09/28/25 - Luke 9:51-62 - "Gospel Grit"

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[0:00] Please turn in your Bibles to Luke chapter 9, beginning in verse 51. When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.

And he sent messengers ahead of him who went and entered the village of the Samaritans to make preparations for him. But the people did not receive him because his face was set toward Jerusalem.
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? But he turned and rebuked them, and they went on to another village.
As they were going along the road, someone said to him, I will follow you wherever you go. And Jesus said to him, Foxes have holes, and birds in the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.
To another he said, follow me. But he said, Lord, let me first go bury my father. Jesus said to him, leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.
[1:09] Yet another said, I will follow you, Lord. But first let me say farewell to those at my home. Jesus said to him, no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.

This is God's word. Well, praise the Lord for being able to gather here today. You probably noticed that there's a screen with some different language on the top.
We have a Spanish in-person translation running now. And so if that is your primary language, you can follow along the sermon specifically.
But you can also eventually probably have lyrics on the screen and everything like that. So at least when people are talking, you're invited to take a look at that and follow along.
As I mean, we're commanded, you know, all nations, tribes, and tongues to let the gospel go out. And so praise the Lord for technology. We're going to leverage on it for the gospel, for the gospel's sake.
[2:13] Amen. Amen. Amen. If you're new with us, we're in a series in the gospel of Luke, and we're towards the end of chapter 9. Sometimes when you jump into a series like that, you know, you start realizing, well, I missed a lot.

I missed eight chapters before. And so I'll try to connect those dots for you. But I would encourage you maybe throughout this week, go back in chapter 1, verse 1, read all the way up to chapter 9 to see how we got to this situation.
And look ahead. These things are beneficial for our growth and our sanctification. And I want to begin by asking you a question.
Have you ever noticed how easy it is for the loudest voice to feel like the truest one?
This is 2025 in a very tumultuous time in our history. Have you ever noticed how easy it is for the loudest voice to feel like the truest one?
[3:30] I mean, throughout this week, even on your way, maybe even right now, you're swimming on social media. I can't see where you're at on your phones, but you might be on social media even right now, swimming in these opinions, surrounding yourself.

On the way, you listen to the news and the highlights of what's going on, and you have just constant influx of opinions after opinions after opinions.
You have it on your phones. You have it on your phones. You have it on TVs. And even you got the friends that are around you that are listening to those phones, listening to those TVs, and they want to tell you their opinions.
We're surrounded by it. And often, these opinions set our moods, set our reactions to things.

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We get quicker to strike back, to guard our comfort, to delay action, or maybe to long for those good old days. Back before, phones weren't in our pockets, like little pocket computers.
[4:49] I like when it had a cord and it was tied to the kitchen. I wish we could go back to those days. Preach. But if volume can make us holy, church, let's be real.

Volume can make us holy. We've all had volume, I could imagine. We'd all be saints right now if volume can make us holy. Louder opinions don't create stronger disciples.
Louder opinions don't create stronger disciples. And what we need is not more noise and volume. We as a church in our culture need a stronger resolve in the face and in the current of all these opinions.
Luke 9 shows us where that resolve comes from. You can see it in Luke 9, verse 51, that John, he's a year older.
Happy birthday, John. Also known as Jack. Whatever you want to call him. He's got other nicknames too. We won't go there. But Luke 9 shows us where that resolve comes from.
[6:10] This strength and resolve to not get involved in noise and loudness. He says in verse 51, When the days drew near for him, Jesus, to be taken up, he set his face to Jerusalem.

I'm going to call that grit. That's grit. Grit is the combination of courage, perseverance, and resolve. That enables somebody to stay the course through difficulty, through opposition, and delay. Grit. Grit. It's enduring.
For a disciple of Christ, grit isn't something that's self-made, like toughness. Like, just pick up your bootstrap, you wuss, you know? Like, just get over it. Grit isn't about self-made toughness.
It's about a spirit-enabled resilience. A spirit-enabled resilience that clings to Christ and his mission with both mercy and determination.
[7:26] Grit. Jesus had grit. He had it. He knew what awaited for him in Jerusalem. Betrayal.

Mockery. Nails. A cross. And he set his face there anyway. And as he walks this road, and mind you, Jesus, from now until chapter 19, Jesus will be on this road to Jerusalem.
And so it's going to be kind of implied in the weeks ahead. This is a long road. As Jesus walks this road, he teaches his disciples what it will cost to walk with Jesus on this road.
And so what he unpacks today and what Luke records for us today are four scenes. There's four convos, four defining moments.
I'm going to call them four mile markers, if you know the running terms. You have mile markers at every mile. I'll call them mile markers today.
[8:37] These are moments that expose a temptation in our hearts. A temptation in our hearts in four different ways. Of a pull toward revenge.

