

**Intro:**

This is the last message for our summer series, Jesus: encounter.

It is the beginning of the longest section in Luke, a section known as the journey section, because it will repeatedly note that Jesus is on his journey to Jerusalem, to accomplish his ultimate purpose of dying on a cross and rising from the dead, for the restoration of humanity and creation to God's goodness and perfection.

It's a good section, then, to get some of our final thoughts for the summer.

Two main things:

Jesus unwavering pursuit to bring God's goodness to us.

Our call to have an unwavering pursuit of Jesus and His plan.

Read Text: Luke 9:51-62

**Jesus' unwavering pursuit to bring God's goodness to us...**

Seen in v.51, 53- he sets his face, to fulfill the plan that is supposed to happen in Jerusalem.

Two special notes about this unwavering pursuit:

- *There is no discrimination in this; he is set in bringing this to all.*

This is seen in the fact that he sends his disciples to go to a Samaritan village. This is the first time we hear of these people in the book of Luke, and we'll find that Luke actually has a very positive view of these people. This is shocking, of course, because the Jewish people of the time despised the Samaritans. They despised them on racial, moral, and religious grounds. They were seen as half-breeds, being originally Jewish but half breeds through intermarriage with foreigners. Not only that, they were seen as people who compromised true spirituality, most notable in terms of where the center of spirituality was- Gerazim, not Jerusalem. This may be why the Samaritans reject Jesus.

But here's the deal. Jesus makes a point to go through their territory. Jewish people of the time were known to travel around this territory. Jesus does not. All throughout the Bible, God loves those that seem to be on those beyond the realm of loveability. We all, at one time or another, have had people like that in our lives, regardless of how open minded we may think we are.

Now, the reality is that the Samaritans still reject Jesus- that's something we need to keep in mind- those whom God makes extra effort to show love to can reject Jesus. Just like God's goodness is available for all, rejecting Jesus is possible for all. This is sobering being sometimes we think that God automatically likes the down and out over and above the strong and powerful, and that somehow the down and out will always be on God's good side. Not the case. It's all very sobering. But the shocking reality to focus on is that God extends himself for all.

- *He is truly brings God's goodness, not His judgment.*

This is seen in v. 54-55. Some background information to flesh out what's happening. This may simply be fueled out of their racial hatred of the Samaritans. But there's also something more.

You'll remember that throughout the life of Jesus so far, there have been strong allusions made by Jesus that he is in line with the holy people of old, the prophets that preceded him in the Bible. In particular, two people named Moses and Elijah. I want to focus in on Elijah for a moment. Remember just earlier in this chapter, Jesus was compared to him twice (v.19, v.30)

The point of these and many of the other allusions was that Jesus was like these prophets of old, yet also very different. One major difference was and is this: He is here to bring God's goodness, not judgment.

But the disciples are still trying to understand Jesus- they don't get it. They see these Samaritans rejecting Jesus, and want fire to come down on them. They didn't get this idea from nowhere- this was something Elijah called for when there were some wicked people who rejected God in the Scriptures of old (2 Kings 1:1-12).

Jesus rebukes them- no! You don't get what I am about. There will be a time for judgment, Jesus will later say, but this is not that time. Furthermore, you still do not understand that I am here to bring God's goodness.

And the way I am going to bring that, we discover, is through my death. Because what we discover about the cross is this: yes, there is a God who will judge the world, and it is a judgment that none of us can escape, because we have all made choices to turn our back to God, to reject Him. But the shocking reality of Jesus is this: he has taken all of God's holy judgment onto himself, not allowing any of it to come upon us. He is here to make it so all of God's goodness can come to all- there is no discrimination, no one beyond the reach of this.

Our context:

Do you believe God is here, with an unwavering pursuit of goodness for you? Do you believe that He is here truly to bring goodness, and not judgment?

The reality is that many of us who have said “yes” to Jesus or are thinking about saying “yes” truly think that God will give up on us, or that God still secretly holds out judgment on us. We think this because it’s the only sort of love we’ve known- our parents at one time gave up, our lovers secretly judged us. And so we’ve become closed off to the possibility that anyone could love in an unwavering sort of manner, or in a manner where judgment is completely removed.

**... Calls us to have an unwavering pursuit of Jesus and His plan.**

This is how we say “yes” to His unwavering pursuit of us. Not that we set out to earn His love- He decided even before we could love Him that He wanted to pursue us. It is how we say yes.

Three notes about this pursuit:

- It is a pursuit where Jesus becomes our source of home/safety/comfort (v.58)  
v. 58- following Him will involve a loss of a sense of home in anything here. But we will find our home in Him.
- It is a pursuit where Jesus becomes our highest relational priority (v.59-62)  
Let the dead bury themselves could be let the “spiritually dead,” meaning those who don’t follow me. Or it could be simply a saying of let it take care of itself.
- It is a pursuit that is unwavering and enduring. (v.62)  
Plow metaphor points to this.

We cannot do this on our own. God will need to enter our lives and help us, and later in the development of the Jesus story we see God doing that. But this is the nature of the journey. This is how we say “yes.” There is no room for a part time, cultural Christianity.

Our context:

- This commitment will have different nuances as we experience different things in life.
- Some of us are in a season when we’re going through a lot in terms of friendships- we’re experiencing massive fluctuation, we’re going through massive ups and downs with romantic interests. Has Jesus become your home? Does he have relational priority as you pursue friendship?

Or perhaps we’re in a place in life where things are relatively set for us- we have a stable income, home, family, and so on. There’s nothing wrong with that sort of stability. But the question is, in the midst of that, who is the source of your comfort- the stability, or Jesus? Who has ultimate priority- if God calls you to give away a bunch of money, or get up and move somewhere, would you go? Would you be able to, as a family, open up to Him and let Him have that sort of centrality?

How is your pursuit of God going? How might you need to go deeper?

**Challenge:**

- Say Yes to His unwavering pursuit of God’s goodness for you.
- Say Yes to His call for an unwavering pursuit of Him.