

Communal Reflection Week of September 25, 2022

Song: *Lead Me Lord* performed by Chris Brunelle <https://youtu.be/kW49fDgVNE8>

Reading: Gospel Lk 9:57-62

As Jesus and his disciples were proceeding on their journey, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus answered him, "Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head." And to another he said, "Follow me." But he replied, "Lord, let me go first and bury my father." But he answered him, "Let the dead bury their dead. But you, go and proclaim the Kingdom of God." And another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but first let me say farewell to my family at home." Jesus answered him, "No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the Kingdom of Go



Commentary: (Read privately) from journeyintothewilderness.com

The challenge many have with Luke 9:57-62 is that it feels abrasive, cold and unloving. On the surface, all three excuses are relatively reasonable and provide just enough temptation to quickly brush past them without the slightest consideration.

Yet when we dig deeper into Jesus' response to each potential follower, we realize we are similarly guilty of rationalizing our own behaviors in order to sidestep personal responsibility and sacrifice.

In no way were the superficial desires of these followers' hearts disingenuous. It would appear they sincerely desired to follow Jesus. However, their superficiality became front and center when Jesus abruptly confronted them with not so much ultimatums, but accountability.

Keep in mind, "The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out" (Proverbs 20:5). Jesus is that man of understanding in the lives of those who call upon His name for salvation. However, we must also recognize that "many a man proclaims his own steadfast love, but a faithful man who can find?" (Proverbs 20:6).

Push comes to shove when our excuses are confronted with truth. The real question is to what extent are we willing to embrace truth enough to lay down our pride, selfishness, fears and insecurities, and subsequently deny our flesh, take up our cross, and follow Jesus no matter the cost?

The true mark of a disciple is found in our willingness to die to self for the sake of the Gospel. Paul reminds us, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:2).

Our minds will never be renewed if they are cut off from hearing the truth of God's Word, because excuses flourish in an environment where accountability is absent.

SSJ Word:

"Put aside your old self" so that you can put on the new," "Put aside your old self" so that you can put on the new," (Eph. 4:22-24) and accordingly lead a life dead to the world and to self-love, full of gentleness, humility of heart, true sincerity, modesty, interior and exterior peace, and of charity toward the neighbor; in a word, (a life) completely modeled on the holiness and the pleasing virtues of Jesus which you should develop in yourself. Thus you can by grace draw many people who will profit by your example and your conversations.

— Maxim 6

In everything and everywhere, have only God, God's will and God's glory before your eyes, and make no account of anything else.

— Maxim 16

Apply yourself seriously and totally to perform with perfection the present will of God without diverting yourself from it, to the detriment of your obligations, by considering uselessly what will be intimated and manifested to you in due time and place.

— Maxim 20

Quiet Reflection: (10-15 minutes)

For reflection and sharing:

First Sharing:

- What feelings stir in my heart as I came into our time

Second Sharing:

- What thoughts energized me in today's reading?



Third Sharing:

- What are the graces we wish to receive individually and for each other?

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