

Title: CLARIFYING DISCIPLESHIP, LUKE 9:51-62.
(Chatham, NJ; 06/27/10, AM) [Pc – Textual Analysis]

Theme: Jesus begins to formulate and clarify for his followers exactly what is demanded of them: changes in leadership style and personal changes in the attachments to things of this world.

Purpose: To teach and confirm things that characterize discipleship regarding leadership, opposition, and personal attachments.

Introduction:

1. We begin chapter nine with Jesus sending out the twelve to participate in spreading the message of the arrival of the Kingdom of God. This is their first taste of experiencing the work for themselves.
2. Herod is perplexed by what he hears, and the disciples will also be perplexed as Jesus begins to explain in more detail what is expected of them.
3. In this chapter Peter makes the confession of faith, and Jesus reveals more about the precise nature of his mission.
4. He will insist that the disciples must follow him by taking up the cross as he will do.
5. The Transfiguration confirms Peter's confession, and Jesus again foretells his death.
6. In verse 51 the journey to Jerusalem begins.
7. In the context of all this Jesus unveils a series of teachings essential to their mission and the challenge of being a follower of Christ.

I. Leadership is the first challenge.

- A. The argument for primacy.
 1. They have been discussing who is the greatest.
 2. The argument returns—or never went away—at the Last Supper, [Luke 22:24-27](#).
 3. As much as I like sports, they still reflect the worldly notion of determining the greatest. We like to have bragging rights: we are the best, the biggest, the strongest, or the fastest.
 4. Jesus challenges the very heart of one of humanities' biggest sins: pride.
- B. Turning things upside down.
 1. He who is least of the one who is great.
 2. Humility becomes a primary ingredient for behavior in the Kingdom.
 3. Receive a child, receive me; receive me, receive my Father.
 4. Jesus identifies with children and makes them the model to strive for.
 5. His response at the Supper is to compare their striving for top honors with the kind of striving the rulers of the Gentiles demonstrate: it's all about power.
 6. In the Kingdom it is all about humility and service.
 7. A better approach will be to let God decide who is the greatest.

II. Opposition to the Kingdom

- A. One who didn't "follow us"
 1. John counters the discussion by pointing out a person who wasn't one of them.
 2. Jesus' statement opens the door to God's activity in others: if a person is not against the Kingdom then he is for the Kingdom.
 3. Clearly this has limitations since we see John and others in the New Testament point out false teachings which are clearly in opposition to Jesus.

4. Jesus issues a caution for in this case the disciples limited their view of the sphere of God's activity.

B. Those who are clearly opposed

1. A Samaritan village refuses him.
2. James and John want to emulate Elijah who called down fire on his enemies.
3. Elsewhere James and John are the "sons of thunder."
4. It is odd, don't you think, that John will become the Apostle of love.
5. Some manuscripts add, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of, for the Son of Man came not to destroy people's lives but to save them."
6. This is not a matter of a limited view of God's sphere of activity but a total misunderstanding of their role in God's activity.

III. Attachments – oppositions within each of us

A. Following Jesus

1. One disciple commits to following wherever Jesus goes.
2. Perhaps he doesn't grasp the nature of Jesus' mission.
3. Jesus has no "place" here that he is going – this is the meaning of "foxes, etc."
4. This is a precursor to realizing that this world is not our home.

B. Bury the dead

1. Another person wants to go home and take care of a family funeral.
2. This is a difficult statement because Elisha was given permission to say goodbye.
3. Paul insists that not caring for one's family equates to infidelity, 1 Timothy 5:8.
4. Jesus must be addressing the attachments that prevent us from following.
5. Familial attachments can hinder us (Mt. 10:37); worldly concerns (Lk. 14:18-20), business, marriage, etc. can become excuses.

C. Saying farewell

1. A similar attachment to family
2. I think this one had more immediate implications because Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem.
3. The man had to grasp what was happening right then and there.
4. There was no time to pause.
5. Attachment to the past can also thwart discipleship.

Conclusion:

1. The call to follow has a sense of urgency that we must grasp.
2. We are living in the age when the Kingdom has been established and when we expect Jesus to come back at any time.
3. Paying attention to leadership style, how we deal with those who oppose us, and with our personal attachments are significant concerns for the follower of Christ.
4. Ultimately these are characteristics that create pure devotion to Jesus.