



***BIBLE STUDY for the  
THIRD SUNDAY after PENTECOST***



**1 Kings 2: 1–2, 6-14 or 1 Kings 19: 15-16, 19-21; Psalms 77: 1-2,11-20 or 16;  
Galatians 5: 1, 13-25; Luke 9: 51 – 62**

It is not enough to resist evil. It is not enough to not do what is destructive or harmful. It is not enough to avoid what we consider to be sin. For our world to change, for real transformation to happen, for life to be the abundant, beautiful, joyful experience that God created it to be, we must embrace, proclaim and live what is good, what is creative and what is healing. This is a central and persistent call of the Gospel, and it is the heart of this week's readings in the Revised Common Lectionary. May your worship lead you into paths of life, freedom and the sharing of goodness.

**READINGS:**

**2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14:**

Elijah is taken up to heaven and Elisha receives his cloak and his spirit.  
OR

**1 Kings 19:15-16, 19-21:**

Elijah anoints Elisha as prophet to succeed him. Elisha offers his oxen as sacrifice, and feeds his community with the meat, then leaves his home to follow Elijah.

**Psalm 77:1-2, 11-20:**

The Psalmist cries out to God, remembering God's miraculous work in saving Israel through Moses and Aaron.

OR

**Psalm 16:**

Praise for the God who is a refuge to those who seek God, who provides good companions and a beautiful inheritance, and who makes known the path of life.

**Galatians 5:1, 13-25:**

Christ gives us freedom, but not as an excuse to engage in destructive behaviour. Rather, through Christ we receive the life-giving fruit of God's Spirit.

**Luke 9:51-62:**

Jesus calls many people, who all have reasons to delay or decline. Jesus proclaims that God's Reign calls us to choose now – to live it and proclaim it.

**REFLECTIONS ON THEME:**

The journey into living the values of God's Reign continues. In the last few weeks we have recognised our need for forgiveness and God's resources, and we have confronted the ways that evil works in our world. This week the focus shifts to God's call for us to embrace the positive power of God's reign, and the difference it makes in the world. Elisha is called to be a prophet and follow Elijah's ministry. The Psalmist recognises God's saving work, and the way God leads God's people into the ways of life and life-bringing. In Galatians, Paul contrasts the destructive ways of evil and sin with the life-giving fruit of God's Spirit. And in Luke's Gospel, Jesus urgently calls all people to follow him and to live and proclaim God's reign immediately – not as some after-death hope, but as a world changing reality that we can experience and share now, right where we are.

## CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

### **GLOBAL APPLICATION:**

The work of justice, of standing against evil (the *via negativa*) can sometimes leave us feeling cynical and can cause us to embrace expediency as we work for goodness – believing that in the face of evil, we sometimes need to use evil means to achieve good ends. This week, we are called to a higher standard, to the *via positiva* of affirming God's goodness, grace, salvation and reign in our world, even in the midst of evil and suffering. This means that on a global scale, there is a need for voices that will call us all to appreciation and protection of goodness. In the corridors of power, good people need to stand for what is good – not partisan, expedient or “not bad”. In every community and every situation good people need to work to protect and proclaim what is good – natural wonders, our environment, places of hard work and great contribution to the world, places of healing and of caring for the marginalised. It is not just money that these people and organisations need. It is affirmation, support and recognition. It a celebration of the good that is being done. And it is partnerships with others who will stand together to raise up goodness and demonstrate its life-giving power.

### **LOCAL APPLICATION:**

As Christians we are too often known for what we stand against, for the way we label all sorts of things as sin, just because we're afraid or we don't understand. Too often we rage against the darkness, instead of responding to God's call to simply shine a light where we can. In what ways have you and your community fallen into this trap? How can you begin to be those who search out goodness wherever you may find it, whoever may be doing it, and celebrate it, acknowledge it, support and partner with it? How can you begin to be known for the goodness you stand for, rather than the badness you stand against? How can you hear God's call to be light, to live and proclaim God's life-giving reign (the paths of life), and to raise up the power of goodness in your church and community?

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