

## The Companions of the King: Luke 5-9

Jesus Christ invites us to become His companions, to walk through life with **purpose, compassion and wisdom**. He offers a remarkable purpose to the first fishermen He calls. They are to do two things—to follow Him and to learn to reach out to others. As they follow Him they learn from Him the form reaching out must take. He heals incurable contagious diseases, He frees paralysis of body and spirit, He takes woundedness and makes it whole, He brings people back from near death, liberates the mentally ill, feeds the hungry, and protects from the danger of a storm. By implication, as we watch Him do these things we become freer and more confident to ask for His intervention.

His wisdom includes a higher view of morality than narrow legalism, a set of values that run counter to our normal ones, a call to connection even with those who harm us, and compassion for those who have taken wrong turns in life. He expects His wisdom to grow in us to the point that we are able to imitate His compassion and wisdom.

And then He reveals to us the great mystery that following Him will result in **suffering and death**. This suffering must be freely chosen, and as Christ sets His journey in the direction of death, His companions have to decide if they will follow. In Luke 9:51 Jesus “resolutely sets out for Jerusalem.” This journey begins because “the time drew near for His return to heaven.” Even in the mystery of the transfiguration, when His glory is once more revealed, the purpose to fulfill God’s plan by dying is made plain.

So are we willing to **follow**, even to death? Are we willing to follow, to exercise compassion? Are we willing to follow, and accept God’s wisdom? If we are, we become Christ’s companions, and we offer love and life to others. We become part of His healing presence in the world. We are invited to be an expression of His compassion in every illness, trouble, and distress that we encounter. In fact, we are to seek out opportunities to reach into places where suffering needs to be alleviated.

Jesus’ call to us may come in the same way it came to the disciples. He met them in their life-style, their occupation, and provided something miraculous and beyond their reach in a large haul of fish. This was enough to convince them that He was worthy to be followed. In our lives, we may not hear His call in quite the same clear way, or we may be privileged to have a moment of revelation when it is clear where God wants us to go. The need for compassion in the world is infinite—we should have no trouble finding a place to offer our love. And a moment then comes for each of us when we are offered a way of showing compassion that is so costly we would call it very like death. In that death we show our faith, and that we have become someone who walks with Christ as His close companion.

The Companions of the King: Luke 5-9



## The Companions of the King: Luke 5-9

### Chapter 5: The Companions are Called

**5:1-11**      **The Companions are Called to Fish for men**  
*Jesus calls three fishermen to become His co-workers.*

All of us need a calling.  
A vocation  
Gives us what we need  
    To tough out hard times,  
    To be elated at God's elaborate engineering,  
    To enjoy the match between our interests  
    and His job description.

Jesus called the disciples,  
And He's never stopped calling  
Great leaders of the church:

    Augustine,  
    Jerome,  
    Luther,  
    Calvin,  
    Tyndale,  
    John Wycliffe,  
    John Wesley,  
    William Carey,  
    Hudson Taylor,  
    Billy Graham,  
    Cameron Townsend,  
    Ken Taylor.

All in a great chain to the present.  
Lovers of God's Word.  
Many were Bible Translators.

My father heard a dramatic call  
    To Bible Translation  
    At the age of 19.

And he and my mother listened and gave their lives to this task  
And completed a translation.

We know now there are 6,913 language groups, and around  
2,600 don't have scripture in their language.

Here's the goal: Projects underway in all languages by 2025.

I imagine there are a lot of people  
Jesus is ready to call to this work  
"Drop what you're doing.

Follow me.

Transfer your skills to my program!"

*Free Verse*

## The Companions of the King: Luke 5-9

5:12-16

### The Companions are Called to Faith

*Jesus heals a leper and vast crowds come to Him.*

Cancer is our incurable disease these days.  
My sister had cancer off and on for fourteen years.  
Thanks to medical intervention  
There were lots of cancer-free years, and  
A miraculous moment when a spot on her brain scan disappeared.  
It was touch and go some times.  
We were grateful when  
    She survived a life-threatening infection.

