



Create a peaceful space to pause, and allow yourself to feel God's presence alongside you, as near to you as your own breath. In following the reflection below, as a church we will draw closer to God and to one another as we grow in faith and deepen our sense of belonging to God.

Luke 9: 51-62 'A Place of Rest for Jesus on the Way'

⁵¹When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. ⁵²And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; ⁵³but they did not receive him, because his face was set towards Jerusalem. ⁵⁴When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, 'Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?' ⁵⁵But he turned and rebuked them. ⁵⁶Then they went on to another village.

⁵⁷As they were going along the road, someone said to him, 'I will follow you wherever you go.' ⁵⁸And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.' ⁵⁹To another he said, 'Follow me.' But he said, 'Lord, first let me go and bury my father.' ⁶⁰But Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury



their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.' ⁶¹Another said, 'I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home.' ⁶²Jesus said to him, 'No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'

In this passage which follows the account of the Transfiguration Luke tells us that 'Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem' knowing full well what lay ahead of him and that there was no turning back if he was to fulfil God's purpose in sending him into the world. (Perhaps best summarised in John 3:16: '*For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life*'). Later in Luke following the Last Supper, Jesus prays in the Garden of Gethsemane, '*Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done*' (Luke 22:42).

This passage reminds me of the title of a book by the late Eddie Askew, *Snails Have No Reverse Gear*. If a snail gets into a tight corner or difficult place it cannot extricate itself because it cannot reverse! The result is inevitable, the snail eventually dies. In this time of Lent as we trace the path of Jesus to the cross our world is in a tight corner with the coronavirus pandemic. We cannot reverse the situation we are in and go back to moving around freely, sharing worship and fellowship, but what we can do is to pray and keep in touch with one another and follow the advice we are being given. It won't be easy but as we move towards Holy Week we can look beyond the despair of the crucifixion to the hope and joy of the Resurrection. The Matt Redman song: *When We Were in the Darkest Night* captures this rather well, expressing that in God has 'grace enough to see us through'. Perhaps you could read and pray the beautiful words of this hymn (StF 241).

Prayer:

Lord, help us to realise
that whatever life may bring today
it comes wrapped up in you,
and that should be enough. Amen.