

- ▶ Facing Jerusalem
- ▶ Luke 9:51-56
- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ <sup>51</sup> *As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, LUKE INTRODUCES MORE DETAIL OF BIRTH AND EARLY LIFE AND OF THE START OF HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY IN THE SYNAGOGUE IN NAZARETH – HE WAS REJECTED THERE BECAUSE “NO PROPHET IS ACCEPTED IN HIS HOME TOWN – HIS MESSAGE WAS CLEAR – GOOD NEWS PROCLAMATION, LIGHT, FREEDOM; JESUS AS NO STRANGER TO REJECTION;*
- ▶ Turning point
- ▶ THIS IS A TURNING POINT IN THE STORY – HE KNOWS THAT HIS ULTIMATE MINISTRY AT THE CROSS IS APPROACHING AND SO HE PLOTS A PATH THERE; IT IS ONLY CHAPTER 9 – THERE ARE 14 MORE CHAPTERS TO COME, A MAJORITY OF WHICH ARE UNIQUE TO LUKE – A TEACHING MINISTRY IN PREPARATION FOR WHAT IS TO COME – LUKE NEEDS THIS TRAJECTORY TO BE CLEAR – THE WHOLE GOSPEL IS POINTING IN ONE DIRECTION – THE CROSS; THEREFORE...
- ▶ Facing Jerusalem
- ▶ *Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. (NIV) – ALSO TRANSLATED SET HIS FACE TOWARDS JERUSALEM; A RESOLUTION, A FIXED AND CLEAR DIRECTION AND PURPOSE. JESUS TRAJECTORY IS SET TOWARDS THE CROSS – “JERUSALEM , A CITY OF FATE AND DESTINY WHERE GOD’S PLAN AND REJECTION OF THE PROPHET ARE REALISED” (DARRELL BOCK)*
- ▶ Sending out
- ▶ <sup>52</sup> *And he sent messengers on ahead, JOHN THE BAPTIST’S MISSION WAS TO” PREPARE THE WAY”; IN THE SAME WAY JESUS SENDS OUT THE TWELVE AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS CHAPTER, WITH POWER AND AUTHORITY TO DRIVE OUT DEMONS AND CURE THE SICK; AND THEY GO FROM VILLAGE TO VILLAGE PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS AND HEALING PEOPLE EVERYWHERE (9:6); AFTER THIS EVENT JESUS WILL SEND OUT THE 72 (10:1) “2 BY 2 INTO EVERY TOWN AND PLACE THAT HE WAS ABOUT TO GO”; SENDING OUT MESSENGERS AHEAD OF HIM WAS A USUAL TACTIC SO THAT WHEN HE ARRIVED PEOPLE WOULD BE READY AND OPEN; BUT NOT IN SAMARIA....*
- ▶ SAMARIA?
- ▶ *who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; <sup>53</sup> but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem.*
- ▶ THE MESSENGERS WHO GO AHEAD INTO SAMARIA ARE NOT WELCOMED. WHY?
- ▶ SAMARIA ESTABLISHED IN 880BC BY KING OMRI AFTER TWO SHORT REIGNS;
- ▶ **FIRSTLY, ELAH** TWO YEARS MURDERED BY ZIMRI STRUCK THE KING WHILE DRUNK HE ALSO HIS FATHER , BAASHA’S, FAMILY. BAASHA HAD BEEN A DISOBEDIENT KING AND THE WORDS OF THE PROPHET JEHU AGAINST HIM CAME TRUE AT THE HANDS OF ZIMRI.
- ▶ Zimri ...Omri