After thirteen years she became ill again.  
We were grateful for the wisdom her illness gave  
    And the tranquility of her spirit in her suffering.  
We hoped for another miracle, but  
Accepted that heaven might be the answer.  
  
And waited.

She rallied in the summer after a sickly spring.  
There's a picture of her visiting the Alaskan glaciers.  
There's another picture—and I treasure this—  
My once beautiful sister looking  
    Wan, aged, very ill, but smiling with friends  
    Having walked again for the cure.

For years she supported cancer survivors,  
And raised money for hopeful new research.  
When she died, my sister-in-law and her children  
    Couldn't come to the funeral with my brother.  
They signed up for a cancer-walk  
    And walked for the cure in her honor.

Perhaps we'll beat it some day.  
We've beaten Leprosy,  
    Polio,                   Typhoid,  
    Tuberculosis,       Cholera,  
    Malaria,             Bubonic Plague,  
    Measles,             Dysentery.  
People still die from these things that we know how to cure.  
Let's tackle it—  
    Medicine when we know something;  
    Research when we don't.

*Free Verse*

## The Companions of the King: Luke 5-9

5:17-26

### The Companions are Called to Forgiveness

*Jesus heals a paralyzed man and forgives his sins.*

My 80 year-old aunt is so healthy  
She makes the rest of us look weak.

The 50 year olds,  
30 year olds,  
even the 20 year olds!

Wise eating.  
Good genes.  
Good health care.  
Positive enthusiasm for life.  
And lots and lots of activity.

All right, we all know better.

We need to move!  
So perhaps there's some  
Modern relevance in Jesus'  
Commands for our healing.  
"Stand! Get up! Move!"

*Free Verse*

5:27-32

### The Companions are Called to Friendship

*Jesus calls a tax collector to be His co-worker*

God has a knack for calling men  
Who are a little too clever with money.  
He transforms their hearts,  
And puts those skills to good use.  
There are three big areas today with poor transportation,  
And unreached people groups:  
Central Africa,  
Indonesian archipelago,  
East Asia.

They need big money to make it happen.  
But God always has  
A supply of Matthews to step up to the task.

*Free Verse*

## The Companions of the King: Luke 5-9

5:33-39

### The Companions are Called to Feasting

*Jesus' companions feast with Him, to the dismay of His critics.*

Wedding guests celebrated here the groom,  
But days of gloom soon brought fear  
When His suffering drew near.

Life, resurrection—our sign Christ was first.  
An old skin burst with new wine.  
New life, death could not confine.

For us Christ our holy King is now here,  
So we don't fear anything,  
For in Him death lost its sting.

*Englyn penfyr*

## The Companions of the King: Luke 5-9

### Chapter 6: The Companions are Coached

#### 6:1-11 **The Companions are Coached in the True law**

*Jesus heals a man with a deformed hand  
to the dismay of His critics.*

What does the deep rest of God mean?  
Is it a game of statues where we freeze as we are thrown?  
Is it a game of hopscotch where you can't touch the line?  
Is it hide and seek and we fear getting caught before we're home?

Or is it a toddler in the park  
Walking in the grass?  
Or an orange butterfly whisking through the air  
Making a chain of triangles?  
Or a soft breeze that sets leaves twinkling in the sunny blue sky?  
Is it supervising your neighbor's behavior?  
Or is it opening your hand to receive God's gift?

