

Polly's Pondering

When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. Luke 9:51

I am wrestling today with what it means that Jesus set his face toward Jerusalem. I mean I have usually thought about this in relationship to Palm Sunday – the day we see Jesus riding into Jerusalem, knowing it will be his last Passover with the disciples on earth and knowing that the cross is in sight. But this verse comes much earlier in Luke's account of the ministry of Jesus.

Perhaps the clue to understanding comes from the conversation Jesus had with a man who declares that he wants to follow Jesus wherever he goes. Jesus responds to this man's declaration with a simple command: "Follow me" (9:59.) Jesus has said yes, come follow me or perhaps he has responded with; well then if that is indeed what you want to do, do it; Follow me. What happens next is that the man who seemed intent on following Jesus, has second thoughts, or perhaps he wanted the idea of following Jesus but not the actually *doing* of following Jesus. "I will follow you, Lord; but first..." (9:61)

Suddenly, I am quite aware of the struggle there is in following Jesus. We are people of divided focus. We have not set our face toward following Jesus. We are still distracted by things that pull us away. The Greek word is *epakoloutheo*; it means to carefully follow after someone with the goal to replicate what he does...

So, this Lent I am wrestling with two questions. I know I want to follow Jesus but where and in what ways am I like the man in the scriptures who says "I will follow you, Lord; but first..."? The second question is what do I see in the life and actions of Christ that I need to mimic more closely?

I remember playing the mimic game where you sit or stand face to face with someone and you try to do what they do as if you are their reflection in a mirror. To be really good at it you must focus intently on each movement of the individual you are mirroring. You must notice not only the more obvious movements like raising a hand or shifting the body, but you must also notice the subtle things like a raised eyebrow or a slight movement of the mouth. To mimic one must be focused on the movements, actions, attitudes of the other.

Here are some of the actions of Christ I am looking at: He was a man of prayer and committed to a relationship with God the Father. He was a man who served others. He was a man who believed in community. He was a man who lived with integrity and honesty. He was a man who willingly shared his faith journey with others. He was a man who demonstrated love and forgiveness. He was a man willing to set aside his own will for the Will of God. He was a man willing to face challenges for the good of the Kingdom.

How good are you at mimicking Christ?

In Deuteronomy 13:4 we find these words: "*You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.*" And in John 14:9 it states "*He who has seen Me has seen the Father.*"