- ▶ **SECONDLY, ZIMRI:** WHEN NEWS OF THE REGICIDE REACH THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, WITHIN A WEEK OMRI THE ARMY COMMANDER SET SIEGE TO THE CITY WHICH THEN WAS SET ALIGHT BY ZIMRI WHO THEN DIED IN THE INFERNO.
- ▶ **THIRDLY, OMRI** BECAME KING. WHAT A START TO A NEW NATION. AFTER 6 YEARS OF RULING FROM TIRZAH, OMRI BOUGHT A HILL AND BUILT A NEW CITY CALLING IT SAMARIA. OMRI WAS THE **FATHER OF AHAB** WHO WAS THE KING OF ISRAEL THAT THE PROPHET ELIJAH WAS SET AGAINST AT MOUNT CARMEL WHERE – YES – FIRE WAS BROUGHT DOWN ON THE PROPHETS OF BAAL (1 KINGS 18).... BUT MORE LIKELY LUKE REFERS TO THE 100 SOLDIERS SENT BY **AHAZIA**, OMRI’S SON, TO ELIJAH THAT ARE CONSUMED BY FIRE FROM HEAVEN.
- ▶ TWO MOUNTAINS
- ▶ <sup>54</sup> *When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them<sup>[a]</sup>?” TO THE DISCIPLES THE SAMARITANS WERE BEYOND THE PALE; THEY INTERMARRIED AND CLAIMED MOUNT GERIZIM AS THE TRUE PLACE TO WORSHIP YAHWEH; BASED ON THE STORY IN JOSHUA OBEYING MOSES’ COMMAND IN DEUT TO SPLIT THE TRIBES AT SCHECHEM, ON CROSSING THE JORDAN; SIX TRIBES ON THE MOUNT OF BLESSING KNOWN AS GEREZIM AND SIX TRIBES ON THE MOUNT OF CURSES, MOUNT EBAL*
- ▶ Samaritans in Jesus time
- ▶ *. FIRST CENTURY SAMARITANS CAN TRACE THEIR ROOTS TO THIS BELIEF in the mountain of blessing, Gerizim, descended from the HALF TRIBES OF JOSEPH WHO RETURNED FROM THE EXILE IN ASSYRIA IN THE 700’S BC, TO THEM JERUSALEM WAS **NOT** THE HOLY PLACE OF GOD THAT DAVID ESTABLISHED, BUT INSTEAD IT WAS MOUNT GERIZIM.*
- ▶ Objections to Samaritans
- ▶ *TO THE JEWS SAMARIA WAS A CAPITAL CITY ESTABLISHED BY THE FATHER OF AHAB FOR AN IMPURE ONLY HALF-JEWISH SECT WHO, INTERMARRIED WITH LOCALS, AND DENIED JERUSALEM AND TEMPLE WORSHIP. SAMARITANS WERE DESPISED.*
- ▶ *IT MAY HAVE COME AS A SURPRISE TO JAMES AND JOHN THAT JESUS WOULD EVEN TRY TO BRING GOOD NEWS TO THE SAMARITANS AND WOULD BE NO SURPRISE THAT THEY IN TURN REJECTED JESUS. THEY ASK permission TO CALL DOWN FIRE AND DESTROY THE SAMARITAN VILLAGES as an act of vengeance partly because of this rejection but mostly because they were Samaritans.*
- ▶ James and John
- ▶ *NOT LONG BEFORE THIS JAMES AND JOHN HAD BEEN ATOP THE MOUNTAIN AND SEEN JESUS’ TRANSFIGURED. HE HAD ELIJAH AND MOSES NEXT TO HIM. THIS WOULD BE FRESH IN THEIR MINDS AS WELL AS GOD’S INJUNCTION “LISTEN TO HIM”.*
- ▶ *WHILE TRYING TO GRASP JESUS’ CLAIM THAT HE WOULD BE “BETRAYED INTO THE HANDS OF MEN”, HIS FIRST REVELATION OF HIS DEATH TO COME, THEY START TO ARGUE ABOUT “WHO WILL BE THE GREATEST”. JESUS ENDS THE ARGUMENT BY SAYING THAT “HE WHO IS LEAST AMONG YOU WILL BE THE GREATEST AND THAT “WHOEVER IS NOT AGAINST YOU IS FOR YOU”.*