*Free Verse*

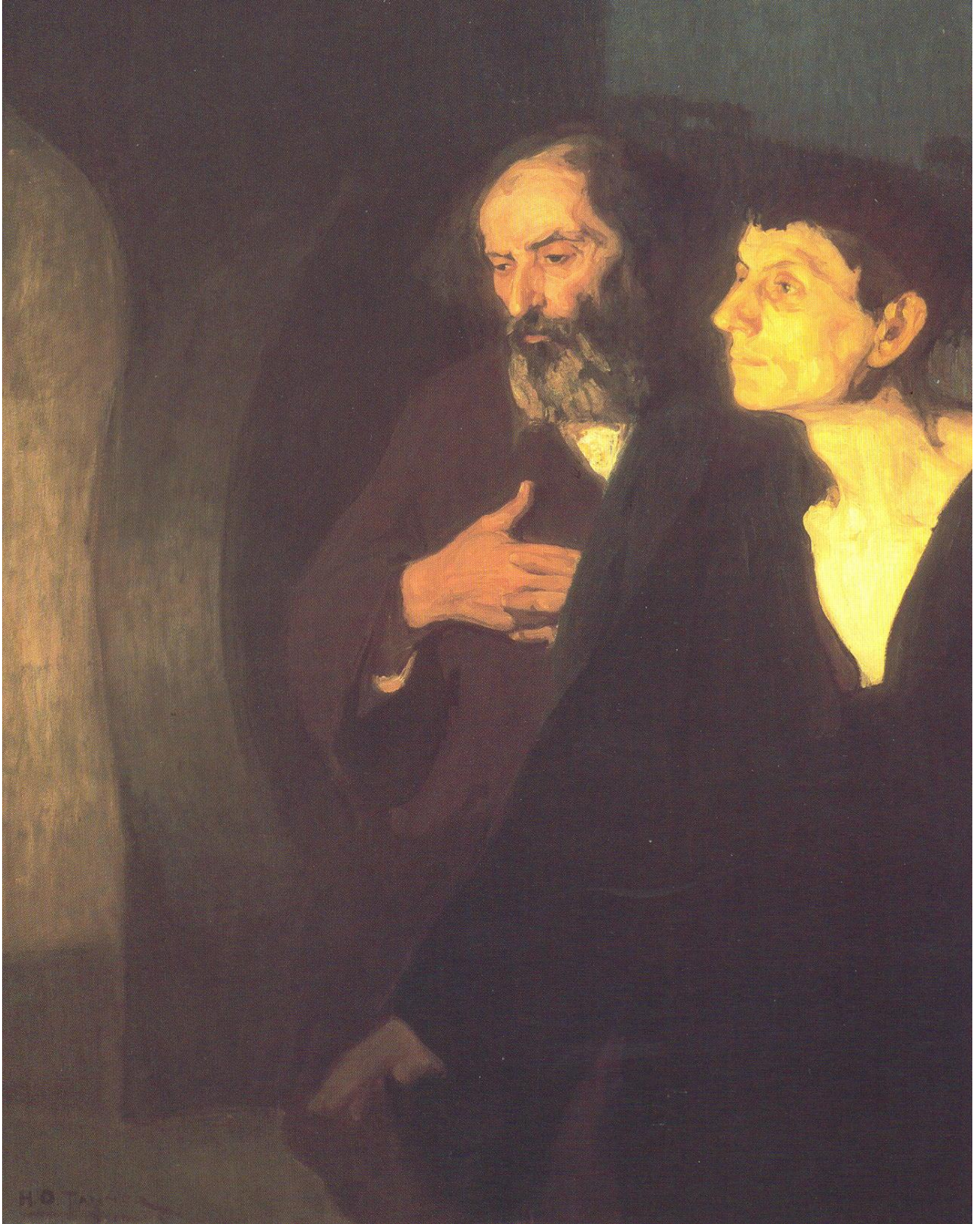
#### 6:12-19 **The Companions are Coached as a Team**

*Jesus selects twelve companions as His team.*

They couldn't have known  
This was the start of many journeys.  
Thaddeus and Simon to  
Arabia, Syria, Mesopotamia,  
Bartholomew to Armenia, John to Ephesus,  
Matthew to Ethiopia or Persia,  
Peter to Rome, Thomas to India,  
It's a little confusing which James (or if James) made it to Spain.  
Provincial, ordinary men  
Made into men of the whole world.

*Free Verse*

The Companions of the King: Luke 5-9



Gazing at Christ: Meditations on the Gospel of Luke ~ Elaine Elliott



## The Companions of the King: Luke 5-9

6:20-23

### The Companions are Coached in Transformed thought

*Jesus teaches the new principles on which His Kingdom is based.*

Your wealth replaces my poverty,  
Your feasts fill my hunger,  
Your comfort replaces my pain,  
    You have promised a time  
    When we will laugh with joy.  
Your community holds me when  
    I am excluded or mocked.  
Let me have the chance to be criticized  
    Because I belong to You,  
For you have promised joy and honor.

