

**Those Sanguine, Impassive,
and Impulsive Disciples**
Luke 9:57-62, Trinity Sunday XVII
September 30, 2007

Beloved of the Lord.....there are three disciples in our lesson today, and they all have their faults. The sanguine disciple is overconfident, and trusts in his own strength. In the midst of battle, he easily tires and is discouraged. The impassive disciple is very lukewarm in his faith. He can't commit. He spends too much time making up his mind, and overall is very unproductive. The third disciple is impulsive, emotional and moody. His divided heart causes him to love his own family and the world, more than the Lord. By looking back, he fails to move forward. When Jesus therefore ministers to these disciples, He is preaching to us. May we therefore joyfully hear His Word, and rejoice in His remedy.

I. The sanguine disciple. The first man who came to Jesus was not a disciple, but a scribe (Mt. 8:19). He pledged himself to Jesus saying, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go!" His words are impressive, and he is sincere. He reminds of us overconfident Peter who swore he would never deny his Lord.

There are Christians in our world today much like this man. They go to church and appear to be strong and courageous disciples. They believe they are zealous for the Lord. But that is the nature of the sanguine disciple. Their confidence and optimism soon fades when the going gets tough. They talk the talk, but in the long run they cannot walk the walk. The sanguine disciple rushes headfirst into battle, but quickly loses heart in the heat of battle. They don't take time to reflect or consider the great cost to discipleship. They wrongly assume that the Christian life is relatively easy, a high and noble life where there is honor and comfort and ease. The sanguine disciple speaks and acts too quickly, and fails to ready themselves for a long and weary battle. The danger with such a person is that they will fall away when the going gets tough. It is as Jesus said, they "for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away." Because they trust more in their own strength, than the strength of the Lord, when times are tough they quickly lose hope. They are much like a marathon runner who starts the race running as fast as he can, but quickly tires over the distance. In the long haul, other runners easily pass him by, and soon enough he lies spent at the side of the road.

And so to the man who thought himself able to follow the Lord even to death, Jesus said, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man [has nowhere] to lay his head." If Jesus had no permanent place of rest, will we? Jesus said this in order

to deflate this man's ego. For if this sanguine disciple did not soon realize that it is a long and difficult road, a long and weary race... he would soon not follow Christ at all! And so it was out of love that the Lord put the kibosh on the scribe's self-confidence. Jesus is really saying, "Do you think it is that easy to follow Me? Will you be by my side to the end? Can you drink the cup I must drink? If you are to follow me you must first stop trusting in your own strength. Without Me you can do nothing. I must be the first and only love in your life, for I loved you before you loved Me. Even your own life which you hold dear, you must be willing to lose for my sake. You must be a servant of all, and a lord of none. And you must love your enemies, even as I have loved you."

Now dear Christian, which of us has done all that God requires? Which of us has forsaken all, and followed Him? And we prepared for that long and difficult battle? When we hear such words, we think to ourselves, "Lord I didn't know the cost was so great! Lord I'm not prepared for that long battle! Lord will be able to endure if there is great suffering ahead?" Like Peter, we begin to sink into the waves of doubt and fear and worry and weakness. Our soul cries out, "Lord save us, we perish!" But, thanks be to God, the Lord does save us! He reaches out His hand to us, and His words calm our troubled breast. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." You see, we as overconfident disciples must first learn that our burdens will be heavy, for only then can God make them light. And all our burdens truly are easy, our burdens made light, when we remember our meek and lowly Jesus. In Jesus, the wearied disciple finds rest for his soul.

II. The impassive disciple. But let us now move on to the second disciple. To this disciple Jesus said, "Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." At first this man is likewise impressive. His own father had just died, and yet here he was by Jesus' side, being attentive to His word. This was quite a mark of devotion and Jesus desired this man for the ministry. But here the man was not completely willing. He had family affairs to attend to. His love for his earthly family was preventing him from following the clear command of the Lord. Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury the dead." But does this mean God doesn't want us to pay our respects if a family member dies? By no means! But this does mean that the burial of the dead takes second place, to the work of the Gospel. For Jesus said, "Let the dead bury the dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God!"

