

Title: No room in that inn either
Text: Luke 9.51-56
Theme: The patience of God
Series: Luke
Prop Stmt: God, who has reason to be impatient is way more patient than we, who have good reason to be patient.

Read Text:

I've been asked if we will know each other in heaven. I could simply say, "yes" but instead I usually say something snarky like, "Do you think we will be smarter or dumber in heaven?" Most will respond by saying, "smarter." Then I will ask, "do we know each other now?" Related to that is a more personal question. "What will we know about each other in heaven?" In the Men in Black movies, they had this device called "the neuralyzer" which made this bright light and wiped-out people's memories. I think that most of us are hoping for some selective memory eraser so that other people do not remember our most embarrassing moments. And of course, we are hoping that we don't remember our most embarrassing moments.

Keep that in mind as you study the life of Christ and the disciples. These guys had their share of embarrassing moments, many of which were recorded in the gospels and have become known to Christians for 2,000 years. How many times have James and John had to tell this story and relive what had to become a very humbling event. Or, maybe in heaven, we have such perfect self-awareness that we do not see this event as being something that is humorous now that James and John know better but we realize the point of this and realize how often this has been true of us as well.

Every sermon I preach has a propositional statement. It is my one sentence that summarizes the point of the text and the point of the sermon. Here is the bottom-line up front: God is way more patient than we are, although we give him reasons to be impatient. The flip side of this is also true. We are way more impatient although we have multiple reasons to be patient. Let's see how this text puts this on display.

1. **The Timing** (51)

The ministry of Christ is coming to an end. When the 3rd quarter of a football game is over, you may see teams hold their hands in the air with their fingers in the form of a "4." It is a reminder to them that this is where it really counts. Don't lose focus. Everything matters. If you have been on a flight, the pilot will tell the passengers and cabin crew to get prepared for landing. The flight is close to the end. You may be taking a test and the instructor says, "2 minutes left." The days are drawing near for Jesus to be taken up, which is a reference to his ascension back to heaven. There is yet a lot of ground to cover. Jesus will preach many sermons and will heal many people and will have more confrontations with the Pharisees. But from this point on we need to realize that his face is set toward Jerusalem. From now on, he will no longer be traveling through Galilee or the Decapolis region. He is heading toward Jerusalem.

This does not mean that Jesus is saying that it is time to get serious and we've got to stop messing around. Jesus never wasted a moment nor wasted a word. His entire life was on mission and was driven for this purpose. At the same time, he never seemed to be in a hurry. I don't recall Jesus ever saying, "hurry up." I am guessing that he ran on occasion, but he is never described as running. He is never in a hurry and he is never late. Everything that he does is right on time. Even though we feel the pressure building as every step he takes is closer to the cross, at the same time, he does not become short-tempered and snippy.

- The ministry of Jesus on earth was perfectly intentional
- The work of Jesus in your life is just as perfectly intentional.

Back in Mark 7.37, the crowds said more than they realized when they said of Jesus, "He has done all things well." He still does. Jesus carried out his mission on earth perfectly and now he is carrying out his ministry in your life with the same precision and intentionality. Embrace and that and enjoy that. He is too good to do you wrong. In fact, Jesus is incapable of doing you wrong.

(Map) much of the ministry of Christ took place in Galilee. Jesus spent very little time in Jerusalem. This contributed to the tension between him and the Pharisees. He wasn't one of them. He didn't come to where the "power" was. He simply did not play their game. At the same time, the people assumed that Jesus had to go to Jerusalem in order to take over the throne and throw out the Romans. So, they were ready for this. But in order for Jesus to go to Jerusalem he could either go through Samaria, or go around it. This helps us understand the setting which is stated in v.52.