- ▶ *JESUS TEACHING IS COMPLETELY COUNTER TO THE ASSUMPTIONS AND BELIEFS that THE DISCIPLES hold. THIS EPISODE MAKES NONSENSE OF THOSE ASSUMPTIONS. "OF COURSE SAMARITANS SHOULD BE NOT ONLY SHUNNED BUT PUNISHED FOR THEIR REJECTION", THEY THINK*
- ▶ *. JESUS DISAGREES. WITHIN A FEW LINES OF this episode, JESUS IS EXTOLLING THE PROSPECT THAT EVEN A SAMARITAN CAN BE A NEIGHBOUR – IN CHAPTER 10. RESPONDING TO THE QUESTION FROM THE TEACHER OF THE LAW "but who is mt neighbour", JESUS TELLS A STORY about a man beaten and robbed on the road– "WHICH ONE OF THE THREE WAS A NEIGHBOUR TO THE MAN?" HE ASKS. – THE SCRIBE HAS TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT IT WAS THE SAMARITAN, THE ONE THAT HAD MERCY ON THE MAN THAT HAD BEEN ATTACKED.*
- ▶ *GIVEN THIS BACKGROUND WE SHOULD NOT THEREFORE BE SURPRISED BY JESUS' REACTION to the disciples request to punish the villages...*
- ▶ **REBUKE**
- ▶ <sup>55</sup> ***But Jesus turned and rebuked them.*** <sup>56</sup> Then he and his disciples went to another village.
- ▶ *I WOULD LIKE TO EXPLORE THE IDEA OF REBUKE. WHY DID JESUS REACT IN THIS WAY? HOW DOES JESUS REBUKE ELSEWHERE IN THE GOSPELS? WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US?*
- ▶ *Rrebuke is defined according to Google as "express sharp disapproval or criticism of (someone) because of their behaviour or actions"; similar words include "have a go at", "give someone a mouthful", "tear off a strip" "come down on" "give someone a roasting", "berate, chastise, reproach, scold or reprimand"*
- ▶ **My rebukes**
- ▶ *Rebuking my children will often happen at a snap, in anger, be over the top, come out harsher than I intended and possibly require an apology afterwards! ON social media my rebukes are often passive aggressive and the desire to rebuke burns within me to get the last word and to show anyone else watching the thread that I am right, they are wrong and I will keep posting until they agree with me!!*
- ▶ *But that is not what is going on here.*
- ▶ [Epetimēsen](#) – he rebuked
- ▶ GREEK WORD – "HE REBUKED"; ROOT WORD MEANS "to honor, to mete out due measure, to censure"  
**2008** 1 (from /epí, "suitably on," intensifies /timáō, "esteem, place value") – properly, assign value as is fitting the situation, building on the situation to correct (re-direct).
- ▶ [2008](#) /epitimáō ("to warn by instructing") can mean "rebuke" but its fundamental sense is "warning to prevent something from going wrong"

YOU DO NOT KNOW WHAT KIND OF SPIRIT YOU ARE OF FOR THE SON OF MAN DID NOT COME TO DESTROY MENS LIVES BUT TO SAVE THEM – Jesus corrects the disciples, not in anger but to reiterate his own purpose and mission that they themselves would take on

John 3:17 God did not send his son to condemn the world but to save the world through him.

Jesus knew his message was for the whole world. Who you are did not exclude you from access to it. That was the same message last week – all are sinners , even the Pharisees.

- ▶ Woman at the well – a Jesus example
- ▶ WOMAN: “You are a Jew and I a Samaritan; how can you ask me for a drink?” (4:9)
- ▶ “Our Fathers worshipped on this mountain but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is Jerusalem” (4:20)
- ▶ JESUS: “I give you living water which is the water of eternal life”
- ▶ “A time will come when true worshippers will worship in Spirit and in truth. God is Spirit and his worshippers must worship in Spirit and truth” (4:24)
- ▶ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony (4:39)
- ▶ JESUS: “whoever is not against you is for you” (Luke 9:50)
- ▶ What might this mean for us?
- ▶ **1. Don’t rush to judgement**
- ▶ **2. Don’t be quick to punish**
- ▶ **3. Don’t get distracted or discouraged from the main purpose**
- ▶ Don’t rush to judgement
- ▶ **Monty Python and the Holy Grail** – crowd want to burn someone as a witch; Sire Bedivere uses logic to help assess whether she is a witch or not – dressed like one – they dressed her up
- ▶ - she turned me into a newt – “I got better” – showing nothing of sort
- ▶ - witches burn, so does wood, wood floats on water, ducks float on water and so if she weighs the same as a duck she must be a witch
- ▶ They are so intent on rushing to judgement that they will use any excuse and any twisted logic to find her guilty
- ▶ The Crucible
- ▶ A less light hearted note on this is the 17<sup>th</sup> C Salem Trials on which the Arthur Millar play “the Crucible is based”; such was the hysteria of witch finding that they abandoned the truth and merely sought repentance – admit your witchcraft and repent or hang; scores were settled by false accusations and many died unnecessarily
- ▶ Arthur Millar
- ▶ Millar wrote the play in the 1950’s as a satire on the House Committee on Unamerican Activities and the process that became known as McCarthyism. Named after Senator McCarthy who led the campaign, companies and government would need to satisfy themselves that employees were not communists. It was the height of the cold war and America was gripped in fear of “red under the bed”. Anyone suspected was under immense pressure and friends, colleagues and family members pressurized to testify against them.

