



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Gospel According to St. Luke

Chapter 9

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Introduction

- The period of their instruction having been completed, Jesus sent the twelve Apostles on their first mission to heal and proclaim the Gospel

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- Herod Seeks to See Jesus 9:7-9
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Introduction

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Sending Out the Twelve 9:1-6

- Christ sent his twelve disciples, who by this time were able to teach others what they had received from the Lord
- This missionary journey was recorded in Matthew 9:35; Mark 6:6
- St. Matthew gives a touching reason for the mission of the Twelve
- It was because He had sympathy for the multitude, “*But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’*” (Matthew 9:36-38)



Sending Out the Twelve 9:1-6

- *gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases,* The words properly mean here, the power to work miracles; and that authority by which the whole demoniac system was to be subjected to them
- The same principle holds true today: whom God calls, God equips
- Note that St. Luke mentions both demons and diseases because the treatment of these two was not the same
- The demons were to be cast out, the diseases to be healed
- Very extraordinary powers were conferred on them



Sending Out the Twelve 9:1-6

- The goal was to *preach the kingdom of God*
- *to heal the sick*, of every disease of body, and thereby confirm their mission and commission from Christ
- Jesus sent the disciples to do more than present a message, but also to do good with supernatural empowering; to bless the whole person, and *to heal the sick*
- This *power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases* was vitally connected with preaching the gospel
- The two go together



Sending Out the Twelve 9:1-6

- They must go as they were
- The disciples were engaged in such holy work (preaching the gospel and bringing God's healing) that they could not give the impression that they have any other motive
- What is amazing is that He offered them the power and the authority, and He granted them the power of preaching, and healing before asking them to give up anything
- They will have to rely on God to provide for them and they must trust that He will care for their needs



Sending Out the Twelve 9:1-6

- Travelling light also kept them dependent upon God
- If they did not take much with them, they had to trust the Lord for everything
- If the preacher himself doesn't trust God, how can he tell others to trust Him?
- The general spirit of the instructions simply is for them to go forth in the most simple, humble manner, with no burdens or obstacles to their movements, and in complete perfect faith



Sending Out the Twelve 9:1-6

- Christ addressed thus far the material needs
- He now passes to social relations
- The general direction here is: stay in the same house all the time you are in a place
- It seems that this rule continued in the early years of Christianity
- In the history of the first Churches, certain "houses" in the different cities were evidently the centers of the mission work there as we see from the expression of St. Paul, Acts 16:40



Sending Out the Twelve 9:1-6

- They were to persuasively present the message, but if their listeners didn't receive it, they could leave and *shake off the very dust from your feet* as they left
- If Jewish people of that time had to go in or through a Gentile city, as they left, they often shook the dust off their feet as a gesture saying, "We do not want to take anything from this Gentile city with us."
- Essentially, Jesus told His disciples to regard a Jewish city that rejected their message as if it were a Gentile city



Sending Out the Twelve 9:1-6

- When truth and love thus go together, and yet the message of God is rejected and despised, it leaves men without excuse, and turns to a testimony against them
- The disciples actually did what Jesus told them to do
- They were *preaching the gospel and healing everywhere*, with both the mission given to them by Jesus and the power and authority to fulfill that mission



Herod Seeks to See Jesus 9:7-9

- There is no indication that Herod (Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great) was a man of sincere spiritual interest
- Yet he was interested in Jesus as a famous man, a miracle worker, and perhaps as an enemy
- Herod absorbed the popular thinking about who Jesus was (as in Luke 9:19)
- Some thought Jesus was a messenger of national repentance, like *St. John the Baptist*
- Some thought Jesus was a famous worker of miracles, like *Elijah* (whose return before the coming of the Messiah was promised in Malachi 4:5-6)



Herod Seeks to See Jesus 9:7-9

- Some thought Jesus was *one of the old prophets*, perhaps the one Moses promised would come, Deuteronomy 18:15-19
- The popular rumors and opinions about Jesus left Herod *perplexed* – especially because of his guilty conscience over the murder of John the Baptist
- A bad conscience brings confusion and perplexity
- Herod executed John in prison, because John rebuked Herod about his sin with his brother's wife
- Herod wanted to see Jesus, but not as a sincere seeker
- Perhaps it was his curiosity or to do the same to Jesus as he had done to His cousin John



