



Smith Rock
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Community Group study guide

LUKE

J E S U S F O R E V E R Y O N E

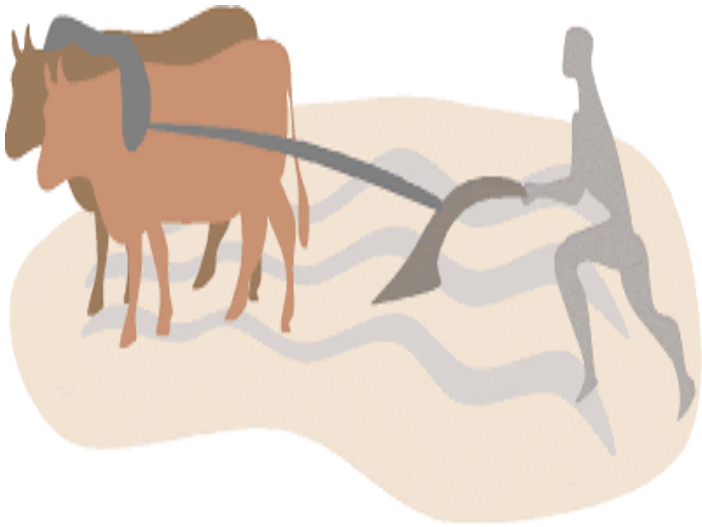
**For the week of
5th July 2020**

Follow Me!



Have you ever signed up for something without ever really asking or understanding what the journey would be like to reach the destination? Perhaps at school or college you took a class or participated in a sport because you thought it would be fun but it turned out to be a lot more difficult than you anticipated.

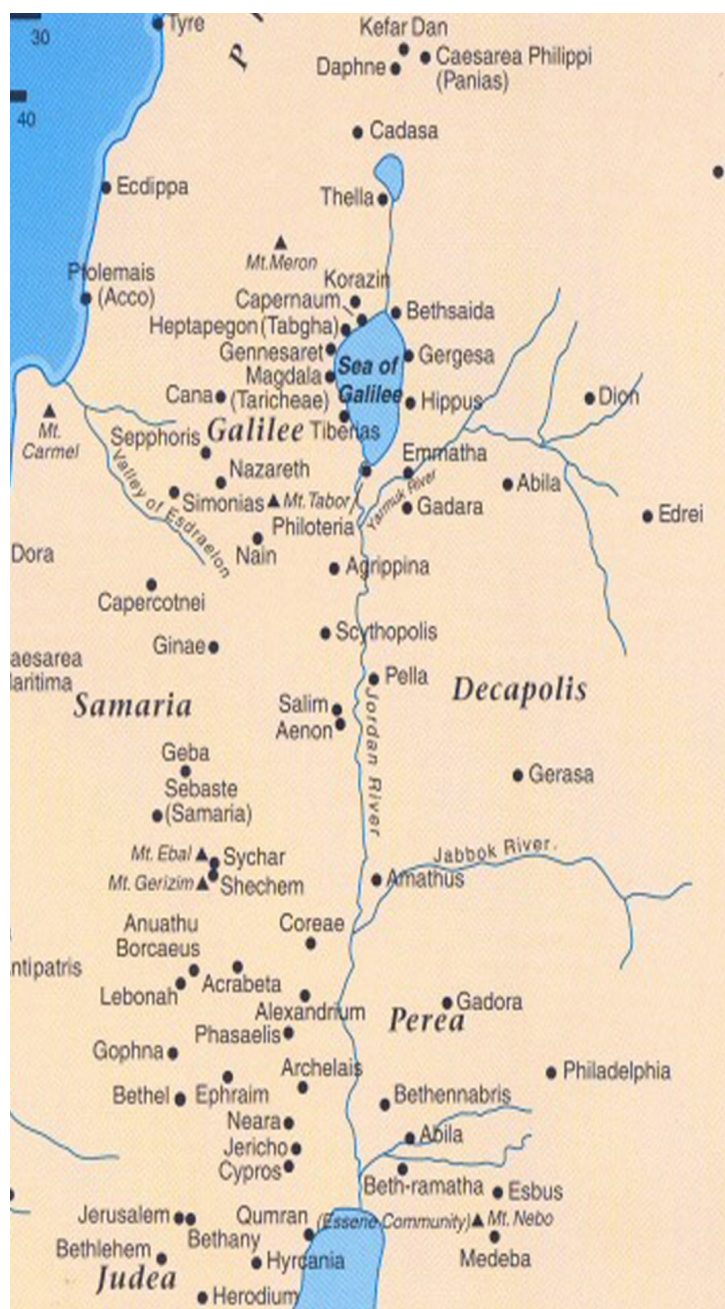
Jesus calls us to "follow Him" on a journey, and we anticipate it will be a straight hundred metres dash, but then we get on the track and find there are hurdles in the way for us to overcome if we are going to answer Jesus' call to "Follow Me."



