

## Our Lord's Royal Duties

Luke 9:51-62

The Sixth Sunday after Pentecost, June 26, 2016

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

And so in the midst of our Lord's ministry He sets His face to go to Jerusalem.

When He sets His face to go to Jerusalem He sends messengers into the Samaritan villages to announce His coming. Why does He do this? He does it because He has set His face to go to Jerusalem.

The Samaritans do not receive Him. Why not? Because He has set His face to go to Jerusalem. What is so bad about our Lord going to Jerusalem? What is so bad about Him going to Jerusalem that the Samaritans refuse to receive Him?

The Lord is a king. When the angel Gabriel announced our Lord's birth to Mary he said that the child to be born from her would be a king. He is a descendent of Israel's royal family. He is to reign over the house of Jacob forever.

If our Lord is a king, there must come a time in His ministry when He will assume the throne. A king cannot simply roam about Galilee performing miracles. He must eventually take up His duties as king. The capital of Israel is Jerusalem. Therefore He must go there in order to assume His throne. He must go there in order to reign over Jacob forever.

The Samaritans do not receive Him because they do not want a Jew to be king in Jerusalem. They would rather a king reign from Samaria like what happened long ago. They would rather if Jesus were to reign at all that He would reign from Samaria. But Samaria is not the proper capital of Israel. The king in Samaria was a punishment to the king in Jerusalem. Samaria was never destined to reign. God never made a promise to Samaria. God promised David. God promised Jerusalem. So if Jesus is going to assume His royal duties, He shall go the proper capital of Israel. He shall go to Jerusalem. Since Jesus is of the wrong political persuasion for the Samaritans, they do not receive Him.

Such rejection is condemnation for the Samaritans.

Jesus goes to Jerusalem to take up His royal duties. He goes there to establish the kingdom of Jacob and make it an eternal kingdom. If you refuse the king of the eternal kingdom, you refuse the eternal kingdom. To be outside of the eternal kingdom is to be subject to eternal death. There is no other place to go. To be subject to eternal death is to be damned.

James and John realize this. They also realize that they are apostles of the Lord and therefore have authority to call down the damnation on the Samaritans that the Samaritans deserve. But since they are with their Lord at the time they do not act without His authorization. They therefore ask His permission to call down fire from heaven.

Jesus refuses to have them do so. In fact Jesus tells them that they are out of line in such a request. That means that the apostles' primary vocation is not to deal out damnation although they do have the authority to do so. It also means that the Samaritans are given another chance. After all Jesus has not reached Jerusalem yet. Let the Lord reach Jerusalem and take up His royal duties. Once He does that the Samaritans might have a change of heart.

Jesus continues on to Jerusalem.

Now dear saints of Immanuel Lutheran Church, you should already know what our Lord is going to do in Jerusalem. You should already know how our Lord will take up His royal duties in

Jerusalem. You should already know how His coronation will take place. You should already know how the Lord will establish Jacob as His everlasting kingdom.

Since you should already know these things the rest of what our Lord says should not be surprising at all. A fellow comes up to Jesus and tells Him that he will follow Him wherever He goes. Jesus tells him that foxes have holes and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to bow His head.

Perhaps this fellow knew that our Lord was going to Jerusalem to establish His everlasting kingdom. Perhaps this fellow wanted a piece of the glory that would belong to the Lord once the Lord took up His royal duties. It is hard to say. And Luke does not bother to tell us whether or not the person joined Jesus and followed Him after the Lord told him that the Son of Man had no place to bow His head. Furthermore are we to assume that if this person were to have followed Jesus that he would have no place to bow his head either even though foxes and birds had such places? The gospel does not say. What it does say is that if you follow Jesus you are following a King who had no place to bow His head except for one place. He would bow His head in Jerusalem.

That means, people, that you are not to read this passage and think to yourself that if you follow Jesus, that you will have no place to bow your head because Jesus didn't either. If that is the case, then none of us in this room are following Jesus at all because all of us have a place to bow our heads. I have a nice pediatric pillow where I lay my head at night. How about your pillows?