Herod Seeks to See Jesus 9:7-9

- Luke noted this to emphasize the increasing danger surrounding the work of Jesus
- Luke records a second reference to this Herod
- Later, Jesus was told that this Herod wanted to kill Him
- Jesus replied, *Go, tell that fox, "Behold I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected."* (Luke 13:32)
- Luke also told us that Jesus finally met this Herod, on the morning of His crucifixion



Herod Seeks to See Jesus 9:7-9

- Herod was in Jerusalem at the time, and when He heard that Pilate was sending Jesus to him, he got happy and excited – Herod wanted Jesus to perform a miracle for him
- Yet Jesus did not perform any kind of miracle for Herod, and when he asked Jesus many questions, Jesus answered him *nothing*
- Herod then treated Jesus with contempt, mocked Him with a purple robe, and sent Him back to Pilate
- *So he sought to see Him*, Herod's guilty conscience was ready to conclude that John was risen from the dead

Feeding the Five Thousand

9:10-17



- *And the apostles*, When they left Jesus in Luke 9:1, they were called *disciples* – that is, “learners”
- When they came back after their preaching mission, they were called *apostles* – that is, “those sent with authority and a message”
- They certainly remained disciples but knew both the message and the authority in a much better way after their work
- The evangelists give us but a summary account of things
- Here we read of their return, and giving their Lord an account of their discharge of the trust He had reposed in them
- *told Him all that they had done*, What doctrines they had taught, how they had been received, and what success they met with, and what miracles they had wrought

Feeding the Five Thousand

9:10-17



- *He took them and went aside privately,* Jesus did this to serve and bless those to whom He delegated His work
- Jesus has a special care to bless and serve those who serve Him
- *the city called Bethsaida,* The city of Andrew and Peter, John 1:44, and which, as Josephus says, was by the lake of Gennesaret
- And this desert place was the desert of Bethsaida, a lonely, wild, uncultivated, and desolate place, not far from it
- Christ went with His disciples, that they might be retired and alone, and have some refreshment and rest from their labors, and where they might privately converse together; and He probably gave them some fresh instructions, and directions, and comfort

Feeding the Five Thousand

9:10-17



- He had barely time to retire with His disciples to one of the hills when a crowd assembled on the little plain to see the Great Prophet
- Jesus served the seeking needy multitudes by:
 1. *He received them*, Very kindly, and in a very affectionate manner, and with great respect, though they had prevented the private conversation between Him and His apostles
 2. *spoke to them about the kingdom of God*, The Gospel dispensation and of the doctrines and ordinances of it, of the governing principle of grace in the hearts of His people, and of the glory of the world to come

Feeding the Five Thousand

9:10-17



3. *healed those who had need of healing*, Jesus did not only give them spiritual instruction, but He also did good among them, He both taught doctrine and did miracles
- Probably the disciples mentioned their remarks as a simple consideration for the crowds, among whom we know were women and children
 - They felt they were doing good for the multitude by sending them away to *lodge and get provisions*

Feeding the Five Thousand

9:10-17



- *You give them something to eat*, Signifying that it was not His will to dismiss people, and send them scattering into the nearby cities, towns, or houses
- But that His will was, that they should be supplied with provisions out of their stock
- To the disciples, this request must have sounded strange or even shocking
- It was obvious to them that they did not have the resources to feed even a fraction of the multitude
- With this statement, Jesus challenged both their faith and their compassion

Feeding the Five Thousand

9:10-17



- Jesus wanted them to do this work in an orderly, organized way, and He also wanted them to *enjoy* the meal
- This command suggests that this was more than just putting food in their stomachs
- The idea was that there was something like a banquet-like atmosphere of enjoyment
- Organizing them *in groups of fifty* also made it possible to much more easily count the multitude, giving more reliability to the number of *about five thousand men*

Feeding the Five Thousand

9:10-17



- Jesus took the little that they had and He thanked God for it
- This miracle displayed Jesus' total authority over creation
- Yet He insisted on doing this miracle *through* the hands of the disciples
- He could have done it directly, but He wanted to use the disciples
- Obviously, the miracle happened in the hands of Jesus, they simply distributed what Jesus had miraculously provided
- *twelve baskets of the leftover fragments were taken up by them,*
A very impressive lesson from the Creator Himself against waste or extravagance