And all were astonished at the majesty of God. But while they were all marvelling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, 44 "Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men." 45 But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying. 46 An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest. 47 But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side 48 and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great." 49 John answered, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he

does not follow with us.” 50 But Jesus said to him, “Do not stop him, for the one who is not against you is for you.” 51 When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. 52 And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. 53 But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. 54 And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, “Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” 55 But he turned and rebuked them. 56 And they went on to another village. 57 As they were going along the road, someone said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” 58 And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” 59 To another he said, “Follow me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” 60 And Jesus said to him, “Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” 61 Yet another said, “I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home.” 62 Jesus said to him, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Luke 9:43–62 (ESV)



Commentary

The text begins with everyone marvelling at what Jesus has been doing, in particular the healing of spirit possessed lad. But Jesus warns His disciples that the marvelling will be short lived because when they get to Jerusalem He will be “handed over into the hands of men.” Throughout the Gospel so far Jesus’ emphasis has been for people to hear Him, it was what God’s voice spoke from the cloud, “listen to Him,” and again Jesus tells the disciples to “let these words sink into your ears.”

Luke tells us the words don’t, in fact they are too frightened to ask Jesus what they meant, they could have asked but they chose not to. Perhaps they really didn’t want to know.

An argument ensues over which of them is the “greatest,” who is Jesus’ favourite, who had done the most awesome things, who has had the most insight and wisdom, who has the most authority. They are comparing and competing with each other. Jesus knows what is going on and takes a child and places him or her before them. Children were not doted on as we do today, but rather they were seen as third rate citizens; nobody is going to extend a lot of time and energy on children because it won’t gain you anything. Jesus however explains it is the opposite in the kingdom of heaven; time spent on the least important people in this world gets the greatest honour in God’s kingdom.

John then tells Jesus that they had seen someone casting out demons in His name but had tried to stop them because they were not official disciples. Jesus’ response is to tell them not to make barriers where He had not, if Jesus was OK with this man casting demons out in His name then they should be OK with it,

and if God is not OK with it then God will take care of the situation.

Up until now Luke's Gospel had taken place in Galilee and has been focused on identifying Jesus, but now the focus turns to Jerusalem and what awaits Jesus there and the work of the cross.

To get to Jerusalem from Galilee the most direct route was through Samaria, although some Jews preferred to take a longer route avoiding Samaria altogether. The enmity between the Jews and Samaritans was intense; the Jews despised their religious ideals, and the Samaritans likewise hated them back and were not hospitable to them especially if they were heading for religious feasts in Jerusalem. Jesus' disciples are spurned by a Samaritan village for this reason, but James and John the sons of thunder take umbrage at the rejection and want to call fire down from heaven in response! Jesus rejects their judgemental response to the Samaritan village which is more to do with them than Jesus. They have not been given the authority to make those kinds of judgements, that is God's prerogative.

Luke does not give a linear account of Jesus' travels to Jerusalem, and in the next section the would be disciples are not Samaritans but Jews. The first tells Jesus He will follow Him anywhere, but Jesus emphasises to him the transitory nature of His ministry, and that he will face the same trials and lack of hospitality that Jesus has faced.

The second man Jesus tells to "follow Him," but the man asks Jesus' permission to return home to first bury his father. Had his father died or was he still some way off death? We aren't told, but the family obligation to take care of a deceased parent was strong. What was Jesus' objection against the man fulfilling his

obligation? Jesus is not against us fulfilling our obligations but He is pointing out that His call has even greater priority than even the most pressing obligations in our lives. Jesus says for the dead to bury their own dead. Most interpretations see Jesus as calling for the spiritually dead to be left to bury the physically dead.

