

UNRECEPTIVE HEARTS

Ever been completely determined to accomplish an objective? Totally immersed in your mission? That's what farmers have been doing for the past several weeks. Maybe you've had an important task in your life. Reaching a goal requires determination, discipline, tuning out all distractions.

Accomplishing your mission requires clear thinking, careful planning, deliberate choices. The time comes when every other important thing must yield to the one thing that must be done.

TURNING POINT - In Luke 9:51 we come to a great turning point in the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. He deliberately pivoted His attention to a dramatic objective. Within this we learn how God deals with hostile hearts, with hope and healing.

We learn how we too can respond in faith rather than react in fear to a hurting world around us. Not just to get through whatever is the current crisis, but in all your life, to focus on God's goals. Not your comfort but His mission, to bring His healing to hurting hopeless hearts around you.

HIS DESTINY - Luke 9:51 says, "*when the days drew near for Him to be taken up, Jesus set His face to go to Jerusalem.*" He had been ministering primarily in Galilee, with side-trips in all directions to reach people in areas populated by both Jews and Gentiles. Now Jesus is on the road, heading toward His destiny in Jerusalem, as the great drama of redemption unfolds.

Much earlier in Luke 9, Jesus was seen on the mount of transfiguration discussing with Moses and Elijah His "departure" that He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Verse 9:22 explains 9:44, as it refers to the time for Jesus to be taken up, delivered in order to be the deliverer.

"Jesus will soon walk through everything involved in His being taken up," notes RK Hughes, "betrayal, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension all rise ominously over all that follows from this point." Over the next 10 chapters, God works out His predetermined plans.

RESOLUTION - Ever been to Mt. Rushmore? What do you remember? The iconic scene bears the chiseled faces of four presidents honored for their accomplishments for America. From verse 51 on, Jesus looked like that. Stone-faced, determined, intentional in one direction, disciplined in deliberately realizing His divine destiny as our Deliverer.

Isaiah 50:5 speaks of the servant of the Lord whose ear the Lord God opened each day, for obedience to His words and His mission. In verse 7 he says, "*therefore I have set my face like a flint.*" That's a rock so hard it takes an edge and becomes a powerfully useful tool.

As Jesus Christ was guided in His life by the word of God, so much more should we, to steel ourselves for His work. "Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem," says RC Sproul, "because the same One who had been transfigured in glory must now be delivered into enemy hands and suffer humiliation and death for the mission laid upon Him by His Father."

UN-RECEPTIVE - Luke 9:52-53 says, "*And Jesus sent messengers ahead of Him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for Him. But the people did not receive Him, because His face was set toward Jerusalem.*"

Why were they unwelcoming? One practical reason is that Jesus traveled not with just 12 disciples but sometimes over 80 people at a time. This could overwhelm the amenities of a little country town. That's why people were sent ahead, to make arrangements for food and lodging.

The Samaritans practiced what they regarded as the true religion, but it differed markedly from Judaism. It's a bit like how Islam recognizes Jesus as a prophet, but not "the prophet" and not Lord and Savior. A good Samaritan didn't want much to do with a Jew, and vice versa.

DETERMINATION - When the town learned Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem, they refused Him hospitality. The real reason was "*because His face was set toward Jerusalem*" the religious capital of Judaism. They realized Jesus would not be agreeing with their religion.

This situation might be somewhat analogous to the political climate in America today. Two major sides hold varying degrees of calumny toward one another.

Even an election will not solve the divide, assuming it can be called and trusted. How can hostile hearts and minds be turned? Jesus shows how, if you trust and obey Him! ☐