

FOLLOWING JESUS INTO THE UNKNOWN

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LUKE 9:23-25

Growing up, one thing that always bugged me was when I thought my parents didn't know where they were going. We'd be driving in the car on a trip. Dad would be driving, Mom would be looking at the map. And if I sensed they were lost at all, I'd begin asking: "Are we lost?" "Do you know where you are going?" I just had to know. They'd always assure me that they'd find their way. But I didn't like it. I wanted someone in the car to know how to get to our destination.

Our lives can bring a level of the unknown. As finite beings we are unable to know all and be all to ourselves and others. The unknown can be paralyzing if we focus on it too much. The "what-ifs" start swirling and we are frozen by the endless possible outcomes to our situations and circumstances. What if we are lost? What if we never make it to where we are going? What if we run out of gas? What if, what if, what if . . . Jesus set a new standard of unknown when he entered our world.

His arrival brought a new level of mystery and wonder. The God of the universe came as a babe in a manger? His disciples responded to this wonder and unknown. They often attempted to stop him and ask him questions. Questions like, "Who are you?" and "Where will we find enough food to feed this crowd?" and "Will we survive this storm?"

I don't know if you've ever found yourself in a situation like this when following Jesus, where he leads you into a place of uncertainty and unknown in the eyes of this world. I've

been there quite a few times over the years as he has asked me to step into some difficult situations or situations that are unfamiliar to me.

However, I want to remind us of Jesus's words from Luke 9:23-25 (ESV): "And he said to all, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?'" Jesus patiently leads his disciples into deeper discipleship and relationship with him. He desires for them to follow him into the unknown—into the world that they cannot control—because there they will find a life lived with their Savior. Who wouldn't want to go deeper with Jesus? And the invitation is a daily invitation. He instructs us to, take up our cross daily, and follow him.

It can be hard to trust Jesus. Especially when it means trusting him with everything you have in this world. We cling to our possessions and relationships. And yet, we know that one day Jesus will return just like he left, and make all things new and right in this world. Everything will be okay, and everything will be as they should be. This is the only way we'll gladly and joyfully step out of our comfort and into the fray of living deeply with Jesus. This Advent season, would you consider stepping into the unknown and follow Jesus to a deeper level of intimacy with him as you trust him for your every need?

PRAYER

Father, help us to make room for you this Advent season to step out into the unknown and release the control we like to have on our lives. Help us to know and trust in your Son Jesus, and that your plan for our lives is the best plan. We believe you know what is best for us and we want to step out into a deeper relationship with you. Amen.



BY JONATHAN BROMHEAD
Pastor of Family Ministry