It matters not if this man's father died in the faith or in unbelief. Nothing more can be done for the dead, but there is yet much to do for the living. Jesus desired that this man preach the kingdom of God, the glorious and wondrous life giving message of salvation to all men, that all might be saved. God sincerely desires that those still living in the deadness of unbelief repent of their sins and be saved by faith in the Lord Jesus! That is why the preaching of the Gospel by the spiritual priesthood of all believers, is so important! So that the dead might live, that people be converted to their Lord and Savior by faith! For the Bible says, "The kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared!" When the baby Jesus was born, God's kindness and mercy appeared on the stage of humanity! "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Here is the message all believers ought to teach! This was the job and duty that Jesus desired this disciple to fulfill! For there is nothing more to be done for a dead man, but bury him. But when the Gospel is preached, the spiritually dead are made alive. "Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

But this disciple that Jesus spoke to was impassive, indecisive. He wasn't ready to commit but was rather of a sluggish nature. You could say he was lukewarm toward the Lord, neither hot nor cold. That is the way it is for many Lutherans today. Lutherans who are born Lutheran are very poor and impassive disciples. They have forgotten their first love. They no longer sing as the children do, "Jesus loves me, this I know." They are very unfruitful in God's kingdom. May God forgive us, of our lukewarm faith! Yet let us remember the words of Jesus who said, "Son be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." For on the cross, our Jesus was neither impassive or indecisive. Nor was He lukewarm. Jesus willingly went to that cross for you, and with a full and perfect and passionate love, nailed Himself to that tree. He did it "for the joy that was set before Him." His joy was in the knowledge that by His suffering and death, you would not have to suffer nor endure eternal death! Therefore, on the cross your Jesus for your sake, cried out to His heavenly Father, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." And God the Father heard and answered the prayer of God the Son. And so all those sins, our sins of being lukewarm toward the Lord, impassive, indecisive in God's kingdom.....they are all forgiven. The perfect and compassionate love of Christ, did all that we could not do. It is finished, it is done, your sins are all forgiven, for Jesus' sake. May our faith no longer be lukewarm.

III. The impulsive disciple. And now our third and final disciple, who said to Jesus, "Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house." This disciple was impulsive. His moods and emotions made him impulsive. But his moods and emotions did not benefit his faith. Emotion created his first and foremost desire, to first say good-bye to his family. He wanted to do this more than immediately following His Lord. Emotion is often the downfall of the Christian. Instead of being led by the clear and certain and solid Word of God, Christians are often misled by emotions which come and go. While emotion is sometimes the fruit of faith, emotion can also blind us and mislead us away from God's Word. Emotion causes us to make impulsive and poorly thought out decisions. Emotion also leads us to say things in anger, instead of speaking in love.

To this emotional disciple therefore, who loved his family more than God, Jesus said, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." God wants us to love Him more than even our own family. We are to put God and His Word first before family, before emotion. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." If we are led about by emotion, we will surely trip and fall. But if we put the kingdom of God first in our lives, His righteousness, all else settles into place. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

So let us not look back. When a man plows in a field, if he looks back his work will be in vain. Remember Lot's wife who looked back with longing eyes upon the burning city that she loved. Looking back did not profit her, nor will it profit us. Beloved of the Lord, our heart are not to be divided between God and this world. "Thou shalt love the Lord God with all thy heart" our Lord says. For God's heart, God's love toward you is not divided. His love toward you is perfectly pure and gentle and kind in every way. His mercies endure forever. And what about our sins? What about our shame in the past? What does God do with our shameful past? Because of Christ our Lord says, "Their sins and their iniquities, will I remember no more." Isaiah writes, "He will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Because of Christ, God takes all of our sins, and casts them behind His back. Beloved of the Lord, God desires that you do the same by faith in your Savior. Don't look back, but press forward, life everlasting awaits. Amen.