But since Luke never bothers to tell us whether or not this man followed Jesus or not the point of the account is not to tell you what kind of people follow Jesus, but to tell you what kind of king Jesus is that you are following. If you are following a Jesus who has a place to bow His head, then you are not following the right one. The Jesus who goes to Jerusalem to assume His royal duties and establish the everlasting kingdom of Jacob has only one place to bow His head. He cannot bow His head just anywhere. He has no place to bow His head except in Jerusalem. So unless you are following the Jesus who bows His head in Jerusalem, then you are not following the right Jesus, you are outside of the everlasting kingdom of Jacob and your fate will be no better than the fate of the Samaritans who refused to receive Him.

The second guy in the account did not volunteer to follow Jesus. Jesus called Him to preach the Kingdom of God. The guy wanted to bury his father first. Commentators on the Scripture differ on whether this guy wanted to bury his father who had just died or whether or not his father was well and he wanted to wait until his father had died before taking up the preaching of the Kingdom of God. Whatever the case the man had put something important in front of the calling of the Lord.

The death of his father is no small thing, but then the things that we place in front of the Lord's calling are not small things either. It is usually something important that we put in front of God's calling.

Not all of us are called to preach the Kingdom of God. We simply aren't. We have other callings. God calls us to all sorts of things. He calls us to be fathers and mothers and sons and daughters and husbands and wives and workers. Whatever our callings are they are callings that the Lord has issued to us. Nothing is more important than the calling of the One who is going to Jerusalem to assume His royal duties. Not even our lives are more important than the callings that the Lord has issued to us. After all He did not allow anything no matter how important even father and mother to deter Him from His calling. He did not wait to bury His mother before taking up His royal duties in Jerusalem.

The third guy in the account is the guy who looks back.

He volunteers to follow Jesus, but wants to say good-bye to his family first. If he has volunteered to follow Jesus why has he not taken care of this already? It seems as if the idea to follow Jesus hits him in the moment and in the moment he wants to do it. Then he realizes that he has other vocations that need to be honored first. Well, if that is the case, fine, honor those vocations, but don't look all righteous and volunteer for service to Jesus and then turn around and do something else. A calling is a calling.

Don't volunteer for the Lord's service as a married person if you are going to look back longingly at your unmarried life and wish you were back there. Don't volunteer for the Lord's service as a father or a mother and then longingly look back on your life when you had no children. Don't volunteer for the Lord's service in any capacity whatsoever and then look back longingly on the days when you did not have that responsibility. If you do you will wind up coveting your neighbor's house. You will wind up wishing that your life was like his. And the Lord who gave you those gifts that you wanted to have so badly will be offended that once He gave them to you, you did not want them any more.

No one who puts His hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the Kingdom of God. Once you are baptized, you are baptized. The Lord has called you. He has summoned you out of darkness and into light. Do not long for the darkness or you are not worthy of the Kingdom of God. The Lord has made you dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Anyone who wishes to return to his sin is not fit for service in the Kingdom of God.

The Lord Himself has set His face to go to Jerusalem. He does not turn to look back. If He did He would not be fit to reign in the Kingdom of God.

If you have paid attention to the Apostles' Creed on all of the occasions which you have recited it, you should know what Jesus is going to Jerusalem to do. If you have paid attention to all of the times that you have recited the Nicene Creed together with the congregation, you should already know what Jesus is going to do when He assumes the royal throne of David. If you are a careful student of the Scriptures, you already know what Jesus is going to do when He establishes the eternal Kingdom of Jacob. In fact you know what Jesus is going to do in order to establish the eternal Kingdom of Jacob for it is only when the Son of Man was lifted up from the earth that He draws all people unto Himself.

When Jesus enters into Jerusalem to take up His royal duties, one of the duties of a king is to render judgment. Jesus goes to Jerusalem to render the final judgment upon our sins and the fulfillment of our callings.

And Jesus is fit for such service. He is fit to reign over an everlasting Kingdom He is fit for service in the Kingdom of God. And whether you volunteer or are summoned to it, Jesus is a fit king to follow. The reason that Jesus is fit for these things is that He sets His face to Jerusalem and all that is going to happen there and He does not look back.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.