The last would be disciple asks Jesus' permission to say goodbye to his family; another seemingly reasonable request. Jesus' response is as jarring as the previous one. "No who puts their hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." Again we are not told how any of these would be disciples responded to Jesus' call to follow Him at this critical juncture of their lives. Were they willing to give up everything to follow Jesus? Are we?

Group Study

Open the group with prayer and discuss how you have used your application from last week's study in your life, and what you have learned from it.

Have you ever tried something that was more difficult than you thought it was going to be?

Why was it more difficult than you thought it was going to be?

Was there a difference in what you heard and what was actually described?

On a scale of 1 -10 how good are your "listening" skills?

Where do we get the right understanding about who Jesus is and how to follow Him?

What benefits in this world do we think following Jesus will get us?

What is the official way to follow Jesus? Why do we think our way is right and others are wrong?

When does it matter and when doesn't it matter?

Should we call for God's judgement on people?

Have you ever written someone off only to find out later that their story turned out quite differently?

While we are sincere when we tell Jesus we will follow Him, do we really understand what He wants from us and are we willing to give it?

Have you ever had to give up an "obligation" to follow Jesus?"

What lesson will you take from this text, and how will you put it into practice this week?

Personal study time

Read Acts 8:14-25 and answer why Jesus was not willing for James and John to call fire down from heaven. Why are we not able to judge and determine the final destiny of any human being in this world?

14 Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." 20 But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! 21 You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22 Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." 24 And Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me."

25 Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

Acts 8:14-25 (ESV)

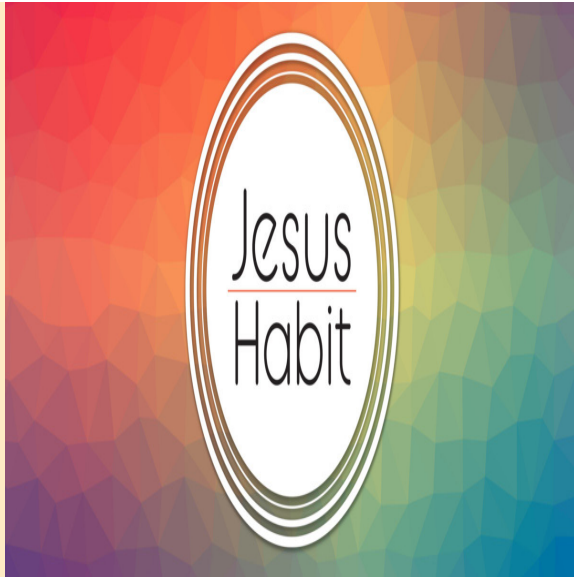
Reflection

Read 1 kings 19:19-21. Why do you think Elisha was able to say goodbye and the would be disciple were not.

19 So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen in front of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and cast his cloak upon him. 20 And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, "Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back

Reflection

KIDS CORNER



Less Is More

1. What are some problems you've seen that are caused by pride?

Everywhere Jesus went, people's own personal prides were getting in the way of being right with God and others. After all, feeling puffed-up, self-assured, and wanting to be better than everyone else always cause trouble, and unfortunately, those have always been easy traps to fall into. But, Jesus offers the solution to the problem of pride. Instead of making ourselves to be the greatest and needing to feel better than everyone, He says

we should do the opposite. Jesus wants us to show humility, and that is how we live truly great lives in God's eyes.

So how do we show humility? To be humble is to not care at all about our own importance and respect, but to care a lot about treating others as important and respected. As Jesus described how to be humble, He used a little child as an example. That may feel funny to read when we ourselves are young, but we can learn from it no matter how old we are. Since we all know people who are younger than us, and we all know people who have less experience, less knowledge, and perhaps less social standing, we know whom Jesus is talking about in our lives. He is calling us to treat those who seem least among us as important and respected. When we do that, our perspective shifts so that we no longer seem better, but we become the least too. This is true humility. This is the solution to our prideful problems. And this becoming the least is how Jesus says our lives become the best.

2. How can you show more humility in your life?