A lure to comfort. A refuge that we seek through our excuses. And even those temptations to glance backwards at better days.
In each moment, Jesus calls us to a hard road. A hard road. And the road requires grit.
It requires grit. Not the grit of clenched teeth and human stubbornness. We all have enough of that. And that fails in the times of hardship.
But grit. Gospel grit. Mercy in heart. Tenderness towards other people. But steel.
[9:34] Hard steel in our resolve. Mercy in heart. Steel in resolve. Unshakable towards the mission of Christ. And so here's the main point that we'll see today.

Is that the road with Jesus Christ requires grit. Mercy in heart. And steel in resolve. And so like I said, I'm going to break this down into, I'm going to break this down into like mile markers.
There will be four of them today. And the sermon titled is Something Plain. There you go. Gospel grit. You can tip me at the door. I'm just kidding by the way.
The family just walked out. Yeah, this ain't for us. Let's journey down these four mile markers.
And join me in prayer. Father, help us to understand rightly. To discern rightly. To speak rightly.
[10:40] Help us to shut the noise of our surrounding opinions in our lives. They're only meant to confuse us.

And they are not absolute truth. Your word is absolute truth. Help us to submit ourselves to the authority of your word this morning.
And myself included as we go through this text. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. The first mile marker is choosing mercy over revenge.
So when the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him. And they went and entered a village of the Samaritans.

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And then in verse 53. And then in verse 53. But the people did not receive him because his face was set towards Jerusalem. Well, that's interesting.
[11:43] Well, that's interesting. Culturally speaking, during these days, the relationship between the Jewish people and Samaritans was awfully tense.

Awfully tense. Awfully tense. The tension can be traced back centuries before when Samaritans intermarried with Assyrians.
Assyrians intermarried. Which is a complete defiance of God's law and the people of God. And so they intermarried with their Assyrian conquerors.
And so Jews ended up, you know, when we're talking about our failures and everything, the Jews are calling them names. They're calling them half-breeds. If you've seen any Harry Potter fans, you know, they're the half-breeds, you know.
They're not muggles. They're not wizards. They're half-breeds, right? And so this is what the Jews called them. The Samaritans were known as this label.
[12:46] Half-breeds. The Jews looked at them as apostates. Those were the messed up people. Now, obviously, drama ensued and the Samaritans stuck it to the Jews over the course of history.

They erected a similar mount, the Mount Gerizim. And they actually put together their own Pentateuch. They made their own liturgy.
They stuck it to the Jews. Fine, you all want to, you know, judge us for what we're doing? We're going to do this and this. Man, humanity has a way of solving problems only to make them worse, right?
This is our story, too. In other words, for these Samaritans, there was so much hate and so little time. And in verse 51 through 53 that we see here, this is a sad reality.
I want you to see this. Before we get into even the next verse, I want you to see this. There's a sad reality that the Son of God sought them out.
[13:57] Folks who disobeyed God's law. Jesus took the time to at least consider staying and looking for them to take care of Him.

But due to their hatred for a societal group, no, we're not messing with those Jews. Due to their hatred, they rejected not only the Jews, but they ended up rejecting Jesus Christ in the process.
I think it's worth mentioning today that today in our lives, we have to keep our hatred in check, church.
I've seen labels of Charlie Kirk's memorial service as some Nazi gathering, some Nazi rally, and all of these labels.
But when you watch something like that, all you hear is the gospel being proclaimed from a global perspective.
[15:06] And some of those gospel presentations are better than many pulpits. But that's a Nazi rally.

Don't mess with those people. And in so doing, they reject the gospel with these labels. There is something disturbingly demonic, church, about this hatred.
Disturbingly demonic. This is a Samaritan hatred in our day to day. Be careful to reject people groups, because you might end up rejecting Jesus Christ, throwing the baby out with the bathwater.
But in verse 54, when the disciples, James and John, saw it, I don't know if you remember, these two were labeled as the sons of thunder.
Like, these are the guys you don't double cross, because they're going to clock you in the head. These are the sons of thunder. They said, Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?
[16:28] Well, that escalated quickly. Calm down. But Jesus, he turned and rebuked them in their retribution of hatred towards them.

