Reflection
September 28, 2022
Job 9: 1-12;14-16   Psalm: 88: 10-15
Gospel: Luke 9:57-62
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We might look at the two readings through the lens of the **cost** of being faithful.

 In today's first reading, Job is trying to prove to one of his friends that he is not guilty of anything that would bring down the terrible misfortune as he has experienced. Job will make serious complaints against God's treatment of him, but he never abandons or curses God.

He does not know what to do or say that would make a difference this situation, for who can resist God's divine power that rules the universe and sustains everything?

Even if Job is right about his situation, he doesn't think God would listen to or answer him. He wonders if God even hears him. Perhaps the **cost** for Job is having to live with this terrible vulnerability and uncertainty and not giving up on God. For Job, as for us, we walk by faith and not by sight.

 I Imagine most of us can think of times when we felt like Job and wanted to argue with God and wondered where God was in our struggle or suffering. At such times, like the psalmist, all we may have been able to say is: "I, O God cry out to you; with my morning prayer, I wait upon you."

In the Gospel from Luke, we hear the beginning of Jesus's journey to Jerusalem. The cost for being faithful is that disciples must expect to be treated no better than their Master. We are given three examples of would-be followers.

The **first** is enthusiastic and will follow Jesus anywhere. Jesus tells him the **cost** is that you will be less secure than foxes and birds. You cannot be tied down to anything or anxious about having or not having. You must be free to follow immediately and wholeheartedly day after day.

The **second** candidate wants to follow but wait until after his father dies so he can fulfill his sacred obligation as a faithful son. Who knows when that may be? The **cost** Jesus tells him is the urgency of God's reign outweighs those sacred responsibilities. Follow now, not at some future date.

In the **third** example, the **cost** is that once one has decided for discipleship they cannot look back and take their eye off the goal. Disciples must have a singleness of purpose and a commitment to the journey to the end, come what may.

We don't know what the three did after Jesus made them aware of the cost of following him. We know that Jesus' primary concern was always to be on the move to fulfill his mission. How will we follow his pattern in the circumstances of our lives?

Where might the costs be found for us today?

1. Living with uncertainty and the vulnerability of aging and dying,
2. Selling our property and what that might mean to each of us,
3. Living with our own personal vulnerabilities and not being in control of all the parts of our lives like we might have imagined we were,
4. The quandary of how we will be with one another to discern and express our mission as we move into the future
5. Not allowing ourselves to be sidetracked by the" small stuff" to stay focused on and faithful to our mission so we can discern the signs of the times and respond to the critical issues of our day, even as our energy and numbers diminish.

There will probably be other unknown costs that haven't yet surfaced

In her book, <u>Fragments of Your Ancient Name</u>, Joyce Rupp comments on the text of Jesus the Way (John 14:6); she writes: "We meet you in your gospel teachings, recognize you in the witness of your life, know you by the interior pathways leading us to love as you have done. When we search for our bearings or question what our true direction is, we can look to how you lived your years and discern our own path for how to be. Your lessons mark our lifelong journey with constant signs of steady guidance."

How will we allow the cost of discipleship to guide us into the future?

How will we respond to the cost of discipleship at this moment in

our journey? Can we pray : "Daily I call out to you, O God, to you I stretch out my

hands, lead me in the way you want me to go.