

# TFTD Lent 2025.10    Saturday March 15<sup>th</sup> No room at the inn (again ...) ... Luke 9.51-62



“Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.”

We have reached a watershed in the Gospel. Luke is less than half-way through the story he has to tell — but here at the end of chapter 9, Jesus begins his “journey to Jerusalem” which will take up the whole of the rest of the story. The first half comes to a climax on the Mount of Transfiguration (Luke 9.28-36), where the disciples see Jesus revealed in his heavenly glory, conversing on the mountain with Elijah and Moses about “the Exodus which he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem”. For the rest of the Gospel, he will be “on the way” to that Exodus, where his full glory will be revealed in the great “lifting up” of Easter: the Cross, the empty tomb, and the ascension on the Mount of Olives.

When the days drew near for Jesus to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.

What's interesting is the way Luke has arranged his story. Two mountain-tops: the mount of transfiguration, and the Mount of Olives. And in between, a journey — a long and rambling journey, with a lot of intensive conversations, life-changing encounters, and challenging teaching along the way. (As we shall see, many of Jesus' best-known parables are told "on the way to Jerusalem.") But all along, we get gentle reminders that we are "on a journey" — it's as if all the best stuff in life happens in the in-between spaces, when you think you're just "on the way" to somewhere else. You know how the best conversations always seem to happen when you're getting your coat on, standing in the doorway, just popping out (or in)?

And that in a way is a parable for Jesus' disciples, then and now. Whether we're static or roaming, out on a mission or rooted in the challenges of the everyday, following Jesus means being "on a journey" with Jesus, discovering familiar worlds with new eyes as he reveals his glory in the world around us.

The first happening on Jesus' journey is really a non-event. It's what doesn't happen that's significant here. As any pilgrimage leader knows, arranging accommodation for a large group of people is always more complicated than travelling on your own. You can't always rely on the chances of village hospitality to find enough beds for the night. And Jesus' group was getting quite large — as well as the twelve disciples, there was a group of women who travelled with them to testify to Jesus' healing power and (incidentally) to provide finance and practical support (Luke 8.1-3).

So Jesus sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; but they did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. Palestine (then and now) was a patchwork of different ethnicities and religious and political affiliations: Samaria, lying between Galilee and Jerusalem, was

notoriously hostile to Jewish pilgrims. A few years after Jesus' time, a similar quarrel between Galilean pilgrims and Samaritan villagers dragged the Romans into a massive altercation which eventually escalated into outright war.

So it's a case of "No room at the inn" — again! What was Jesus going to do? James and John, the "sons of thunder," had no doubt — he shouldn't stand any nonsense. This was an insult! "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" Did Jesus remember that other mountain in the wilderness, where the devil showed him "all the kingdoms of the world and all the glory of them," and said, "Worship me, and all this will be yours"? (You can read the story in Luke 4.1-11.) Did the thought flit through his mind, "Who do these people think they are? Don't they realise I'm doing God's business here?"

We don't know what went through Jesus' mind. But we do know what he did: He turned and rebuked them [James and John, that is]. Then they went on to another village. No problem — we'll find somewhere else. So here's the first lesson of the journey for would-be disciples. Following Jesus means not insisting on our own way, not worrying about our own reputation, not claiming a privileged status as servants of God — but choosing the difficult and costly path of peace, the road that leads to Jerusalem.

God bless,  
Loveday

Father, hear the prayer we offer:  
Not for ease that prayer shall be:  
But for grace that we may ever  
Live our lives courageously.

**Be our strength in hours of weakness,  
In our wandering, be our guide:  
Thorough endeavour, failure, danger,  
Father, be thou at our side.**