Feeding the Five Thousand

9:10-17



- At first glance this story of the feeding miracle seems to be only concerned with Jesus' compassion and His supernatural ability to meet the needs of His people, but there is so much more to be understood concerning this event
- The miracle of feeding is not only meant to remind us of God's compassion in the Old Testament, Exodus 16:4-13,35; Numbers 11:31-34; 1 Kings 17:8-16; 2 Kings 4:42-44, but also to prepare us for a greater miracle that the Gospel of St. John Gospel points us to in Jesus' Bread of Life Discourse

Feeding the Five Thousand

9:10-17



- In that discourse the Jews saw Jesus feeding miracle the day before in the context of the miracle of the manna and Jesus as the new prophet Moses, come to liberate His people and the new David come to reestablish the kingdom of Israel, John 6:1-15,30-31
- In His discourse the next day, Jesus promises that He will one day give His Body and Blood as food and drink for the salvation of man John 6:22-65
- His miracle feeding and the discourse the next day foreshadows the giving of Himself in the Eucharist

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ 9:18-20



- Since the miracle of feeding the five thousand at Bethsaida much had happened
- We see here that St. Luke changes for his readers the time and scene
- This scene began with Jesus praying, and the disciples joining Him
- We don't really know if they *joined* with Him in prayer, or if they interrupted His time of prayer
- When Jesus was done praying, He asked them a question: *Who do the crowds say that I am?*

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ 9:18-20



- Jesus did not ask this question because He was ignorant on this point and needed information from His disciples
- He asked because He would use this question to introduce a more important follow-up question
- *“John the Baptist, This was the opinion of some who thought that he was risen from the dead, as in Luke 9:7*
- The image of the recently murdered Baptist was present with some
- Herod's words point to this, perhaps, widespread belief

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ 9:18-20



- But people who thought that Jesus was *John the Baptist* did not know much about Him, because He and John worked at the same time
- Both John and *Elijah* were national reformers who stood against the corrupt rulers of their day, and the similarity with the courage and righteousness of Jesus may have suggested the connection
- Perhaps in seeing Jesus as John or Elijah, the people hoped for a political messiah, one who would overthrow the corrupt powers that oppressed Israel

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ 9:18-20



- *one of the old prophets has risen again*, Thus they were divided in their sentiments about Him
- The answer of the Apostle showed the sad truth that Jesus *came to His own and His own did not receive Him* (John 1:11); that the *Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it* (John 1:5)
- It was fine for the disciples to know what *the crowds* thought about Jesus
- But Jesus had to ask them, as individuals, what *they* believed about Him

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ 9:18-20



- Jesus assumed that the disciples would have a different opinion of Him than *the crowds*
- They should know who Jesus was
- Peter knew Jesus better than the crowds did
- He knew that Jesus is *the Christ of God*, God's Messiah, the promised redeemer from the Old Testament, the Messiah from the heart of God, *not* the Messiah from the desire of man



Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection 9:21-22

- Though He highly approved of this their confession, and pronounced Peter blessed upon it; and signified that it was a discovery which *flesh and blood has not revealed it ... but My Father who is in heaven*, Matthew 16:17, yet He gave them a strict charge, and laid His commands on them *to tell this to no one*
- The crowds couldn't understand that Jesus really was the Messiah yet *had to* suffer – the disciples had to learn this first
- He did not want them to tell anyone perhaps also because His work was not yet finished



Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection 9:21-22

- Because their faith was very weak and their knowledge very partial
- Because the public proclamation of the truth would have hastened the workings of God's foreordained plan, Ephesians 1:9, 3:11
- After hearing what the crowd thought of Him, Jesus then told them what He had really come to do: *suffer, be rejected, be killed, and be raised the third day*
- This was not what His disciples or the crowds expected or wanted at all



Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection 9:21-22

- This is a turning point in Jesus' preparation for His disciples
- From now on He will teach clearly about what they can expect so they will be prepared when He reaches the climax of His ministry
- From the beginning He was fulfilling the prophecies of Isaiah concerning the coming of the Messiah: healing the sick, casting out demons, giving hope to the oppressed and broken hearted
- But He will also be fulfilling Isaiah's prophecies of God's suffering servant who will die for the sake of His people, Isaiah 53:12



Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection 9:21-22

- An important word here is *must*
- This wasn't just a plan or an idea or a prediction; this was the fulfillment of what was planned before the world began for our salvation, 1 Peter 1:20 and Revelation 13:8
- *be raised the third day* The resurrection was as much a must as any other aspect of His suffering; Jesus had to rise from the dead

Take Up the Cross and Follow Him 9:23-27



- It was bad enough for the disciples to hear that Jesus would suffer, be rejected, and die on a cross
- Now He told them that *they* must do the same; or at least have the same intention
- A true discipleship is based on the willingness "*to deny*" selfish desires by daily dying to oneself in order to live for Christ
- Willingly "*to take*" and endure those struggles/crosses that are necessary in order
- "*to follow*" Jesus' teachings faithfully and obediently in service to Christ and His Kingdom

Take Up the Cross and Follow Him 9:23-27



- It means completely identifying with Christ's message even to the point of death
- In the Roman world, before a man died on a cross, he had to carry his cross to the place of execution
- The first hearers of Jesus did not need an explanation of the cross; they knew it was an unrelenting instrument of torture, death, and humiliation
- If someone took up his cross, he never came back
- It was a one-way journey
- But the promise is whoever loses his life for the sake of Christ will live eternally in His heavenly Kingdom

Take Up the Cross and Follow Him 9:23-27



- *whoever loses his life for My sake will save it*, We must follow Jesus this way because it is the only way that we will ever find life
- It sounds strange to say, “You will never live until you walk to your death with Jesus,” but that is the idea
- You can not gain resurrection life without dying first
- This is a strong and sure promise of the afterlife
- If there is no life after death, then there is no reward for either the dying martyr or the living martyr

Take Up the Cross and Follow Him 9:23-27



- What is Jesus' warning?
- Earthly profit is only temporal and is not worth one's eternal soul
- Avoiding the walk to death with Jesus means that we may gain the *whole world* – and end up losing everything
- Some are *ashamed* out of fear, some out of social pressure, some out of intellectual or cultural pride
- After this extreme call to follow Jesus unto death, He added a promise of significant glory
- Jesus wanted them to know that it wasn't all suffering and death, the end of it all was not death

Take Up the Cross and Follow Him 9:23-27



- The Despised and Rejected would assuredly return with a glory indescribable, inconceivable
- He affirms that *he* will return as Almighty Judge
- Jesus is probably referring in verse 27 to His glory which Peter, James and John will witness in the event of His Transfiguration
- Others believe He is also referring to His Resurrection, Ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, which the Apostles and disciples, with the exception of Judas Iscariot, will witness

Take Up the Cross and Follow Him 9:23-27



St. Ambrose of Milan contemplates on verse 27 by saying:

- “Thus, if we wish not to fear death, let us stand where Christ is, so that he may say of us too, “There are some standing here that shall not taste death.” It is not enough to stand unless the standing is where Christ is, for only those who can stand with Christ cannot taste death. It is therein lawful through the quality of the very word to ponder that those who are seen to have deserved the fellowship with Christ will not have even the perception of death.”

Jesus Transfigured on the Mount 9:28-36



- What started as a mountain top prayer meeting quickly changed into the shining forth of the glory of Jesus, and as He prayed, Jesus was transformed right before the eyes of the disciples
- There are two traditions identifying the mountain of the Transfiguration
- One tradition names Mt. Hermon at Caesarea Philippi, but the more popular tradition identifies Mt. Tabor, an isolated mountain about six days journey from Caesarea Philippi, west of the Sea of Galilee
- Mt. Tabor has been celebrated as the site of the Transfiguration since the 4th century AD

Jesus Transfigured on the Mount 9:28-36



- The object of this occasion was to fill their souls with a vision which should support their faith during the horrors which they afterwards witnessed
- The disciples and Apostles must have been frightened and discouraged after Jesus' prediction of His death
- Jesus took three Apostles to witness a manifestation of His glory that confirms He is the Son of God and that He will come again in glory when the suffering He predicted has been fulfilled
- These three Apostles will also be taken apart from the others when Jesus faces His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane

Jesus Transfigured on the Mount 9:28-36



- Jesus showed in an acted-out way that cross bearers would be glory receivers
- The end is not the cross; the end is the glory of God
- St. Cyril of Alexandria explains verse 29 by saying: “Not as though His body changed its human form, but a certain glistening glory overspread it. The mystery, namely, of His Incarnation, also the lifegiving Passion accomplished on the sacred cross.”

