

# Jesus' uncompromising side

We think of Jesus as exemplifying goodness and benevolence – someone who would listen, forgive and understand us. There is the image of the sacrificial lamb that gives its life or the person who, if struck, will always turn the other cheek. And the examples continue ...



These images are accurate and correspond to what Jesus was – the Son who revealed God's unfailing love for us. But these images could make us forget the battles that Jesus fought against a strict and uncompromising practice of religious law of his era, mediocrity and hypocrisy. These struggles with the authorities became so intense that they eventually led to his sentencing to a horrible death and torture that was commonly reserved for thieves.

St. Luke's Gospel gives us four brief examples of Jesus' uncompromising side. When the disciples wished to use God's power to avenge the Samaritans' slight, Jesus rebuked them soundly. The three other examples concerned candidates who wished to become disciples. Suspecting the shallowness of their commitment, Jesus rejected their proposals. We can speculate why this happened. St. Luke's focus is not on the stories themselves or possible interpretations, but on Jesus' uncompromising statements. We also know that events were unfolding very quickly, that time was of the essence and Jesus could not wait: *no one who ... looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.*

There are moments in life when we must stop beating around the bush or running in circles. Delays become compromises and hesitation, complicity. We have seen many such instances during the current economic crisis: the general lack of responsibility and conscience has thrown millions of people into dire straits. We can never be patient with indecision, evil and greed.

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