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The Roads Best Travelled Part Twenty-nine - The Road To Jerusalem

(Based on Luke 9:51-62)

What is the hardest thing you have ever had to do? Maybe it was to fire someone or make a lot of people redundant. Perhaps you have had to declare bankruptcy or admit catastrophic loss. Maybe you have had a breakdown or burnt out.

Perhaps your most difficult moment came when you realised your efforts were all in vain and you had been betrayed. Again it could be an immense burden of responsibility or a feeling of ultimate responsibility in a project that leads you to your most difficult challenge.

For some the hardest thing they have had to do has not been a work issue at all. It was the moment a loved one died and you had to tell the others, or when news of an illness broke and you had to communicate it. It might have been when you had to end a relationship or admit an affair. In the real world we all face our "hardest challenge" at some point.

This is the story on the road to Jerusalem . There came a point in Jesus' career when He had to take a road which would end in certain, hideous and excruciating death. No real human being would want to take the first steps on such a road.

In these circumstances you know that after you take those steps, extraordinarily painful consequences will follow - when you start divorce proceedings, file for bankruptcy or move towards liquidation. It is the quiet moment the night before the battle when there is no sleep to be had due to the certain knowledge of the struggle that lies ahead.

As you read you will know what your moment has been.

For Jesus there came a moment when He had to move down the road. Although He had been preparing for this road since before roads existed He still had to go. The account starts with a resolute setting out. The older versions speak of His setting His face towards Jerusalem . If the hardest moment is in the future and if you know what it is, and that it is coming soon, if you know you have to do something which no one else can do and if you don't do it you will have missed the point of your life, then you have to set your face as Jesus did.

At this point He resolves, He solidifies, He quietly hardens His demeanour.

If you are to learn from this moment then you will have to find a deep resolve which is prepared, whatever the cost, to go down the path that lies ahead. So it had better be worth it.

Immediately He encountered opposition as the Samaritans did not welcome Him and His friends suggested an absurd response – neither of these would be allowed to get in His way. His resolve extended to rebuking His closest friends as well as ignoring the stupidity of His enemies.

What follows is a series of encounters which we have looked at before on other

roads. But now we can see them from a different perspective. Three quick interviews with would be members of His movement result in Him rejecting them because they wanted home comforts, they wanted to manage their own affairs, or they wanted to say fond farewells. Jesus challenges them to accept struggle, proclaim a message, and keep looking forwards.



*see News
below*

But He is also speaking to Himself. The road to Jerusalem challenges Him to engage in deep inner struggle, keep speaking His own message and keep looking forwards.

When you set your face towards a profoundly difficult task you will encounter immediate opposition from friends, from family, from enemies and from strangers. All the voices will tell you to turn back. But the biggest struggle by far will be the struggle within yourself. For Jesus, as He kept speaking the truth He was fighting the lies, as He kept accepting the hard path He was tempted to take the comfortable one, and as He kept His perspective forwards He was wrestling with the urge to give up and go back to where He had come from in the first place.

But the irony is not to be found in these contrasts. The irony is to be found in the introductory prologue to the Jerusalem road. The time approached for Him to "be taken up to heaven" it was a simultaneous road to Heaven with the road to Jerusalem that made the journey possible. Instead of going backwards and rewinding the story of incarnation Jesus had to go forwards to the pain, the challenge and the torture.

It is always thus. The real road is a painful one. The authentic journey goes to heaven via hell. The joy of reward comes via the misery of battle. There seems to be no other way. Love hurts. Love bleeds. Love dies – and love rises again. When you get that you can set your face- resolve to go through with it, ignore friends, families, enemies, or strangers and silence the inner voice which will deter you from taking the authentic road. As you do this you will discover the road to Jerusalem and death is also the road to heaven and life.

This, ladies and gentlemen, will always be the hardest thing you ever have to do.

Work well,

Geoff Shattock

Wake up call is taking a short break and will be back in April. In the meantime, if you wish to visit the archives, you will find around 250 past additions for you interest.

If you would like some help reviewing your life, work or career path, we offer one-to-one coaching sessions for just such purposes. Please email comms@worknetuk.org for details.

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Here is some Biblical background for this week's Wake Up Call

Luke 9:51-62

Samaritan Opposition

⁵¹ As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. ⁵² And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; ⁵³ but the people there did not

welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them[a]?" ⁵⁵ But Jesus turned and rebuked them, ⁵⁶ and[b] they went to another village.

The Cost of Following Jesus

⁵⁷ As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." ⁵⁸ Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

⁵⁹ He said to another man, "Follow me." But the man replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

⁶⁰ Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

⁶¹ Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family."

⁶² Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

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Also remember to have a look at the Bible sections for the biblical background to your Wake Up Call