6:24-36

America, we've got it good.  
    Great recreation,  
    Awesome landscapes,  
    Beautiful huge homes,  
    Terrific educations.  
We need to be careful.  
    We're a little too into  
    Our own health,  
    Our own bodies,  
    Our own income,  
    Our own retirement.  
We're used to having fun  
    Great comedy on TV,  
    Terrific movies.  
We're enthusiastic about our celebrities,  
    Non-stop info is available on their lives.  
We need to be a little cautious.  
    Are we too wealthy?  
    Too satisfied and prosperous?  
    Too busy having a good time?  
    Too eager for our 15 minutes of fame?  
We need to think through the  
    Consequences of our excesses.

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**6:37-42**

Lord, please be our surgeon.  
    He may have a speck,  
    And I may have a log,  
But neither of us can see, and neither of us can heal our blindness.  
Personally, I think I have the speck,  
And he has the log.  
But Lord, You know,  
Your eyesight is clearest.

**6:43-45**

Here is my pomegranate tree,  
    Blood red seeds spilling sweetness  
    From its good fruit.  
Do not touch this tree,  
    Do not tear it down,  
For I need this fruit  
    It's juice crushed to heal.

**6:46-49**

The hurricane caught us with homes below sea-level,  
    Ruined by flood.  
Help us find that firmer place  
    In the Spirit,  
Where hurricanes and floods cannot destroy.

*Free Verse*

## The Companions of the King: Luke 5-9

### Chapter 7: The Companions Care

#### 7:1-10 The Companions Care for a Slave

*Jesus heals a Roman officer's slave.*

This poor benighted centurion actually owned a slave,  
But he loved him enough to ask Jesus to heal him.  
Most of us wouldn't dream of owning a slave,  
But, to my shame and shock, I read the price my great great  
(great?) grandparent put on the man he gave his son.  
I benefited from slavery on two sides of the family.  
Our history is sorrowful in this,  
Racist remarks by our founding fathers and scholars,  
Slave-owning presidents and Supreme Court justices,  
A Supreme Court Justice who was a member of the KKK,  
3,589 recorded lynchings in 43 years,  
Supreme Court decisions that did not recognize  
any citizenship rights for slaves,  
Separate graveyards at Gettysburg,  
No voting rights,  
2% of federal housing funds for minorities post-WWII,  
Redlining of neighborhoods so bank-loans weren't available,  
Still today hunting for a job, an apartment, shopping, driving,  
All affected by race.  
God, forgive us for this evil legacy,  
Give us wisdom on how to be just today.  
May we be like the centurion,  
May we care enough for the suffering to ask for their healing,  
Especially if they are the descendants of slaves.

*Free Verse*

## The Companions of the King: Luke 5-9

7:11-17

### The Companions Care for a Son

*Jesus raises a young man from the dead.*

Once again she seemed so close to dead,  
Three months in bed, drugged and fed,  
Silent and asleep. Near Christmas Eve  
Her dad noted how like Christ she was to leave  
Her glory to become so small, a child asleep.  
“Must this be?” we ask our Lord and weep.  
“Why yet another wretched test?”  
We long for peace and genuine relief and rest.  
But, stunningly, in the midst of gloom,  
She wakes up, leaves her tiny room,  
Laughs with others in their jubilation,  
Travels far and joins in celebration.  
So like this son “asleep.” Yet another  
Raised up, and given to a mother!

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## The Companions of the King: Luke 5-9

7:18-35

### The Companions Care for seekers

*John's disciples' question whether Christ is the promised One.*

When Moses asked

“How can you expect me to lead?”

God answered

“I will be with you.”

When David was selected to be king

Samuel heard

“This is the one; anoint him.”

And God's spirit came on him.

