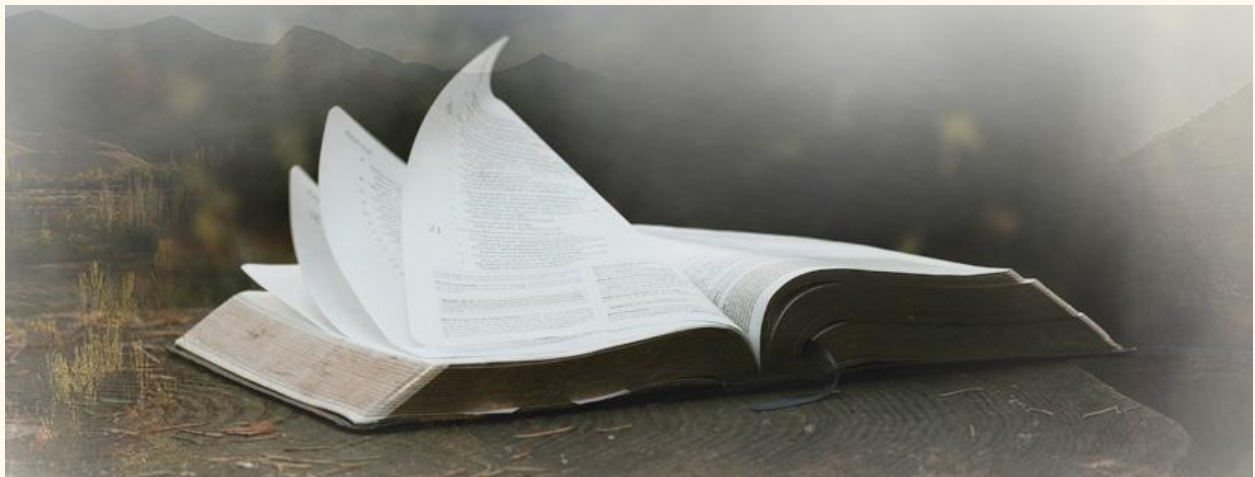

Ignite

"Good Shepherd, we praise You for Your mercy and compassion. Help us to hope in You alone, that we may not falter as we run this race until the end. Amen"



SERMON SUMMARY

Note to Word Facilitator: The sermon notes below is a summary of the sermon. You may choose to further summarize it according to the needs and context of your CG members. The goal is not just to go through it “verbatim” but to prepare well, allowing members to recall and engage the message in the best possible way.

Following Jesus: Comfort, convenience or commitment?

Luke 9:51-62

Pastor Daniel Ho

Luke 9: 51-62

As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?” But Jesus turned and rebuked them. Then he and his disciples went to another village. As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.” He said to another man, “Follow me.” But he replied, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.” Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” Still another said, “I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family.” Jesus replied, “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”

Introduction

Our journey in following Jesus can take many forms. We could be following Jesus out of comfort, convenience or commitment. Following Jesus out of comfort and convenience can lead to complacency, which distracts us from the Father's mission for us and its urgency. On the other hand, following Jesus out of commitment can be

daunting and challenging. Nevertheless, we can learn how to remain committed and undeterred by keeping our eyes on Jesus.

Jesus' example in commitment to His mission [Luke 9:51; James 1:4](#)

Jesus demonstrated the highest level of commitment to His mission, when He endured the final stages of events leading to His crucifixion. He was heading towards death, enduring mockery and shame, and overwhelming grief. Yet, He persevered knowing that the mission that God has given to Him must be fulfilled. Jesus remained absolutely single-minded and fully devoted to His mission. In our lives, we too can learn to persevere in God's mission. We do not lose hope nor resent God when faced with challenges, but remain steadfast in His promise, believing and having faith that God is good amidst the chaos. We should continue to serve God, fulfilling His mission, and be a beacon of encouragement to others.

Jesus' examination of our motive in carrying out His mission [Luke 9:52-56](#)

In carrying out God's mission, we may be turned away by others who rejects Him. These experiences may be a set-back and discourages us from continuing His mission to reach out to others. We feel miserable and disappointed when turned away. Let us learn from Jesus. Jesus' heart is always open. He loves everyone, including those who rejected Him! Jesus helps sets our motives right. He reminds us that the ultimate mission for us in following Him is to get people into His Kingdom. Therefore, while there may be some who rejects Him, there are also others whose hearts are open to accept Jesus. So, reach out to those who are open to accept Him!