2. **The Setting** (52)

There was a specific group of people who were with Jesus, including the 12. They did not travel every day. The home base of the ministry of Jesus was often in Capernaum where there was some housing available to them from Peter, James, John and others. But they were now heading to Jerusalem and the most direct route would be to go through Samaria. If you were a Jew who traveled between Judea and Galilee, going around Samaria was inconvenient, yet many Jews did. A Samaritan was often rejected by Jews so the name was considered to be derogatory. A Samaritan was an ethnic mix between a Jew and a Gentile that dated back to the time of the fall of the Northern Kingdom to Assyria and the Babylonian Captivity a while later. The Jews who were left in the land, married the Gentiles who settled there and adopted their pagan practices of idol worship. They also claimed to worship the God of Israel, which was very confusing. The Samaritans built their own Temple to God on Mt. Gerizim that was modeled after the Temple in Jerusalem. You may remember that the woman at the well (the woman from Samaria) talked about this in her conversation with Jesus when she said, "*Our fathers worshiped at this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.*" She was referring to Mt. Gerizim. 100 years before, John Hyrcanus (leader in the Maccabean revolt and high priest of the Jerusalem Temple) led a Jewish invasion of Samaria and destroyed the

Samaritans temple on Mt. Gerizim. That did not help race relations. The region of Samaria was littered with shrines, temples, and multiple smaller sites where idols sat and incense would burn. To walk through the region of Samaria made a Jew feel dark, depressed, lost and oppressive. Judea and Samaria were ruled by the same government but between the two areas there is significant religious tension, historic ethnic animosity, and deep-seated military hostility which made them feel like two different countries who hated the other.

Jesus sent messengers ahead of him. They entered a village of the Samaritans. They would feel like they were in enemy country and they were charged with finding a place for them to stay and food to be able to purchase.

3. The Issue (53)

“The people did not receive him.” If you lived back then, this would not be surprising at all. If you lived back then, the story that Jesus tells of the good Samaritan in chapter 10 and the thankful Samaritan leper in chapter 17 would shock you. But this rejection is not shocking, it would be expected. Jews did not have dealings with Samaritans and they were more than happy to return the favor.

Think about the particulars for a minute. In order for Jesus and his team to find a place to stay and food to eat, someone in that village would have to agree to house them. If you are a Samaritan and you agree to house the Jewish Messiah, what do think people will post about you on social media? And what if others found out that you sold them food? Could you expect people to boycott your business? Absolutely. You can understand that the local merchants were not willing to risk their long-term standing for a short-term deal. So, they decline. That meant that there was no room in that inn for Jesus, either.

Look at the last phrase of v.53. Luke says that behind the refusal of the Samaritans to receive Jesus was the sovereign plan of God. God’s plan was for Jesus was to die. In order for Jesus to die, he would have to be condemned and in order to be condemned he would have to be rejected. Verse 51 begins the 2nd half of the gospel Luke. Here, the story changes. Here, Jesus is heading towards Jerusalem. His mission to come and die is now clearly in view and this journey to Jerusalem begins with rejection even as it will conclude with rejection (Luke 19.41-44). As hard and sinful as that rejection is, and it is; the rejection of Jesus is part of the Sovereignty of God to carry out his plan to provide a Savior for the world.

We know that the Jews rejected Jesus, but so did the Samaritans and don’t forget that it was the Romans (Gentiles) who crucified him. Jesus came as the Savior for the world, even as he was rejected by the world. His life was characterized by rejection, but that was all part of God’s plan in order to provide a Savior for us. There are these occasions in Scripture, where God pulls the curtain back for a second to let us know that no matter what happens, God never takes his hand off the steering wheel. God remains completely in charge. Yes, had this village received Jesus, they would have been blessed in immeasurable ways. Therefore, this rejection added more

weight to the Man of Sorrows and his acquaintance with grief, but this sorrow was not beyond the plan of God, but part of it.

The hostilities between Jews and Samaritans had no earthly hope of ever being resolved which is why it needed a solution that came from God. It is still that way. Parts of our world are more aware of the destructive nature of racism, but the solution to it is not in educating the society because the heart of racism is not culture. Culture cannot come up with a solution for a disease of the heart. Only Jesus can do that, and he has. Which is one of the reasons why the church is called to display the new community of God's people on earth. Verses 51-53 set up the point of the text which is found in the responses in the next verses.

