

JESUS REJECTED BY WOULD-BE FOLLOWERS

Luke 9:51-62; John 7:1-10

STRUCTURE

Key-person: Jesus

Key-location: Road from Galilee to Jerusalem

Key-repetitions:

- Jesus rejected by: his brothers (Jn 7:3-5); Samaritan village (Lk 9:53); three would-be followers (Lk 9:57-62).
- Excuses for not following Jesus: Jesus' brothers did not believe in him (Jn 7:5); Samaritan village saw that Jesus was going to Jerusalem (Lk 9:53); one wanted to wait for father's death (Lk 9:59); one needed to tell family good-bye (Lk 9:61).

Key-attitudes:

- Jesus' brothers' unbelief.
- Samaritan village's prejudice against Jews.
- Disciples James and John's prejudice against Samaritans.
- Three would-be followers' reluctance to commit to Jesus.
- Jesus' determination.

Initial-situation:

The third year of Jesus' ministry is divided into two halves. During the first half, Jesus went on three retreats seeking to be alone with his disciples.

After Jesus fed the five thousand, the crowds wanted to make him king by force. After this, Jesus traveled in Galilee. He stayed away from Judea where the Jewish leaders wanted to kill him (Jn 7:1).

Initial-problem:

It was time for the annual Jewish Feast of the Tabernacles and Jesus set out for Jerusalem where there were Jews who wanted to kill him.

Final-situation:

Three would-be followers gave excuses for not following Jesus.

BIBLE STORY

Jesus Is Rejected by his Brothers

It was almost time for the annual Jewish Feast of the Tabernacles. Jesus' brothers told him, "Leave this place and go to Judea, so your disciples can see the miracles you do. No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret." Jesus' own brothers didn't believe in him.

Jesus told his brothers, "You go to the Feast. I'm not yet going up to this Feast. The time has not yet come for me." Jesus stayed in Galilee.

Jesus' brothers left for the Feast. Then Jesus left for the Feast in secret (Jn 7:2-10).

Jesus Is Rejected by a Samaritan Village

Jesus decided to go through Samaria to Jerusalem. Jesus sent messengers to a Samaritan village to arrange for a place to stay. The Samaritans refused hospitality because it was clear Jesus was going to Jerusalem. The disciples, James and John, asked Jesus, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" Jesus rebuked James and John. So Jesus and his disciples went to another village (Lk 9:51-56).

Jesus Is Rejected by Would-be Followers

Jesus and his disciples were going to Jerusalem. They were walking along the road, and a man said to Jesus, "I'll follow you wherever you go."

Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place of his own to sleep."

Jesus invited another man, "Follow me."

The man replied, "Lord, I'll follow you after my father is dead and buried."

Jesus told him, "Let the dead bury their own dead. You go and proclaim the Kingdom of God."

Another man said, "I'll follow you, Lord; but, first let me go back and tell my family good-bye."

Jesus replied, "Anyone who starts plowing and then keeps looking back is unfit for service in the Kingdom of God" (Lk 9:57-62).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

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| 1. What catches your attention in the story? | 5. How did the characters face their problems? |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 6. How have you faced similar problems? |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story? | 7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you? |
| 4. What problems did the characters face? | 8. What does the story tell about God? |

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who were some of the people who rejected Jesus?
2. When the Samaritans rejected Jesus, how did James and John want to retaliate?
3. How did Jesus respond to James and John's desire to retaliate against the Samaritans?
4. What excuses did prospective followers give for not following Jesus?
5. How did Jesus answer each excuse?
6. What excuse do you tend to use for putting off what Jesus would have you do?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **Judgment belongs to God. Christians should not retaliate against those who reject Jesus.** The Samaritan village refused hospitality to Jesus. James and John didn't want to stop at just shaking the dust from their feet (Lk 9:5). They wanted to retaliate and call down fire from heaven as Elijah did on servants of a wicked king of Israel in 2 Kings 1. Jesus reprimanded James and John (Lk 9:51-56). Jesus demonstrated the love that he preached (Mat 5:44).
2. **Christians do not find in Jesus support for racial prejudice.** Because of the hostility between Jews and Samaritans, most Jews bypassed Samaria. However, Jesus went through this hostile territory (Jn 4:1-42; Lk 9:51-56). Jesus rebuked John and James' prejudice against the Samaritans (Lk 9:55-56).
3. **Jesus rebukes his followers whose zeal for him manifests attitudes contrary to the Lord's teachings.** The Samaritans rejected Jesus. John and James manifested their zeal for the Lord by seeking revenge on the Samaritans. Jesus rebuked the two brothers (Lk 9:55).
4. **Procrastination in obeying God may result in missed opportunity.** Three would-be followers made excuses for putting off a decision to follow Jesus (Lk 9:57-62). It was close to the end of Jesus' time on earth and the would-be followers would not have other opportunities to walk the road with Jesus.
5. **Followers of Jesus must be willing to pay the cost of discipleship without hesitation or delay.** The would-be followers of Jesus wanted to choose the time when they would begin to follow him (Lk 9:57-62).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Pantomime Retelling of the Story:

The storyteller tells the story one time. Then the storyteller:

- Chooses a listener to pantomime the story as the storyteller retells it a second time.
- Invites a listener to retell the story.
- Asks listeners if the one who retold the story left out or added to the story.