

In the Gospel *Jesus* knew his time was almost up so he “set his face to go to Jerusalem.”

In the Old Testament *Elijah* found his successor and called him to follow. So, Elisha “took the yoke of oxen, and slaughtered them; using the equipment from the oxen, he boiled their flesh, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out and followed Elijah and became his servant.”

Both stories are about having a direction that is unwavering and having a point-of-no-return. Elisha literally destroyed his livelihood to follow Elijah. Jesus knew going to Jerusalem would end him. For us, if we hold onto life as it is, it can steer us off course. What if we held life more loosely and followed Jesus more pointedly? Our ways seem to move us forward, but often we just go in circles.

Furthermore, there are so many ways that seem absolute, but then vanish like smoke. The pandemic showed us how everything that we held as so solid can vanish so quickly. Even without a pandemic, our most virtuous and highest aspirations need a direction. Through grace, we can follow Jesus closely.

- What relationship(s) are you willing to redefine for more freedom?
- What are you willing to fight for in order that others might be free?
- How much of a point-of-no-return call are you willing to pray for?

Furthermore, how much does life / business-as-usual cost you already? I've said this before, *something* will demand everything of you. If that something is not God, you will get sucked dry:

- Work comes first -- then you retire without meaningful connections.
- Raise a family because children are everything – then they move to another state.
- Start a charity because of a driving passion-- then it shrivels up.

If you think your busy life is God's best intent for you, it might be just an addiction and actually “pointless.” There are so many ways to be miserable and addicted, and far fewer ways that lead to grace and freedom. Tolstoy wrote in *Anna Karenina*: "Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." Following Jesus where he leads is a good start away from *Anna Karenina*.

C.S. Lewis spent years trying to figure out how to hold on loosely. I think his life and writings give solid directions. He writes in *The Joyful Christian* “Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you get neither.” We will worship and /or follow something -- work, video games, the news, pizza, family, but the only thing in all the world that will fill us is God. Turning to Jesus may cost us something, but everything else costs too much. **Todd**