Hatred for more hatred. He rebuked them, and they went on to another village. The sons of thunder don't take this rejection well.
They literally wanted to wipe the Samaritans off the map. That's extreme. White fire with fire, literally, pun intended.
Within this emotionally charged response, is that proximal belief that Jesus is this Elijah-like prophet and Messiah.
And this is like thinking about a rejection that Jesus Christ reflected with a story in 2 Kings 1, where the apostate king of that day and 50 of his men were consumed with fire from heaven.

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[17:43] They know the verses. They know the tales. And so these sons of thunder, in their emotional fury, forgot who the real enemy was. They had forgotten Christ's example and his teaching from just three chapters before in Luke 6, where Jesus said, But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies.

Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who abuse you. In our cultural moment, how important it is to remember, it takes grit to refrain from hate.
It takes grit to refrain from hate. More grit than to actually act on that hate. That's the easy road. That's the road the culture takes, because it's easy.
In a culture of instant gratification. Church, may we hear the rebuke from Jesus Christ today.
Echo in our hearts. To act on grace and mercy. We need to avoid dehumanizing people based on societal affiliations.
[19:10] It takes maturity, church. It takes great maturity to love a Christian with differing political affiliations. It takes maturity.

And not to somehow forge their identity to one single politician or a set of policies. It takes maturity, church.
When we reduce people to labels, we stop seeing them as brothers and sisters in Christ, and some even resembling and reflecting the image of God.
And the cross unites where politics divide in our day-to-day. And the church must be known more for our mercy and less for our mockery.
Hate has no home in the heart of a Christian, regardless of societal categories that they want to put, whatever labels the world wants to put on groups.
[20:11] And it takes gospel grit to choose mercy over revenge. And so we have to be intentional about drastically limiting our intake to the opinions that are surrounding us.

To drastically limit our intake of social media. Your apps have controls on them that you can limit how much you're on Facebook. And I use that very much so.
Because I can get lost in that. Social media news both often distort reality to serve their own agendas and their own plans.
And so instead of us, church, falling for the lie that we need those opinions to shape the way we're thinking, we need to look at this as a mission field.
We don't need anything to shape us. We have everything to put content out there to shape the world in absolute truth.
[21:21] The authority of God's word. The world is waiting for it. Truth, not opinion. That's mile marker one.

I'm going to probably be going long here. Mile marker two, we see choosing hardship over comfort. And a little situation takes place at this mile marker.
From verse 57 to 58. They were going down the road. And someone said to Jesus, I will follow you wherever you go.
Praise the Lord. And Jesus said to him, something odd. It's kind of strange. Foxes have holes. And birds have air.
Birds of the air have nests. But the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head. Here on this mile marker, this unknown person speaks up.
[22:23] They are the type of person that would like to, that wanted to join the movement. I want to go on your team. Wanted to join the movement of Christ, but failed to understand the demands of such a road.

By Jesus replying with natural logic of foxes and birds, he applies this figurative language and illustration to himself that the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.
And now, that's not to say that Jesus Christ never slept. He never, it's not saying that he never actually had a place to lay his head.
It's not what he's saying. It's a little bit deeper, more figurative in this, in the context of what he says here. And so we have to ask, what does Jesus mean by this figurative expression and assertion?
Well, following Jesus Christ meant immense discomfort. Immense discomfort.
[23:35] Discomfort to the point, y'all, we got our neck problems in our day today. You got to get the perfect pillow and everything like that. He's saying, amen.

He's saying like, forget it. Forget my pillow. Your little cervical pillow. Like, there's no pillow for you. He's saying, this life is going to include immense discomfort.

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And even further, Jesus reinforces the reality that this life, this reality, is not home for somebody following Jesus Christ.
You see, following Jesus never promised a life of ease. Welcome. We don't preach the prosperity gospel here. It doesn't include and promise a life of ease.
And it is important to remember that if your faith has not brought you a sense of discomfort, discomfort, I would say that there's something wrong.
[24:45] If your faith doesn't bring you some type of discomfort, there's something wrong. That's a bold statement, and I'm going to qualify that. Because isn't it uncomfortable to love difficult people?

Isn't it uncomfortable to give till it hurts? Isn't it uncomfortable to put yourself out there vulnerable and serve a community of strangers who would rather you get off their porch and get off their steps and go pound salt?
Isn't that difficult and uncomfortable? Isn't it uncomfortable to live counter-cultural in our day-to-day? Isn't it uncomfortable to be disliked?
To be rejected? To be called names? A bunch of Nazis. It's our label today. See, following Jesus takes gospel grit.
Because we are walking a road of hardship, church, and difficulty. And figuratively speaking, there is nowhere in this world to lay our heads.
[26:07] And I'm going to break the news to you. There never will be somewhere in this world to lay your head. For the Christian, we don't need comfort.

