

The Way of the Cross
The Intentional Life, Luke 9:51-56

Synonyms for Intentional: deliberate, calculated, conscious, intended, planned, meant, studied, knowing, willful, purposeful, purposive, done on purpose, premeditated, preplanned, preconceived.

Jesus prepared to die His entire life. In the last six months of His life Jesus demonstrated necessary character strengths which He needed for the last few days of His life. In order for Jesus to die well, He had to live well. His entire life was preparation for the final hour.

As you read through the gospels and encounter a wide variety of experiences, there is something that can be easy to miss: ***Jesus lived an intentional life.*** Not just embracing the cross in His final hour, but every single day. All of Jesus' life was preparation to embrace the cross. Jesus was intentional.

The Gospel of Luke chapter 9 covers the last 6 months of the life of Jesus.

It's interesting that so much of Luke's gospel is spent on such a small slice of time in Jesus' life. The journey to the cross actually receives more attention than the cross itself. In fact, the journey to Jerusalem receives more attention than the cross and the resurrection combined. Maybe there's something in this journey that we deserves our attention.

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

The phrase, "he set his face" is literally, "*he fixed his face.*" This was a final decision. Jesus made up His mind and He set out for Jerusalem. Nothing was going to stop Him.

Point to consider: Jesus still has 6 months to go. That's six more months to live a perfect life. Six more months to live with imperfect people who will try His patience at every turn. Six more months to live on earth exposed to the cruel and crafty attacks of the devil. One sin and Jesus cannot be a sinless Savior.

Lesson to learn: Circumstances do not make you, they reveal you.

In this passage alone, Jesus received rejection from the Samaritans and misunderstanding from the disciples. Rejection and misunderstanding are hard to handle. All the while, the mission is the cross and Jesus cannot let anything detract Him from the mission.

So often we think of sin as something willful against God or people. Anger, hurtful words, pornography. Sin is the stuff we do. It's deliberate and measurable. What about the stuff we avoid? How about the hard things we don't do? Or the pain we try to avoid?

Nothing wrong with trying to avoid pain...unless...it costs you the will of God. The will of God takes priority over personal preference every single time.

To live the intentional life of a follower of Jesus, you need to be empowered by the Holy Spirit.

For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. Galatians 5:17 (NIV)

Home Group Discussion Questions:

1. Read Luke 9:51-56 in your groups. What are some general thoughts you have on the passage or the Sunday message?
2. How would you rate yourself in terms of being intentional? High, Medium, Low.
3. Are there any areas in your life in which you would like to be more intentional?
4. What do you think it looks like to intentionally grow as a Christian?
5. What can we learn from Jesus who intentionally prepared for the cross by living a life fully devoted to enjoying His Father and doing His will?
6. Pastor Karl made this point: *The will of God takes priority over personal preference every single time.* Respond to that idea....what does this look like in your life?

BONUS QUESTION:

Is being a Christian about doing the right things and not doing the wrong things?

OR...

Is being a Christian about following a person – namely, Jesus.

What's the difference?