Jesus' exhortation regarding our commitment in following Him [Luke 9:57-62](#)

1. The uncertainty of following Him [Luke 9:57-58](#)

There is no denying that there is uncertainty in following Him. But we are encouraged to remain committed to His mission and should not be

discouraged by what others say or do. Instead, we should always trust that God will honour those who honour Him.

2. The priority of following him [Luke 9:59-60](#)

Following Jesus demands a strong commitment; not one out of comfort or convenience. A strong commitment will enable us to respond to God's mission accordingly and appropriately. When we are committed, we will not lose sight of the ultimate mission irrespective of circumstances. On the contrary, when we respond out of comfort, convenience, or complacency, we can be easily distracted from fulfilling the mission.

3. The urgency of following Him [Luke 9:61-62](#)

There is urgency in following Him. When God stirs our heart to commit to His mission, we should urgently give ourselves to Him and His work. There is much to be done for God's kingdom, and by giving ourselves to Him ensures that the work of God can be done. And we can only respond to such urgency by following Him out of commitment, not comfort nor convenience.

Conclusion

Following Jesus out of commitment is the way forward. To help us remain committed, we should be single-minded, fully devoted to the mission, and have the right posture of our hearts. A strong commitment to following Jesus can build our faith and help us to persevere in times when uncertainties set in. With such faith and perseverance, we are molded into stronger and better people too, to continue to trust God in challenging times.



SERMON REFLECTION

Comfort, convenience or commitment - the three possible paths of following Jesus. And like it or not, we may have taken any or all three paths some time in our journey in following Jesus.

When we follow Jesus in comfort and convenience, our journey with Jesus is peppered with ease, freedom and choices. We connect with Jesus when we have the time, the need or the pleasure to do so. Much of these is centered on ourselves, our comfort and convenience, resulting in an inward looking, lopsided relationship. While most of our daily decisions are understandably based on comfort and convenience, such as where or what to eat, where to shop, where to live, where to travel; making decisions on our journey with Jesus in this similar manner can have implications. Reflect upon the times when we have skipped CG because the host stays far away. Or skipping church due to rain as it will be “inconvenient” to travel in the rain. Or the many reasons listed for not signing up for a Bible study class because the schedule was “inconvenient”. Or the times when we shy away from out-reach work, community volunteering or mission trips, because it was “uncomfortable” and “inconvenient”. Sadly, these are the times when comfort and convenience supersede the commitments we made to God. As such, nothing good comes from us when comfort and convenience takes us away from our commitments in following Jesus.

Commitment, on the other hand, is a “big” word for many. The Cambridge Dictionary has it defined as a promise or a firm decision to do something, in which time and energy is willingly given to a job, task, activity that we believe in. Very often, in our own journey with Jesus, commitment has taught us hard work, endurance and perseverance, as we encounter hardship, heartbreak, and pain. But all is not lost. Reflect upon the many times that we held on to God's promise and witnessed His goodness and blessings. Our commitment in following Jesus has been blessed by answered prayers, changed lives, salvation for loved ones, providence, mercy and all other blessings. We must continue to seek God to help us to remain steadfast in following Jesus; by surrendering ourselves to God and having the Holy Spirit convict us. Staying committed to following Jesus helps us to also persevere and endure the difficult times. And during these times, God stretches us, molds us and builds us to become more Christlike. Clearly, we can emerge triumphantly if we stay committed in following Jesus.

Father Lord, forgive us that we shy away from the path less travelled. Commitment is intimidating to some of us, but as we surrender our lives to You to honour our promises to You, we have been blessed too. We ask that You continuously guide us to commit to Your mission, to have the right posture of our hearts, and to respond urgently to the works of Your kingdom. We pray that You strengthen our faith, and that may we never forget the manifold blessings we receive by remaining committed in following Jesus. Amen.

Contributed by Adeline Ting (PJN2)



APPLICATION

Note to Word facilitator:

As you prepare for this session, this is a great time to pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you to use the questions efficiently. You can select, modify or entirely create your own questions, according to the needs of your CG, especially if you feel that there are too many questions than required for the allocated time. The questions below are crafted with a certain flow in mind. You could use these towards the end or insert them in between your own sermon reflection and summary.

Suggested Icebreaker Questions

- Share one “comfort”, “convenient” or “committed” activity you did in the past week. *(Example: comfort-woke up late, convenient-ordered food delivery, committed-quiet time every morning)*
- What is your “comfort” food that makes you happy?