- ▶ Millar quote
- ▶ Writing in the New Yorker in 1996 about the film version of the play that year Arthur Millar wrote :
- ▶ *“I was motivated in some great part by the paralysis that had set in among many liberals who, despite their discomfort with the inquisitors’ violations of civil rights, were fearful, and with good reason, of being identified as covert Communists if they should protest too strongly.”*
- ▶ *The climate of fear made everyone judgmental of everyone else.*
- ▶ 2020 judgements
- ▶ Leave vs remain
- ▶ Scots and welsh and N Irish vs English
- ▶ Lancashire vs Manchester
- ▶ Mask vs No mask
- ▶ North vs South
- ▶ Orthodox vs Liberal/progressive
- ▶ Trump vs not Trump
- ▶ The world is filled with opposing ideas and identities
- ▶ Jesus calls us to a Spirit of unity not a spirit of opposition – no fire from heaven just because they are Samaritans – a time to share Good news and see the mercy in the person we have reviled all these years
- ▶ 2. Don’t be quick to punish
- ▶ There was a story in the news today about a man who climbed on the roof of a church. He was ripping off the Cross. An act of vandalism. It was all across social media.
- ▶ Here are two responses:
- ▶ Nigel Farage “We are a Christian country and our culture is under assault. Our Archbishops are complaining about Brexit yet say nothing about the desecration of a London Church”
- ▶ Christian Response
- ▶ Rev Thomas, minister of Chadwell Heath Baptist Church “Yes, the cross was vandalized. However, when I caught him it became apparent very quickly that he was not at all mentally very well. We retrieved the cross and he didn’t harm himself or anyone else. The police responded very quickly and took him into custody where he will be professionally assessed and hopefully receive the help he requires...material things can be fixed with ease. Had he lost his life that would have been tragic”
- ▶ I think I know which response Jesus would approve of most. As someone said in the radio this morning – a scalpel is better than a sledgehammer, dissect the detail rather than through our opinions at each other across a void.

- ▶ 3. Don't get distracted from your purpose
- ▶ Opposition and rejection did not put Jesus off and it shouldn't put us off either. Proclaiming his mission in Nazareth and not being made welcome in Samaria did not and could not stop him in his mission to teach, proclaim, heal and eventually go to Jerusalem to die.
- ▶ No distractions
- ▶ His rebuke to the disciples was not about venting anger or frustration. It was about redirecting their attention to the task in hand. Keeping focus on proclamation of the kingdom and making disciples, baptizing them and teaching them all that he had commanded. And to love one another so that others would see that he is the Son of God and that they were his disciples. Calling down a fiery death was not part of that equation or that calling.
- ▶ Stay focused
- ▶ We too should not get distracted from our mission – Making Passionate Disciples for Christ; no matter the obstacles, no matter the frustrations no matter the rejection or opposition. Just as Jesus at this point in his ministry “resolutely set his face”, so should we too. It may not be a straight journey but we are called to remain both focused and resolute, just as the mission giver was.
- ▶ Lets pray....
- ▶ Prayer Ministry – Come Holy Spirit
- ▶ Lord Jesus help us to be slow to judgement
- ▶ Help us to be slower to punish and quick to forgive, to be the offerors of olive branches of peace and silent listeners rather than vocalists wishing to get the last word
- ▶ Help us to maintain our focus on the task that you have given us – individually or as a church – to make passionate disciples; to seek your face, to rise in passion for your mission, to weep for the lost, to speak of you and all that you have done for us.
- ▶ IN Jesus mighty name we pray
- ▶ Amen.