All we need is Jesus Christ. That's it. Continuing our journey, we see mile marker three.
We see choosing urgency over excuses. And so to another, Jesus calls out to this one.
He says, follow me. He appoints someone to follow him. But this person said, Lord, let me first go and bury my father. And Jesus said to him, leave the dead to bury their own dead.
But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God. Now, Jesus invites somebody to join the movement. Like, come on. What are you waiting for?
[27:12] But this individual seems overly concerned about family. Not that his father was actually dead. There's no indication of that.

That's kind of what we assume when we read that. There's no indication that his father's dead. But it would mean that if he goes with Jesus Christ, he will not have an opportunity.
He doesn't know how far away he'll be. He'll never have an opportunity to bury his father. And many assume a theological, biblical contradiction here to discredit Christ's teachings, as well as Old Testament law.
You know, the Ten Commandments, the Fifth Commandments, Exodus 20, verse 12. You know, it's a commandment that says, honor your father and your mother. And so this would include, at the very least, showing honor, showing respect, showing kindness, remembering them, showing acts of kindness, making provisions for them and their welfare, and things of that nature.
And so the Bible doesn't contradict itself. So we'll just put that in the trash can, okay? So what we have then is we have a question.
[28:24] What is Jesus saying? The issue is not so much about a contradiction as Jesus would never contradict his own law. The meaning then is obvious.

We see a theme pop up and discover that this man asked permission to, asked Jesus for permission to delay following.
This man is worried about tomorrow. About what his plans are going to be tomorrow. He's asking Jesus for permission to delay following him.
Maybe till another better suited time. Maybe till his 401 gets to a certain threshold and he's good to go. He's ready to retire. In other words, no concept of urgency came with this man and with that call.
And Jesus answered this. It's not hard-hearted. People are like, whew, that rattled. That shook the earth a little bit. Heartless?
[29:24] Much? Not hard-hearted, but it's instructive to our priorities. If we are called to follow Jesus Christ, we ought to be instructed in all of the priorities that Jesus sets in our lives.

Let the dead bury the dead. Or within the context of the language, let the spiritually dead bury the physically dead.
Let all that work its way out. As for you, instruction here. As for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.

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You see, it includes intense urgency if we are truly on the road with Jesus. Do you sense that urgency in your life?
Jesus sometimes requires us to lay down our plans and to pursue his completely.
[30:33] So whether you're a Christian today or a non-Christian, urgency in our lives are often forgotten. You know, cushiness in life.

We think that we forget about death until a friend dies or a family member dies. And then all of a sudden we're like, I'm going to die someday. And it's like a deep revelation that you have.
We always assume that tomorrow will come. Unfortunately, the deathbed is most often the place where urgency is best understood.
And that's sad. At your deathbed is often the place where urgency is best understood. As people reckon with the reality that they did not live a life with urgency to do anything.
So we might think in terms of an ICU unit with two patients lying on respirators. And maybe we'll just visualize it in two rooms, like a room apart from each other with a wall.
[31:43] One man whispered through the mask on his deathbed. I wanted my life. And I thought I had more time.

And you can tell through the faint whispers of his voice that he's restless. He's discontent.
Filled with regret. But then in the other room, another person, a believer, faced the same machine, same shortness of breath, but had peace.
From this faint whisper, woman mouthed the words of Psalm 23, The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want, meaning I shall not need anything.
Same machines, same deathbed. One filled with unrest and the other filled with comforts. What's the difference?
[32:47] Jesus Christ. Christ. And so if you're not, if you're here today and you're not in Christ, if you have not placed your faith in Jesus Christ, it is critical that you realize the urgency of your faith now before it's too late.

There might not be another Sunday. You might be like, well, this sermon's pretty good, I would say. Maybe a five out of ten. His jacket's good.
This is pretty good. But I think I'll wait till next Sunday. But what if you won't even have till the end of today? I'm not trying to manipulate you or scare you.
I'm trying to enter you in to the urgency that this life demands of us. Don't wait for a more convenient time.
Trust in Jesus Christ here and now and receive pardon for your sin and the promise of salvation and eternity in heaven with Jesus Christ.
[33:56] On this path of following Jesus Christ, we hear the call of Christ to urgently come. And once you come to faith, there's another call to urgently go.