Jesus Transfigured on the Mount 9:28-36



- Jesus was not alone in this display of glory
- *Two men* also appeared with Him, whom the disciples seemed to immediately recognize as *Moses and Elijah*
- Many wonder why it was *these* two particular men from the Old Testament, and not two others. It was not Abraham or David or Joshua or Joseph or Daniel; it was *Moses and Elijah*
- They represent the Law and the prophets
- “The end of the Law is Christ; Law and Prophecy are from the Word; and things which began from the Word, cease *in* the Word.”
St. Ambrose

Jesus Transfigured on the Mount 9:28-36



- St. John Chrysostom contemplates on the reason for this event by saying: “Or else this took place because the multitude said He was Elijah or Jeremiah, to show the distinction between our Lord and His servants. And to make it plain that He was not an enemy of God, and transgressor of the law, He showed these two standing by Him; (Moses the lawgiver, and Elijah who was zealous for the glory of God) but also to give testimony to the virtues of the men... He wishes also His disciples to imitate them in the government of the people, that they might be indeed meek like Moses, and zealous like Elias. He introduces them also to set forth the glory of His cross, to console Peter and the others who feared His Passion.”

Jesus Transfigured on the Mount 9:28-36



- *spoke of His decease* Why was this the chosen subject?
- In all reverence perhaps one reason for the visit of these blessed spirits on that solemn night was the strengthening the sinless Sufferer Himself
- The scene which lay immediately before Jesus, of rejection, abandonment, the death of agony, and the dreadful sufferings which preceded it, - all this had been very present before Him lately
- He had dwelt upon these things, we know, to His own
- He had pondered over them, no doubt, often when alone

Jesus Transfigured on the Mount 9:28-36



- It was not only in Gethsemane that His "soul was sorrowful even unto death"
- As in the garden-agony "appeared to Him an angel from heaven strengthening him," so here on the mount came to Him these glorified spirits for the same blessed purpose of ministering
- Or, perhaps to help the three disciples
- Their wavering faith would surely be strengthened if the words which they heard from Moses and Elijah dwelt with reverent awe and admiration on the circumstances of their Master's self-sacrificing and suffering

Jesus Transfigured on the Mount 9:28-36



- *Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep*, Perhaps the disciples saw and heard only a small part of this meeting
- It may seem remarkable that they should fall asleep on such an occasion; but we are to bear in mind that this may have been in the night, and that they were weary with the toils of the day
- Besides, they did not "fall asleep" while the transfiguration lasted
- "While" they were sleeping His countenance was changed, and Moses and Elias appeared
- The first that "they" saw of it was after they awoke, having been probably awakened by the shining of the light around them

Jesus Transfigured on the Mount 9:28-36



- *as they were parting from Him*, Peter said what he said when Moses and Elijah *began* to leave
- Peter didn't want the scene of glory to stop
- In suggesting *three tabernacles*, Peter made the mistake of putting Jesus on an equal level with Moses and Elijah, with one tabernacle for each of them
- Perhaps Peter made the suggestion to build booths because the event of the Transfiguration took place near the time of the festival of Tabernacles *not knowing what he said*

Jesus Transfigured on the Mount 9:28-36



- While Peter was making the above request, before an answer was returned, a cloud appeared, a very uncommon one, as a symbol of the divine presence, *and overshadowed them*
- If a mere mountain cloud had been intended, there would have been no reason for their fear
- Peter and the apostles at first felt *it is good for us to be here*, but as the glory intensified, it began to create in them the awe and fear
- Peter may not have known what he *said*, but he knew what he *saw* – the cloud of glory was real, and he was wide-awake when he and the apostles saw it

Jesus Transfigured on the Mount 9:28-36



- The voice from the cloud of glory made it clear that Jesus was not on the same level as Moses and Elijah. He is the *beloved Son* – so *Hear Him!*
- St. Ambrose says, “Not Elijah, not Moses, but he whom you see alone, is My Beloved Son.”
- And St. Theophylactus confirms, “Therefore, it is added, When *the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone*, lest anyone should imagine these words were addressed to Moses or Elijah”
- The voice was evidently for the disciples - one more help for them in their present and future struggle against the doubts which ever and again would be suggested to them by the enemy of human souls

