

Lessons for Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

June 26, 2016

Psalm 16 (*antiphon: v. 11*) ~ *David declares his trust in God to protect him in the face of death.*

1 Kings 19:9b-21 ~ *When Elijah anointed Elisha to be prophet in his place, Elisha was committed to serve.*

Galatians 5:1, 13-25 ~ *Christ has set us free from the condemnation of the law and the bonds of sin.*

Luke 9:51-62 ~ *When Jesus set His face toward Jerusalem, He would not be hindered in His Kingdom goal.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: Embrace Freedom With Commitment.

When Elijah was discouraged and ready to give up, God told him there were still 7000 faithful in Israel and sent him to call Elisha to be the next prophet. Elisha showed his commitment by burning his plow and sacrificing his oxen. St. Paul made the connection between commitment and freedom very clear: if we are committed to the freedom of Christ's redemption, we will be guided by the Spirit of God. In Jesus' day, some who thought they were ready for a life of discipleship decided they were not free to make that kind of commitment when they saw the urgency of Jesus' mission. We must examine our lives in terms of our commitment to Christ.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Lord Jesus, you have called me to follow you through the trials and joys of this life to the eternal bliss of heaven. Make my joys of service to you greater and lighten my trials in faithful commitment to you, that I may live my life guided by your Spirit and filled with love, peace, patience, kindness and self-control. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: When the instruments of his occupation lured Elisha away from God's call, he sacrificed them to steel his commitment to God's mission. God has put many such material things at our disposal. When we are committed to God's work of freedom in our lives, we are ready to commit our resources to the message of God's grace.

OFFERING PRAYER: Lord, You have set us free from sin to live for You,
Free to bring the message of Your love to friend and neighbor.
Keep us free from harmful goals, and help us use
The blessings of our land in service to our Savior. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: We dream of being free from all commitments. We want to be able to spend our time and live our lives the way we want to, but Jesus frees us from the encumbrances of our sinful nature. We are set free from the condemnation of the law and the burden of sin, but then we find ourselves committed to the call of God's grace. When we are embraced by Christ's freedom, we are caught by the commitment to "go and proclaim the kingdom of God," and all that it means by extending God's love and forgiveness to all.