tend to react in the face of the disdain of others? Do you tend to 'blow your top', or harbor grudges?

Read **Lk.12.49-51**: how does Jesus' response to the disciples in Lk.9.55 square with what He says in Lk.12?

5. Read Luke 9.57-58. The first of three individual encounters, (in each of which the issue of following Jesus is to the fore) is recorded here by Luke.

Read **Ruth 1.16**, **2 Sam.15.21** and **Jer.1.7**: how have these expressions of faith (like the man's here) been evidenced in your life?

What do you think Jesus was seeking to do by answering the man as He did?

6. Read Luke 9.59-60. Jesus here takes the initiative in calling another individual to follow Him: the man's response need not mean that his father had just died - it may be he was simply postponing following Jesus until his father had died.

In what ways have you found yourself, or others, 'putting off' following Jesus to a more convenient time?

What lessons do you learn from the response of Jesus to this man?

7. Read Luke 9.61-62. The third individual whose encounter with Jesus is narrated here seeks to 'put off' following Jesus in a way reminiscent of the call of Elisha (read **1 Kings 19.19-21**).

To what extent (if any) have you faced a tension between your commitment to Jesus and your loyalty to family?

To what was Jesus pointing in His reply to the person, and how do His words here challenge you?