

Daily Discipleship

Luke 13:31-35

Prayers of Discipleship *To Finish One's Work*

Focus Question: *O God, what am I to do while on this earth?*

word of life

[Jesus] said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work.'" Luke 13:32 (NRSV)

Read Luke 13:31-35

Throughout the gospels, the Pharisees are often portrayed as those who challenge Jesus and his teaching. Many times the Pharisees become offended by Jesus, his actions, and the behavior of his disciples. In Luke's Gospel, the Pharisees are portrayed in a balanced way with a more moderate perspective. (See Luke 7:36; 11:37; 14:1)

In the passage for this Sunday, the Pharisees warn Jesus about Herod and suggest Jesus depart for safety. It does not appear to be a trap, nor does their admonition appear to contain a hidden agenda. The Pharisees seem to genuinely desire to help and protect Jesus.

1. *Does this portrayal of the Pharisees surprise you?*
2. *Why would Herod want to kill Jesus?*

When Jesus hears the threat about Herod, he does not run or hide. Instead, he calls Herod "a fox." It is unclear if that reference is due to the harm of Herod or his trickery. Either way, it is not a positive portrayal of Herod. Jesus is not naïve about the dangers of Herod, nor does he back away.

Take special attention to the emphasis of Jesus on his ongoing ministry. Demons are cast out and illnesses are cured—today and tomorrow. Jesus is not going to stop his ministry because of threats from Herod. Jesus lives his life with a sense of purpose and clarity. There is a sense of urgency with his actions. Jesus acknowledges his work will end on the third day.

3. *What work is Jesus finishing?*
4. *How is it that Jesus is so clear and focused on his work?*
5. *How might life choices change once it is known there is only a limited amount of days?*
6. *What is the reference to the "third day"?*

Luke emphasizes the city of Jerusalem, referring to it ninety times in the Gospel of Luke and Acts. Jesus appears acutely aware of the role of the city of Jerusalem, acknowledging no prophet can be killed outside of Jerusalem.

7. *How does it appear Jerusalem receives someone like Jesus?*
8. *What makes it difficult to receive God's prophet?*
9. *What happens if God's prophets criticize or calls for reforms?*

Jesus laments over the city of Jerusalem. It is with tender compassion Jesus describes his own desire to gather the city like a mother would gather children or a hen protects her brood under her wings. Yet, Jerusalem needs to be willing to be gathered and protected. People need to want to learn the teachings of Jesus and be transformed by this love. The sadness of Jesus overflows as he moves toward that third day of his death and resurrection – aware his own people will turn on him.

10. *What motivates Jesus to continue on and complete his work?*

word among us

The painter pulled out the gray paint bucket, some paintbrushes, and his ladder. He was committed to painting the shed on that beautiful Saturday. Just as he opened the lid of the paint bucket, his seven-year-old son came running from the house, wanting to play catch. The father slowly put the lid back on the paint can and played with his son, savoring the moment of fun and laughter with his child. But then, he went back to work.

Once more, the painter began to lift the lid of the paint bucket; and once again, he was interrupted. This time it was the ringing of his cell phone. His business partner had a few questions. Supposedly, the phone call would only take a few minutes. The day progressed, overflowing with interruption after interruption. It seemed every time the painter bent over to remove the paint can lid, there was a new interruption.

But he was determined to paint the shed on that Saturday. Once he started, he simply could not be stopped. His family smiled at his commitment to this task. He didn't stop for lunch or supper. He painted and he painted. Eventually, the sun began to set and dusk filled the yard. But, he kept on painting. He was focused and undeterred until he finished his job.

1. *Can you relate to this story?*
2. *How easy or difficult is it for you to complete a job?*
3. *How does it feel to complete a task or a job?*

Jesus was clear about his mission on this earth and was unrelenting. Neither Herod, nor Jerusalem, nor even his disciples could get him off course. He set his eyes toward Jerusalem, a path which would lead to the cross and his own sacrifice. The lament of Jesus indicates his own deep awareness of the fickleness of the crowd. He was prepared for the adoration of the crowd waving palm branches and cheering, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord." followed by cries of "Crucify him!" Despite it all, Jesus stayed the course and completed his work.

4. *What can we learn from Jesus in this passage?*
5. *How could Jesus not get discouraged?*

As we consider our own prayers of discipleship, it is critical to discern God's will for our own lives. We pray that we might discover the ways to use our God-given gifts and commit to finish our work – whatever that means.

6. *How clear are you concerning your mission?*
7. *If a person came to you and wanted to discern his or her mission, what would you say?*
8. *Does our "work" necessarily mean our employment, or what else might be included in our "work on this earth"?*
9. *If someone is not employed, how might he or she serve Christ?*
10. *As you finish this lesson, what is your prayer?*

Prayer

Creator of the Universe, create in me a clarity of purpose. Reduce the distractions in my life so I might clearly follow Christ and finish my work on this earth.

Dig Deeper

Luke 22:39-46

last word

Take time this week to begin a list of those things you believe God wants *you* to do in your lifetime.



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