

# July 14, 2019 — 15th Week in Ordinary Time

Two weeks ago, I asked you to join me on this Journey ..... moving along with Jesus as He resolutely heads towards Jerusalem — beginning with Luke 9:51 and ending up at Thanksgiving with Jesus' Passion, Death and Resurrection ..... Remember ? I promised you that the journey would be fulfilling and enlightening. I promised that you would learn a lot about Jesus ..... who He really is ..... and you would learn a whole lot about yourself ..... I repeat my invitation to you today ..... Join me in this journey ..... Beginning Luke 9:51 ..... I promise you .... you will learn more about yourself than you have ever learned before ..... unless you have previously made this journey with Him.

I said to you two weeks ago that, in this Journey, Luke gives all of the Ethical Teachings of Jesus as He makes this journey. It provides all of the Radical Teachings of Jesus in terms of what it means to be a Follower of Jesus. And that is what we want to be, RIGHT ? We want to be Followers of Jesus ..... Right ? Convince me!

Otherwise, we are purposeless. We have no real purpose in our lives ..... no real meaning ! Right ? And that is not alright for one who desires to be a CHRISTIAN ..... One who desires to be a Follower of Christ or claims to be a Follower of Christ. Their lives are permeated with questions of What would He do? What would He have me do in this situation? It means having a real relationship with Him ..... where I truly bring the real and big questions of my life to Him in prayer and reflection !!!!! Not, as I said two weeks ago, where I bring Him the answers to my questions, and ask Him to bless 'My Decisions' ..... Wow ..... how easy it is to fall into this trap!

So, I ask you once again to please join me in this journey ..... begin reading with me in Luke 9:51, and each week take a serious look at what you are reading .... and what He is saying to you !

Today's Gospel Passage is a powerful scene ..... we are so familiar with the passage that we could easily just pass it over and say 'Yea, I know that parable so well I could recite it in my sleep' ..... That is true indeed ! We have heard it so often we could easily say ..... 'yes I know all of that ..... and I try to do it' ..... it's worthy of a closer look.

In fact, it really begins in the 1st Reading today ( Deut. 30:10) It is part of Moses' farewell speech to the Israelites. He exhorts them to commit themselves to the Lord by observing His commandments. Before this period, the Israelites had seen the commandments as external observances. Moses is letting them know that it must spring from an internal experience ..... from inside of them ..... from within their hearts. The people are saying to Moses, "Who will go up to the sky to get this law, or who will go across the sea?" Moses responds, "Nobody needs to go get the Law for

you. The Lord has already written it in your hearts.” We have an innate relationship with Him and He speaks to us in our hearts.

So, the Gospel presents us a lawyer asking Jesus the question, “What must I do to inherit Eternal Life?” There may indeed have been an air of arrogance about the lawyer’s question, and it was meant to embarrass Jesus. But, Jesus cleverly puts the onus back on the lawyer. — How do you read the law? “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.”

“You have answered correctly; do this and you will live” Jesus answers him. But, the lawyer was not satisfied .....“Who is my neighbor?”

This becomes a huge and radical teaching in the experience of the Christian life. It begins by asserting a very important teaching that is core to our Christian faith, namely, we are responsible not just for the sins we commit, but we are equally responsible for the sins of omission ..... where we chose to not do our part, when we could quite easily provide a helping-hand. And this is the key to understanding the Gospel. It is the answer to the issue of sins of omission. We are not just responsible for the sins we commit. As followers of Jesus Christ we are responsible for doing good when the opportunity comes our way.

Tolstoy says, a drama does not tell us the whole of a person’s life. What it does is place a person in a situation. Then, from the way the person deals with that situation, his or her character is revealed to us. This is precisely what Jesus does with His parable. He places the priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan in a situation. They are faced with a real situation ..... a real decision ..... Their response will tell a whole lot about who they are as a person. It addresses the big question in all of our lives, “Why should I help that person?”

That question can be addressed in a number of different ways—  
Why ?      Why Should ?      Why Should I ?

There is but one simple answer to each of the questions ..... Because I claim Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior ..... no other reason ..... and no other answer!!!!  
This is why it is such a powerful and revolutionary parable, not just a nice story.  
If I am in Christ, then I have got to be all in ..... there is no such thing as Part-Time discipleship ! No being part-time in relationship with Him. It requires being all in !!!!

It brings to mind for me that familiar television series : Undercover Boss. Each episode features a CEO of a major corporation who, in disguise, joins the employees of that company in their daily work. So we get to see the CEO of a sanitation company collecting trash in an alley, or the head of a retail company working the sales floor and dealing with difficult customers, or the president of a restaurant chain washing dishes and bussing tables. The climax of each episode, of course is when the identity of the

“Undercover Boss” is revealed to his or her “coworkers.” The assumption driving the show is that the employees would behave differently if they knew who their coworker really is.

This is the moral of the great parable. We have a very practical application of this parable in our own lives at this point with our current plans for renovation and reconstruction. We need a lot of Good Samaritans to ensure the future of our Church, its growth, and development ..... I have no doubt He is inviting us to take on this challenge at this particular point in our journey.

As of today, almost 40% of our people have responded, I am extremely hopeful that He will continue that good work, and that many more will make a response in the very near future. I ask that you continue to pray the Lord for His guidance in your own personal response. Naturally, a 40% response would make it extremely difficult to accomplish this great task.

— Fr. Gerry Hurley