

Luke 9:51-62
Deacon Thomas Winninger 612-801-3194
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Homily 152
1 Kgs 19:16,19-21, Gal. 5:1,13-18

Brothers and Sisters: For freedom Christ has set us free, so stand firm and not submit again the yoke of Slavery.

Think about all the moments in our lives when we thought we were set free? We got our first bike, or trick? Freedom. We went off to kindergarten? Freedom! We got our drivers permit. Freedom! Our first car? Real freedom. We graduate from school. Freedom. We turn 21, freedom. We retire, freedom. We go to confession, freedom. To live in America, Freedom. Though maybe not, for many have found the opposite. With each level of freedom there is a new level of responsibility. With freedom there is commitment; actually there is covenant. As we use to say, the kid who gets his first set of wheels and then quickly realizes that there seems to be less freedom than before. The parents want to know where he is at, where he is going, and when he will be home. He has freedom, but now he has to take care of the car. He has to put gas in it. He has to pay for the gas. No wonder kids today don't want to leave home until they are twenty-six years old. That's right, statistics now show that on average kids are staying attached to the home till the age of twenty-six. There is more freedom, there is less responsibility, and the benefits of the home outweigh the benefits they can enjoy in the real world.

These readings today are full of adolescent dependency. Even Elisha, when anointed by Elijah in the first reading from Kings, says "wait a minute, let me spend a little more time at home with my mother and father". Three times in the gospel of Luke Jesus is encountered by those who seek the benefits of following Christ, but says, "wait a minute, I'm still attached to my home, I can't leave immediately". Remember the first one even says, "I will follow you wherever you go". When challenged by Christ with the price to be paid, nowhere to rest his head, the man declined. The second man wanted to wait till he could bury the dead and the third wanted to say farewell to his family before he left to follow Christ. Each of the men in the readings today had excuses, "I will follow you, but first..." When Jesus calls, do you think you have all the time in the world, that he will just keep the offer open for the chance of a lifetime? The chance of a lifetime. Now, I do believe we have multiple chances, but not the same chances.

The gospel reading today from Luke identifies the turning point of Jesus' life. Note where it says, "When the days for Jesus being taken up were fulfilled, he resolutely determined to journey on to Jerusalem." This is where in scripture Jesus turns to the final destination: Jerusalem, the cross, Crucifixion, death, and resurrection. Not that he could no longer be bothered with those who denied him; in this situation it was the Samaritan who refused to receive him on the journey. Unfortunately, we are not ready to say good-bye to the past and move on. James and John wanted to call down fire to punish the village, but Jesus said to just move on, just move on, leave the dead to bury in dead.

What are we called to do as a result of these reading? What should we take note of for our daily lives? First, we are called to reflect on our own lives. What desires of our heart were placed there by Jesus? What are the desires of your heart? Why do we not

follow them, why do we turn away? Part of the reason is we do not easily make commitments. "Let me see what I can do!" is not a commitment. "I would be glad to do it if I only had the time," is not a commitment. Note, we all have the same amount of time. We all have 24 hours in everyday. We set the priorities. If we are not setting the priorities as Jesus says we are not free, we are slaves. True freedom brings responsibilities. Freedom is a responsibility. Freedom, like faith, is a commitment to give, it is not an opportunity to take. Freedom, like faith, is something we give each other. Freedom and faith are based on sacrifice.

Second, we are called to overcome our excuses to follow Christ. For some of us the excuse is we didn't here the call, but Jesus states we all have a call, the call is loud and obvious. "I don't hear it you say," well I did not hear it loud enough for years. You see, I was creating my own obviousness. Actually that is a word? If not, I will pretend it is. Creating you own OBVIOUSNESS is like being self-indulgent. Setting you own goals in life then asking God to accept them, asking God to support them, asking God to make them possible for you to attain them. Obviousness is when I do something to create my own opportunities then claim they are from God. As it says in the readings today, all real opportunities come from God. We get them everyday, he gives us repetitive experiences to get our attention. I remember going to the open house in 2002 for the diaconate. As Lynne and I drove home from the presentation on all the demands of being a deacon I, like the man who went home to say goodbye to his father and mother, said to Lynne, "there is no way I can make a decision about being a deacon. I have a busy life and the kids and my career". There was a big pause and the car was filled with a vacuum. Then she looked at me and said, "but is it you decision"? Then another big pause, and she said, "Perhaps he is not asking you to decide, he is asking you to open yourself to what he is asking you to doing". Just agree to formation and in being formed in Christ you will find the answer to your life.

Do you understand you call? Do you know God's purpose for your life? Do you have an excuse?

Jesus Speaks, are you getting the message? Leading with desire to serve. Great questions, scripture, and prayer will form you so you can understand the freedom to serve Christ. You will come to understand the joy and challenge of living your life in his great name.

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