Tell it on the mountain. And guess what? You have brothers and sisters that will join you in that quest and that chorus. It certainly takes gospel grit to choose urgency over excuses.
This last mile marker real quick here. Choosing focus over fantasy. To another, this other guy comes in.
He said, I will follow you, Lord. But let me first say farewell to those at my home. And Jesus said to him, no one puts his hand to the plow and looks back.
No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God. Here on this road, we meet this other person. Small request.
[35:01] Just to say goodbye. Right? Small request. And it had this biblical precedence, though.

Again, guess what? With Elijah. Who would have thought? With this plowing imagery, you might think like, well, where did this plow come from? That's creative. Jesus had something in mind.
He had 1 Kings 19 in mind. Where when Elijah saw Elijah plowing behind his oxen, Elijah approached him through his cloak on Elijah.
And that indicated in the culture of a call to discipleship. It's kind of like catching disciples. Gotcha. The cloak. That's how I do it. That's how I found Carmen.
And so, Elijah, he accepted. But, in this context, in 1 Kings, Elijah begged to say goodbye to his family.
[36:07] But what's interesting here is that Elijah permitted it. He said, okay, before you come, and our disciple, go ahead. Say bye to mom and dad and everyone. And so, here we see something different.

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And Jesus is well aware that he knows the story. He wrote the story. He's well aware of the Old Testament story, which is why he chose the plowing imagery in denying such a request.
Although it might be minor. And so, we need to see, okay, Jesus knew that Elijah permitted it. Why is Jesus not permitting it? But he's still using imagery here of the plow.
We might say, Jesus is anti-family. We'll put his labels. We love labels in our culture. He's anti-family. He's anti-all this and anti-that. Does Jesus Christ not have any decency?
Does he not have any courtesy? And we see something here. Maybe Jesus Christ knew. Maybe he knew that a disciple fit to serve must not condition his commitment to even the most proper obligations.
[37:24] A disciple is concerned about the mission alone. That they're like, oh, I forgot to say bye to my family.

Right? Because they're so concerned about the mission. In other words, the call must take priority over your focus.
It must take over the focus of your life. The call must take priority and requires focus of your life.
There's something called a, it's like a psychological phenomenon.
It's called target fixation. And it describes how someone, when someone focuses on an object or maybe a hazard, that it can psychologically pull you toward that object or the hazard.
And this was first noted and named in military terms. It was named and used in motorcycling training, motorcycle training and skydiving safety to keep people safe.
[38:30] And NASCAR translates this phrase as, look where you want to go. Look where you want to go. Target fixation. And so, in a simple illustration, if you're losing control in your car and you're staring at the wall, you're bound to hit that wall.

But, if you're focused on the clear path forward, psychologically speaking, we don't know how it works, but you're going to be clear of any danger and go towards a non-hazard.
It's odd, but it's real. And church, it is impossible to be a disciple of Jesus Christ if we are not willing to leave behind what is behind.
Whether that's sin, whether that's relationships, whether that's a status, whether that's comfort, whether it's a dream of living in Maui, drinking a Kool-Aid, right?
Whatever that is, it leaves it behind. And all these dreams and these fantasies of, what if? No one can follow Jesus Christ when their attention is not fully focused upon that call to follow.
[39:42] That's gospel grit. So, here's the question, church. Whose voice will you follow on the road?

The loud voices of the culture will urge revenge. They'll urge comfort. They'll urge delay. They'll bring about this picture of Maui with Kool-Aid just sitting there chilling.
Nostalgia. Comfort. Are you listening to that nonsense? Or do you hear today the voice of Jesus Christ? A steady voice of Christ who calls us forward with mercy and steel and resolve with grit.
Loudest voices might stir our emotions, but only the voice of Jesus Christ can shape our soul. He set his face toward Jerusalem, not because it was easy, but because it was necessary.
That's why. And he calls us to walk the same road. Having gospel grit. And so that means when rejection comes, we press forward in our faith.
[40:53] When hardship comes, we press forward in our faith. When excuses whisper, we press forward in our faith. When nostalgia tempts us to look back, we press forward in our faith.

The road with Jesus is narrow, costly, and it can feel lonely. But it is also the only road that leads to true life.
Reject the noise, church, and fix our eyes on Jesus and walk with the same gospel grit that he modeled for us. Mercy at heart.
Steel in resolve. We don't need louder opinions. We need deeper devotion. We need deeper devotion. Let's pray.
Let's pray. All right.

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