4. **The Response** (54-56)

First of all, we see wrath from James and John.

a. **Wrath**

“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?’” Wow! We read this and are taken back a bit. But there is some precedent for this going back to both Elijah and Elisha. We should also acknowledge that James and John realize that the rejection of Jesus is a serious matter. In fact, anyone who rejects Christ has no hope of eternal life but will face eternal judgment in what the Bible describes as the lake of fire. Rejecting Christ is eternally serious. But if wrath is our kneejerk response to the rejection of Christ, then we are way out of balance. Jesus is the one who has the right to be offended. When he enters Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and is rejected once more, his response is to weep.

The response of James and John reveals that at this point, wrath and judgment are on a hair trigger. We wonder if James and John have responded this way if it was a village of Jews rather than Samaritans that was not willing to receive them? The next response we see is from Jesus.

b. **Rebuke** (55)

Christ turned and rebuked them. Christ would have none of that. There would be a time for judgment, but not now. And this response by Christ underscores a point that I love to emphasize to you. The mercy of God is on a hair trigger, but his judgment is a long fuse. In a few chapters we are going to encounter the story of the prodigal son, which is one of the most powerful and notable accounts in the ministry of Christ. In that account, when the father sees his son off in the distance, the father takes off running to his son. His mercy is on a hair trigger and his rebuke of James and John reinforces that.

c. **Patience** (55)

The offense of rejection is absorbed by the patience of Christ in giving them another chance. The request on the part of Christ to be received by this village was a grace offered to them. The Samaritans needed Christ way more than he needed them. When he was refused, Christ did not respond with wrath and judgment. That will come at some point. The fact that Christ does not respond immediately with wrath does not mean that rejecting him is a small matter. Rejecting Christ has eternal consequences but God is patient. His mercy is on a hair trigger while his justice is a slow burning fuse.

5. Press on (56)

“And they went on to another village.”

There are a number of truths from this text that we need to marinate our hearts in.

First of all, for many people there are some deep-seated racial, historical and personal issues that are real barriers to overcome in order to share the gospel. If we are going to be able to share the gospel with someone on the heart level, in most cases it will require a great deal of patience. Beloved, it is worth it, but we do not generally see immediate fruit for our efforts.

Secondly, there is a cost of following Jesus now. The message of the gospel is offensive. The narrowness of the way of salvation is offensive. We must share that narrow way because Christ is the only way, but most people do not receive Christ and we feel that. If you are going to follow Christ, you need to know that this is part of what it means to follow him. There is a cost, for now. Not forever, but for now.

Thirdly, there is a cost to rejecting Christ. That cost is not always seen now, but it will be seen forever. And the reality of that cost, is what drives our mercy and protects us from anger now.

Fourthly, rejection does not alter God’s plan. God used the rejection of the Samaritans and the rejection of the Jews to accomplish his plan to offer up Christ in death as the payment for our sins. It did not make their sin less sinful, but it magnified his grace and glory that works in all things for good. Related to that is the fact that just before Jesus ascended into heaven that he told his disciples what to do and where to go. They were to preach the gospel and establish churches in Judea, then SAMARIA, and then the rest of the world. In Acts 8, Luke tells us how they did exactly that. Perhaps some of those in that very village who rejected him the first time around believed when the opportunity came again.

How long did it take for you to become a believer?

Did you believe the first time you heard?

Have you trusted in Christ yet?

What are you waiting for? You will not find anyone more merciful.

As our Sovereign, Righteous Creator, God has every right to be impatient and wrathful with our rejection, and yet he is patient. As fallen sinners who mess all sorts of things up, you would

think that we, having any sense of self-awareness would be a patient bunch, yet we are not. But following Christ will mean that patience is something that grows in us, after all, it is a fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5.22)