

Our Totally Committed Savior Wants Totally Committed Followers

- Today J makes some pretty shocking statements; says some things seem really, really harsh. Don't go father's funeral. Really? Seems unreasonable. Don't say goodbye fam. Come on; not how you treat loved ones. These statements of J almost seem calloused, even contradictory to other portions Scripture: like 4th Com, honor parents, at least by going funeral; or 1st lesson: Elijah lets Elisha say bye fam. Certainly fam is blessing from God. So why harsh tone from J today; why strong language?
- Clearly with this strong language, J making strong point, re what means to follow him. Following J means to believe/trust in, be Xian. J's whole point today: to be Xian, follow J, requires TC. Can't be halfhearted, can't ride fence; have be 100% committed to J; have be completely dedicated to him – bec if not, that's not following J way he wants be followed. That's strong point J makes today with strong language; and it's message we all have take heart. Our TCSwTCF.
- But first let's realize, J is in fact our TCS! He's TC to us! **Vs. 51.** This verse, turning point in Lk's gospel. Until now, J ministering in N by Gal; but beg here & for rest of book, making way S to Jer. (Like riding plane, cruising along: you can feel when begin the descent to dest.) J now making final approach to Jer. You know what happens there. J will: eat last supper, pray Geth, betrayed Judas, arrested guards, beaten soldiers, crucified Pilate, suffer torturous death on cross, then finally rise dead Easter, before ascending back heaven. And all that takes place in/around Jer. J came on mission to save us; that mission culminates in Jer. He knew pain/hatred that awaited him there – nails, whips, crucify him, being abandoned by Father. Knew exactly what he faced. But J is our TCS; was TC to saving us. That's why **vs. 51.** Lit, "set his face" to go to Jer; like in Isa 50, where J: **"Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame" (50:7).** J set his face, with absolute determination, to do what came to do, out of love for us. Nothing could stop or distract him. J is TCS.
- And that TC of J to us is what inspires/motivates us to be TC to him – which what J wants. Our TCSwTCF. And J&J thought they fit the bill. Remem: they so on fire for J, wanted to bring down some fire for J. See, J heading from Gal in N to Jer in S; in between, land of Samaria. You prob know: Jews & Samaritans did not get along, at all. Some Jews would even take long way around Samaria when travelling so wouldn't have set foot in that country. But not J; he's got no problem with Samaria. So **vs. 52-53.** Ouch; rejected. And this outright rejection of J, for J&J (who really felt TC to J), brought out worst in them. **Vs. 54.** While we may chuckle: whoa, fellas; easy with fire from heaven; who think you are, Elijah on Mt. Carmel, with prophets of Baal? But J rebukes them, bec being TC to J means being TC to his mission. What was J's mission? Destroy everyone who opposes him? No: to save a world that opposes him. **"The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (Lk 19:10).** **Jn 3:17, "God did not send his Son...condemn...save."** J came on mission to save; he's our TCS. And sometimes when we see our Savior outright rejected by world, sometimes brings out worst in us, too. Ever felt that same burning anger J&J felt inside you when watch sitcoms, look at social media, listen news talk – so many people rejecting J! This world, country: anti-Xian, all over place! And that hurts, bec we love J. And sometimes in our misguided anger, we want call down some fire, too; or least harbor hatred vs enemies of Xp. But that's not attitude of our TCS; and not attitude of his TCF, either. Being TC to J means being TC to his mission, mission of love, mission to save. J doesn't hate people that hate him; loves them, died for them. And died for us, too, for all times we hate instead of love. The true character of Xian: following J in faith, being committed to his mission of love. Our TCSwTCF.

- And nowhere is that more evident than in the seemingly harsh, certainly strong statements J makes today. **Vs. 57-58**, implying that if you follow J, neither will you. Following J comes at high cost; means being willing to sacrifice creature comforts. Heard re sacrifices Paul made in 2nd lesson. But maybe you have it easier. Maybe you do have place lay head; maybe do enjoy creature comforts. Wonderful – those are blessings from God. But question is: what’s more imp to you: J, or your stuff? What’s most imp to you in your life: J, or anything else? Those your only two options. You can’t be halfhearted; can’t ride fence. You’re either 100% committed to J, or not.
- That’s what J teaching us here. **Vs. 59-62**. And if that sounds harsh, it’s bec J trying tear down anything that stands in way of our TC to him. Having home not bad; loving fam not bad. But even good things become bad when become more imp to us than J. This is really just 1st Com: no other gods. And anything can become god when becomes more imp to us than J.
- I always think re in Olympics, medals, pedestal; gold middle, top. That’s where J needs be in our hearts: top pedestal. Perhaps our danger, not that we outright reject J, like this Samaritan village did. Our danger: shift J down step/two on pedestal. “Don’t worry, J; you still get medal; but right now, you step down here; this moves to top.” Don’t know if we’d ever say that; but we certainly live that. Just look at your own life; examine your own heart. What have you put on top spot in your heart that isn’t J? What have you allowed become more imp to you than your Savior? Make no mistake: only one #1 spot. And if it isn’t J up there, then you’re not truly following him, and you’re not TC to him.
- But thanks be to God: our salvation doesn’t depend on our com to J; it depends on J’s com to us. And dear followers of J, we have TCS! He set face for Jer; resolutely resolved to rescue us from sin, including sin of knocking him off top spot in our hearts! And if not enough, even still calls us to follow him! Wants us to be his followers, so that we can follow him to cross. And there’s no better place to be than at cross, bec at cross our TCS gave his life to give us eternal life, and to give us purpose for life. It’s cross that makes me want be TCF of J. And I know that will be hard. It means sacrificing creature comforts. Means prioritizing J above my own fam; J even once said, **“If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters – yes, even their own life – such a person cannot be my disciple” (Lk 14:26)** – so following J means prioritizing him above my fam. Means not longing for split commitment. **Vs. 62** – split com. When mowing grass in yard, can’t look behind at ACed house (wish be inside) AND cut straight line with mower at same time. You either quit yard, go inside; or look straight ahead, get work done. Can’t have a split com. In OT Lot’s wife became pillar of salt bec in her heart, split com: kinda wanted flee Sodom/Gom, but kinda wanted stay.
- But our TCSwTCF. None us TC. But J forgives that, and calls us to follow him. And when we fail, he picks us up again. That’s kind of Savior we have/follow. So follow J, with urgency/devotion, without delay/regret, without split commitment and without looking back. Follow J to cross. He’s your TCS; he want you be his TCF.

Luke 9:51-62

⁵¹ As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. ⁵² And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; ⁵³ but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?” ⁵⁵ But Jesus turned and rebuked them. ⁵⁶ Then he and his disciples went to another village.

⁵⁷ As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” ⁵⁸ Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.” ⁵⁹ He said to another man, “Follow me.” But he replied, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.” ⁶⁰ Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” ⁶¹ Still another said, “I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family.” ⁶² Jesus replied, “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”