Suggested Word Introductory Questions

- Comfort, convenience and commitment. How much comfort and convenience takes you away from your commitment in following Jesus? Is it possible that all three components exist together in our journey in following Jesus?

Suggested Questions linked to the Sermon:

- Following Jesus with commitment is the right thing to do. What allows or enables us to commit to God? Does “conviction” and “surrender” help to keep us committed to Jesus? Discuss.
- What is your motivation to serve God and others? Share if you have been discouraged by others who have rejected God and how you overcome them to remain committed in following Jesus.
- Eric Liddell stood his ground when he refused to participate in the 100-m heats in the 1924 Summer Olympics as it was held on a Sunday (Sabbath day). Instead, he participated in the 400-m race on a weekday, which he won. His testimony of such great commitment exemplifies how God honours those who honour Him. Would you have done the same? Have you been in a similar situation where honouring God has been an encouraging testimony for yourself and others? Share your story.
- Staying committed in following Jesus can be uncertain and may demand time and energy. What would encourage you to commit fully to God? Pray together and encourage one another.

Question Bank *(Extra questions you can use to bring discussion further as you see fit):*

- Which word best describes your relationship with God in recent times; is it Comfort, Convenience, or Commitment? Share your thoughts.
- Have you had a difficult conversation with God lately? Did this make following Jesus more difficult? What will keep you encouraged to follow Jesus- comfort, convenience, or commitment?
- How often do we make decisions based on comfort and convenience? (e.g., where we live, which school to go to, where to eat, what to eat) Are these decisions all bad? Is there a difference in this perception when it comes to following Jesus? Discuss.
- How do you find the encouragement to remain committed to serve others?
- How far would you go to honour God? Would you compromise your commitment to God (or your values), just to please others or fit into the norm?



PRAYER



Photo by Timothy Eberly on Unsplash

Note to CGL: You (or someone you assign this portion to), may lead by praying OR reading these prayers together as a CG during worship.

Water for Africa (WFA)

WFA is a Christian NGO that provides access to clean water and improved health in Tanzania & Uganda through installation and maintenance of clean water projects in remote communities, healthcare programmes, medical assistance and evangelistic outreaches.

Pray for:

- Peace and God's will to be done and His Kingdom to advance as Tanzania transitions to a new president, following the sudden death of President John Magufuli on 17 March 2021.
- Local teams on the ground as they continue the work each week to give clean water and share the gospel.

Palm Sunday Prayer

Mt 21:1-11, Ps 118:1-2, 19-29

Lord God,
I give You thanks, for You are good, and Your mercy is endless.
Here I stand, at the start of this holy week,
This week in which Your Church remembers Jesus' passion
and death,
And I am distracted by many things.
Turn my eyes now to the One who comes in Your Name
The One who opens the gates of righteousness
The One who answers when we call.
I bless You, Father, for shining Your light upon me,
And for sending Your Son to us, in human frailty.
To walk the road we walk.
Open my eyes that I may see Him coming,
And may praise Him with a pure heart.
And may walk in the way of His suffering,
And share also in His resurrection.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You
And the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.
Amen.



OTHER RESOURCES

Below are some links to resources for you. Do **CLICK** on the images below!

FEATURED

In view of our current changing landscape that affects us individually and corporately, here are some featured resources for you this month!



Holiness

6 minutes 34 seconds

[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0041004)

In this video, we explore the paradox that God's holiness ...

[Bible](#) [Doctrine](#) [Prayer & Spirituality](#) [Christian Living](#)

[Video Clip](#)



Sacrifice and Atonement

7 minutes

[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0041004)

In this video on sacrifice and atonement, we trace the the...

[Bible](#) [Doctrine](#)

[Video Clip](#)



Overview: Leviticus

8 minutes 16 seconds

[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

Israel's holy God invites them to live in His presence desp...

[Bible](#) [Christian Living](#)

[Video Clip](#)



Holiness as the Church Bearing Fruit

seedbed.com

Holiness, as we have seen, is not merely about eradicatin...

[Timothy Tennent](#)

[Bible](#) [Doctrine](#) [Teaching](#) [Christian Living](#)

[Article](#)

OTHER RESOURCES

Discover a host of other resources curated for you here!



DUMC STORIES

Be blessed by a compilation of inspiring DUMC Stories that you can share with others!

