

GOSPEL LESSON—Luke 9:51-62

Jesus was resolute in His purpose to be our Redeemer. He was steadfastly determined to go to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast and later to suffer and die as a sacrifice for the lost. Jesus did not forbid saying good bye, but was warning against divided loyalty. There is no looking back to sin in a life centered on Jesus. He connected the good-bye to our past life of sin. As in Elijah's call, we are to burn the bridges to our past life. Throw them off in anticipation of the freedom we are granted when we are called to follow Him. Once we are granted freedom in Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit there is nothing that can drag us back into the slavery of sin, except our own will and decision.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

⑩ O Lord, our God, You are our strength and our joy. By delivering Jesus Christ, Your only begotten Son, to death on the cross and raising Him to glory, You have brought us life and assured us of our eternity in Heaven with You.

We praise You for Your manifold mercies. In the gifts of our being, our spiritual nature with all its varied capacities, and our physical nature with all its capabilities of activity and enjoyment, You, have been infinitely good, and we thank You. In the gifts of our human relationships, giving us fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters and companions in every walk of life, so that we are not alone, You have been mercifully kind, and we thank You. In the gifts of our place in this rich and beautiful country of our earthly habitation, and in the heavenly canopy of the infinite universe, You have been abundantly gracious, and we glorify Your Holy name.

Give the riches of grace to Your church, O God. Make us fit for service, to the end that we may seek the lost, raise the fallen, comfort the broken hearted, and heal the afflicted. Enable all Pastors and missionaries to proclaim with courage and understanding the Words of life which our Lord and Master has given us in purity of doctrine and understanding. Help them declare Your mighty deeds of judgment and mercy to all the ends of the Earth.

We ask You to be the heavenly guest in all our homes. Move the hearts of all, to trust only in You and to love each other. Bless all who are in any need of body or soul, and grant that they may humble themselves under Your mighty hand, so that You will exalt them in due time. Lead us all to cast our burdens on You and assure us of Your infinite care and understanding.

Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. (**Time of silent prayer.**)

As we go from this Holy place, where we have heard Your Word, enliven us in faith, love and courage, that we may live each and every day as Your children in Your presence, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

© Amen.

PROPER EIGHT

Chant Tone



Introit

Show us Your steadfast love, — O Lord,*
and grant us Your sal—vation.
Let me hear what God the | Lord will
speak,*
for He will speak peace to His
people, to His saints; but let them
not turn back to — folly.
Surely His salvation is near to those
who — fear Him,*
that glory may dwell | in our land.

Steadfast love and faith | fulness meet,*
righteousness and peace kiss each
— other.

Righteousness will go be — fore Him*
and make His foot | steps a way.

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy — Spirit;
as it was in the be — ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. — Amen.

Show us Your steadfast love, — O Lord,*
and grant us Your sal—vation.

(Antiphon, Psalm 85:7;
Psalm 85:8-10, 13)

Collect of the Day

Lord of all power and might, author and giver of all good things, graft into our hearts the love of Your name and nourish us with all goodness that we may love and serve our neighbor; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

Gradual

How beautiful are the feet of those who preach | the good news,*
who publish peace and bring good news of sal — vation.
Their voice has gone out to | all the Earth,*
and their words to the ends | of the world.

(Romans 10:15b, 18b; Isaiah 52:7b, alternative)

ENTRANCE PRAYER: Your steadfast Love, O Lord, never ceases, and Your mercies never come to an end. You are good to those who wait for You, and when we truly seek You, we find You. Therefore we sing Your praises and give thanks to Your Holy name. Your anger is for a moment and Your favor is for a lifetime. We need, O Lord, the power of Your Holy Spirit to enable us to give ourselves completely to You. Send us Your Spirit that we may experience the joy of a life dedicated to spreading Your Love. Bless our nation with peace, and help us dwell in harmony with Your will. This we ask in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

FOLLOWING JESUS IS AS DIFFICULT AS IT SEEMS. Our Gospel lesson presents three different reactions to following Jesus. The one who offers to follow but gets discouraged, the one called by Jesus who immediately finds an excuse, and the one who wants the best of all worlds, following Jesus and following the things of the world. We have been called out of the world by God, to follow Jesus. It would seem that there are actually four responses to the call to follow Jesus, and it would appear that we have responded immediately, setting aside the cares and concerns of the world, and taking up the wonder and pleasure of Jesus through the expression of our worship. Welcome to the freedom and wonder of God.

THEME OF THE DAY:

Following Jesus

INTROIT—(Antiphon, Psalm 85:7;) Psalm 85:8-10, 13

Psalm 85 was written when the people returned to Jerusalem under Ezra. They were praying that they might please God because they knew they had been foolish. They were asking to please God because they recognized that they needed His Love to sustain and defend them.

COLLECT

Life is difficult. Sin knocks us around, and sin is relentless in attempting to keep us away from God. God is on our side. He is our warrior. We ask that we would be allowed to comprehend His constant work on our behalf, just so that we are able to properly love and serve our neighbor.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—1 Kings 19:9b-21

Elijah was used by God to defeat the Baal worshipers. He did his work with enthusiasm and zeal. In spite of his zeal he had little to show for his faithfulness. He began to consider that no one was listening. His work was in vain. To show Elijah (and us) that there are many believers in the world, God assigned Elijah the task of appointing the new king of Israel, and also the new king of Damascus (a gentile,) and his own successor. God showed He was sovereign over all. Elisha's response should not be misunderstood (in light of our Gospel Lesson.) Elisha's willing, enthusiastic response is not dimmed by his turning to say good bye to his parents. Elisha wanted to cut off his past, burn the bridge (if you will) to show to God that he only had a future and would never turn back.

GRADUAL—Romans 10:15b, 18b,; Isaiah 52:7b alternative

Some of the Graduals are as old as the church. This is not the case today. This Gradual is from our latest liturgical revision. We use Romans because it is expressive, and then we go back to Isaiah (whom Paul was quoting) to finish the thought. The Word of God is going to the ends of the Earth, prompted on by the Church of God who contain and proclaim that Word.

EPISTLE LESSON—Galatians 5:1, 13-25

True Christian freedom is a life lived with the Holy Spirit in control. In that way we are freed to live up to the Gospel, freed to live up to the expectations of God's will. Paul is exhorting us to walk in the Spirit, live in our Baptismal grace. Live the life fought and won for us by Christ. Not some sort of new following of the law, but a true following of the will of God. This is a whole life change that submits us to the greater knowledge and understanding of God. Paul knew we would fail, which is why he wrote this letter. Rather than despair over failings, he reminded us to turn again to the Spirit of God. We will succeed in this because it is God Who has established it in us.