Teen Connect

First Presbyterian Church Sarasota

Volunteers or Disciples?

June 29, 2025 // Luke 9:51-62

Case Study: No Easy Answers

The Setup (Luke 9:51-56): Jesus is "resolutely" heading toward Jerusalem, where he knows he will face the cross. It's a moment of intense focus and purpose. He sends messengers to a Samaritan village to get things ready, but the people there reject him because he's going to Jerusalem. James and John get furious and ask Jesus, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" Jesus rebukes them. His mission isn't about power and destruction.

The Interviews (Luke 9:57-62): As they walk, three different people approach Jesus, seemingly ready to follow him. They are like enthusiastic volunteers. But Jesus' responses are intense and unsettling:

- To the one who says, "I will follow you wherever you go," Jesus replies that he has no home, no place to rest his head.
- To another he says, "Follow me," but the man asks to first go and bury his father. Jesus' reply is stark: "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."
- A third says he'll follow, but first wants to say goodbye to his family. Jesus says, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

What's Your Excuse?

Jesus' potential followers had "good" reasons to delay. What are some of our modern excuses for not fully committing to what God calls us to do?

"I'm too busy with school/sports/friends right now."

"I'll get more serious about my faith when I'm older."

"My friends would think it's weird."

"I'm not good enough / I don't know enough yet."

Looking Forward

Jesus' metaphor of putting a hand to the plow and not looking back is about focus. If you're plowing a field, you have to look ahead to make a straight line. What "things behind" (past mistakes, other people's opinions, old habits) can make you "plow a crooked line" in your faith journey?

The "No Excuses" Challenge

This week, identify **one thing** you know God wants you to do that you've been putting off. It doesn't have to be massive. It could be: reading your Bible for 10 minutes before scrolling, apologizing to a family member, inviting a friend to youth group, or praying about a situation instead of just worrying about it.

The challenge is to do it **without making an excuse or delaying.** Just this once, act on the call immediately. See how it feels to put your hand to the plow and not look back.

Key Takeaway:

A volunteer serves when it's convenient; a disciple follows no matter the cost.