

ASH WEDNESDAY everything [in] between intention & action

Read Luke 9:51-62, NIV

Samaritan Opposition

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.

The Cost of Following Jesus

9:57–60pp—Mt 8:19–22

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.” ¹

Commentary | Dr. Mindy McGarrah Sharp

Lent calls us to step forward, even when we're not fully ready

Are you ready to move toward transformation? Are you ready to listen for good news in seemingly impossible spaces, even as a divided people and planet? Ready to set Lenten

¹ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Lk 9:51–62.

intentions, even with this year's challenges? Ready, even with some good reasons to wait a little longer to begin?

Getting ready shifts intended journeys to active practices of packing, strength-training, and starting farewells. The disciples had already asked about itineraries: Where will we sleep? What will we eat? Whom should we trust or fear along the way? They raise concerns about rejection and prepare to retaliate.

Regarding readiness, the more I research listening, the more I rethink it. It's tempting to consider listening a skill set: don't cross your arms, make eye contact, be curious, avoid intercultural offenses. Learn the skills, then you're ready to go.

If mastering skills precedes listening well, how long will that take? Is it possible to be completely ready? How are we supposed to listen for good news in the absolute worst, most inconvenient times?

But zoom out to communal readiness: activating intentions to change while the fresh death of old, harmful—yet beloved—ways of life hasn't even begun to be collectively buried and grieved. In this scripture, I don't hear Luke denying the grief work that keeps getting bumped off our to-do lists that are utterly overwhelming. I hear: How long will this humanity ask for extensions? How long will we say, "*Hold up, I'm almost ready.*"

When important preparation remains undone and fresh deaths remain ungrieved, the time to move is today. What if listening is a practice on the move, a learning as we go, a birth crowning at the gravesides of yesterday? This is the day. Lent is here. Are you ready?

Reflect

As Lent begins, how will you align your intentions with your actions?

SANCTIFIED ART EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN LENTEN DEVOTIONAL | EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN: INTENTION & ACTION



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