

He steadfastly set His face . . .

“And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem . . .” (Lk. 9:51)

Jesus was born to die. He was a lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8.) The shadow of the cross was upon the manger of His birth. Throughout His brief ministry He told His disciples many times that He had to suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day (Lk. 8:22.) He spoke with Moses and Elijah about His decease which He should accomplish in Jerusalem (Lk. 9:31.) When the people marveled that He had cast out a demon He said to His disciples: **“Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men . . .” (Lk. 9:44.)**

Jesus did not die on the cross by accident. He steadfastly set His face toward Jerusalem. As He journeyed a certain man said: **“Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest” (Lk. 9:57.)** He wouldn't, and Jesus knew it! The birds of the air had nests, and the foxes had holes, but Jesus didn't have anywhere to lay His head.

Jesus said to another: **“Follow Me!”** but this man too had other priorities. He wanted to put Jesus on the “back burner” until the more important things were taken care of.

A third man said: **“Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house” (Lk. 9:61.)** How modern! How absolutely in tune with our time. How much like the rest of us! He wanted to follow Jesus, as long as it was convenient. This poor soul did not understand that Jesus was on His way to the cross. Crosses are not convenient! Jesus put it like this: **“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Lk. 9:23.)**

Jesus steadfastly set His face toward Jerusalem. No man was going to take His life, He was going to give it (John 10:10.) Solomon said that the way a man thought reflected what he was (Prov. 23:7.) In this regard Jesus concentrated all of His mental energies on doing the will of God. He said explicitly: **“I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me” (John 5:30.)**

The heroes of history have been people with determination. Shadrack, Meshach, and Abednego did not know what the King would do, or what God would do. They did, however, know what they would not do. They would not bow down and worship a golden image (Dan. 3:18.) Esther determined to intercede for her people and said: **“If I perish, I perish” (Esther 4:16.)** A den of lions could not keep Daniel from his prayers, and no force in the universe could keep Christ from Calvary. He steadfastly set His face toward Jerusalem.

When Martin Luther was threatened by King Henry VIII he responded: “But let these swine come on and burn me if they dare. Here I am and I will wait for them, and my ashes alone having been cast after my death into a thousand seas, I will persecute and harass this abominable crowd. While alive I will be the enemy of the papacy, burned, I will be twice an enemy . . .”

Savanarola was offered the office of Cardinal if he would but change his style of preaching. He chose instead to be strangled and burned because he said the flames of hell were redder than a Cardinal's hat.

The late W. Carl Ketcherside said it like this: “The crying need of our age is for men filled with the Spirit of God, men who dare to break with tradition, and if need be, die for the vision which they have cherished . . .”

Jesus set His face steadfastly toward Jerusalem. Others may be detracted from their duty by fear, ambition, or selfish sentiment, but Jesus was determined not to do His own will, but the will of the Father which had sent Him. He put His hand to the plow and did not look back..

The song writer said it beautifully: “Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace.”