Before John the Baptist was born

God promised

“He will be great in God's eyes.”

“He will be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

“He will have the Spirit and power of Elijah.”

Jesus said

“I tell you, of all who have ever lived,

None is greater than John.”

So God defines leadership,

And makes it work through

His presence,

His call,

His Spirit.

I've always struggled to understand

Why Jesus said none who had ever lived

Was greater than John.

Coverage of his ministry is minimal compared to Moses.

His personality doesn't really come through like David's,

And he doesn't engage in as much drama as Elijah.

It must be that his role,

His task,

His charge

To declare the Messiah

Gave him this level of greatness.

## The Companions of the King: Luke 5-9

But since it is our role,  
    Our task,  
    Our charge  
To share Christ,  
Perhaps that is why Jesus says,  
This littlest of those of us in the Kingdom  
Is greater than John.

His leadership serves as our example,  
    Calling all to transformation,  
    Calling all to a social conscience,  
    Announcing true leadership,  
    Denouncing corrupted leadership  
(He lost his head for that).

*Free Verse*

**7:36-50**

### **The Companions Care for a sinful woman**

*Jesus forgives a penitent woman and corrects a judgmental man.*

She was a Communist,  
She had an abortion,  
She wrote a racy novel,  
She turned it into a Hollywood screenplay,  
She lived with a man not her husband.  
Truly a sinner for our times.

She came to faith in Christ,  
She was a single mom,  
She invited the homeless into her home,  
She wrote for a religious newspaper,  
She confronted religious leaders,  
She prayed, spoke, worked for peace,  
She marched for civil rights,  
She was arrested with César Chávez.  
Truly an example for our times.

Her soup kitchens have multiplied,  
Her newspaper has multiplied,  
Her books are still read,  
Her life still inspires,  
Her legacy includes church statements against war.  
Truly a saint for our times—

Dorothy Day

*Free Verse*

## The Companions of the King: Luke 5-9

### Chapter 8: The Companions are Comforted

#### 8:1-21 **The Companions are Comforted by Closeness**

*Jesus explains a principle of the kingdom to His close companions.*

A farmer went out  
And planted seed in a field  
The seed was perfect

Fell on a footpath  
Seed never rooted at all  
Soon became birdseed

Fell on shallow soil  
Seed sprouted but then hit rock  
Withered, lacked water

Fell among some thorns  
Seed sprouted small tender blades  
Thorns soon outgrew them

Fell on fertile soil  
Seed grew one hundred times more  
More than was planted

*Hokku*

#### 8:22-25 **The Companions are Comforted by Calm**

*Jesus comforts and cares for His companions by calming a storm.*

“Let us cross the lake My friends,” said Jesus,  
“And reach the other side.” So they were sent  
And entered in the boat and started out  
And He lay down and slept then as they went.  
The wind began to rise. A storm increased  
So fiercely, they were in the greatest danger.  
They woke Christ up and He rebuked the wind.  
Waves then calmed with Him as their arranger.  
So Christ, I enter with You in our task.  
But Lord, sometimes it seems You are asleep  
And fear and chaos come. But Lord, I know  
There is nothing that You cannot keep.  
You pick up each fear and give us peace  
And in Your gentle hands the storm can cease.

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**The Companions of the King: Luke 5-9**





## The Companions of the King: Luke 5-9

### 8:26-39 **The Companions are Comforted by Control of evil spirits** *Jesus heals extreme mental illness.*

I don't judge the poor man with demons—  
There are probably times when we're all nuts  
Help us all  
I had a period when I could have been homeless.  
Left to myself I might have been like  
    Homeless vets I've met on the streets  
    Who clearly let too much reality in during the war  
I've even done a little shrieking in my time  
    Screaming, definitely.  
I've had moments of hysteria  
    Feeling the need to "get away"  
    Feeling too many thoughts tumbling inside  
    Competing voices  
My confusion going into the world and causing confusion  
But, I, too, am grateful for Jesus' words that leave me  
    Sitting quietly,  
        Well-dressed,  
            Sane.

*Free Verse*

### 8:40-56 **The Companions are Comforted by Care of the sick** *Jesus heals a child in a coma.*

I do believe in miracles of healing—I've seen them.  
My youngest sister is like the woman with a hemorrhage.  
Although she didn't hemorrhage for twelve years,  
She did need 23 pints though her body only holds 16  
A chain of miracles to get her to the right hospital  
Her doctors knew she was on the verge of death  
Her husband said good-bye  
She asked God for life for her family—she lives.

My other sister was like the young girl in a coma.  
She was 18 when she had convulsions.  
She was two weeks in a coma, sleeping, speechless.  
Doctors expected death or brain damage at the least.  
When she woke up she spoke like a small child,  
Slowly regaining her memory.  
She went to college the next year.  
I do believe in miracles of healing.

*Free Verse*

## The Companions of the King: Luke 5-9



## The Companions of the King: Luke 5-9

### Chapter 9: The Companions Contribute

#### 9:1-9 **The Companions Contribute by Sharing the Kingdom**

*Jesus sends out His companions to heal.*

Looking at our world:

Discrimination and racism  
Ethnic conflict  
Redlining, other examples of privilege

Looking at ourselves:

We need to learn humility to reach to margins  
Put ourselves in cross-cultural situations  
We need to learn to share our love

Looking at the text:

Giving away His ministry  
Peace, fellowship, healing  
Continuing to expand the circle

*Free Verse*

#### 9:10-17 **The Companions Contribute by Serving food**

*Jesus and His friends serve a feast to a crowd.*

Fresh-baked bread on my childhood's kitchen table:  
Cinnamon rolls, three loaves for the week,  
Dinner rolls that we were able  
To form with childish hands. I now seek  
That smell, that sunny white cloth as they raise,  
That cheerful goodness of a warm slice,  
And the regularity of our baking days.  
Such warm memories of bread so nice!  
No time or energy to bake now.  
Nothing but sturdy store-bought bread.  
My life's brokenness reflected in how  
The yeast on my shelf is getting old and dead.  
I'm sure Christ's bread was something to be tasted!  
The best. No wonder none of it was wasted.

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## The Companions of the King: Luke 5-9

9:18-43

### The Companions Contribute by Seeing His glory

*Jesus predicts His suffering and the coming of the Kingdom;  
three of His friends see Him as King on a mountaintop.*

Tucson in July – 107 degrees on a (brief) walk in the afternoon  
Incredible refreshment in the swimming pool  
A thunderbird circling in the blue afternoon sky.  
Evening approaches.  
The lacey green leaves dance wildly back and forth in the wind  
    On the black branches of the mesquite trees.  
A red gash in the sky as the sun sets.  
The scent of the desert before a thunderstorm.  
White veins of lightening in the blackened sky.

The desert southwest is an acquired taste,  
But when you have it, it's all beautiful.

Reminds me of Moses

    Walking around in the heat with the Israelites for 40 years  
    Rescued with cool refreshing water and unexpected quail

Reminds me of Elijah

    God sending a raven to feed him  
    God sending wild winds and then speaking in the stillness  
    Carried to heaven in a chariot of fire

Neither of them officially died

Both had inside information

Both bore images of the Messiah in their lives

Appropriate company for Jesus as a voice thundered:

“This is my Son, my Chosen One. Listen to Him.”

Fire and lightning.

*Free Verse*

## The Companions of the King: Luke 5-9

9:43-62

### The Companions Contribute by Staying with Him

*Jesus resolves to take the dangerous journey to Jerusalem and certain death.*

Lord, let me live my life with You today  
On the road, not requiring space,  
But never wandering with those who say  
Like Kerouac, that truth comes from the race,  
Or listening to the wind to learn the way.  
But may Your pilgrim life I now embrace  
And find now my best path as I pray  
And then resolutely set my face  
For journey to my death on the day  
That is Your gift to me of perfect grace.  
Just as You found where Your head could lay  
And sleep, then rose to take Your rightful place,  
May I with You then find my real home  
And finish this life's pilgrim need to roam.

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