Jesus Transfigured on the Mount 9:28-36



- The Holy Trinity is manifested in this event; God the Father's voice is heard from heaven, God the Son is present in His glory, and God the Holy Spirit is represented by the overshadowing cloud
- The word for, *a cloud came and overshadowed* is the same word found in the account of the Holy Spirit overshadowing the Virgin Mary in the Incarnation, Luke 1:35, and the same word that is used in the Greek translation of Exodus when God's Spirit overshadowed the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant, Exodus 40:34

Jesus Transfigured on the Mount 9:28-36



- A cloud is a frequent vehicle for the manifestation of God's presence in Scripture, Exodus 16:10, 19:9, 24:15-16, 33:9, 34:5; 2 Maccabees 2:8; Acts 1:9; Revelation 11:12, 14:14
- After it was all over, Peter, John and James *told no one*
- But after the resurrection Peter clearly remembered and referred to this event in 2 Peter 1:16-18
- John probably referred to it in John 1:14
- They remembered this powerful experience that showed Jesus in both His glory and singular role as Messiah



A Boy Is Healed 9:37-42

- *Now it happened on the next day*, The Transfiguration probably took place at night
- After Jesus and the disciples came down from the mountain, they were met by demonic trouble and opposition
- The father felt (rightly so), that all Jesus had to do was *look on* his son and the compassion of the Savior would lead Him to help the afflicted boy
- The tender sympathy of St. Luke is shown in this little detail
- He is the only evangelist who mentions that the poor tormented boy was an *only child*



A Boy Is Healed 9:37-42

- The description in verse 39 fits what we would call an epileptic seizure
- In this case, Jesus knew (and it was demonstrated) that an unclean spirit had taken possession of the suffering child, not physiological causes
- Jesus gave the Apostles the power to cast out demons, Luke 9:1
- While Jesus, Peter, James and John were on the mountain, the other nine Apostles were continuing their mission to heal and preach the coming of the kingdom



A Boy Is Healed 9:37-42

- Jesus tells them that their failure on this occasion is because of their lack of faith, Luke 9:41; Matthew 17:19-20
- It is a failure which reflects badly on their credibility as Jesus' ministers
- This scene may reflect that Jesus was frustrated with His disciples
- His season of ministry before the cross was coming to an end, and perhaps He felt frustration that the disciples did not have more faith
- Perhaps they were intimidated by the power of the demon



A Boy Is Healed 9:37-42

- Even when the father brought the boy to Jesus, at first he did not seem to get better, but the problems showed themselves as bad as ever
- While the boy was approaching Jesus, in accordance with His request that he should be brought to Him, the demon made a final assault on his victim, rending and convulsing him
- A word of the great Master was sufficient, and the spirit which had brought the cruel curse of disease and madness into the boy was cast out, and the strange cure was complete
- Jesus delivered the demon-possessed boy instantly

Jesus Again Predicts His Death

9:43-45



- While all were wondering at all the things which He did, Jesus spoke a second time of His approaching death, in connection with this prevailing wonder, and His aim was to keep the disciples from being misled by it
- Jesus had just revealed His glory in two spectacular ways – the transfiguration and the casting out of a difficult demon
- Yet, He reminded His disciples that His mission had not changed; He still had come to die on the cross for our sins, and *the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men*
- Perhaps it was not so much that they did not understand but that they did not want to understand

Jesus Again Predicts His Death

9:43-45



- They had seen Jesus' acts of power and authority over demons
- It was probably inconceivable to them that He would not exercise the same power and authority over mere men
- St. Cyril of Alexandria contemplete saying: “Now some one perhaps will say, How were the disciples ignorant of the mystery of the cross, seeing that it was touched upon in several places by the shadows of the Law? But as Paul relates, Even to this day, when Moses is read, the vale is upon their hearts. It becomes then those who approach Christ, to say, Open you my eyes, that I may behold, the wonderful things out of your law.”



Who Is the Greatest? 9:46-48

- Somewhere on their journey back to the south, between the neighborhood of Caesarea Philippi and Capernaum, this dispute must have taken place
- Their jealous ambition had been sparked perhaps by the separation of the three from the others and their privilege of witnessing Jesus in His glory
- Perhaps the Transfiguration experience has made the other Apostles uneasy about where they stand in the Kingdom of the Messiah
- This improper dispute was again stirred up at the Last Supper, Luke 22:24-26



Who Is the Greatest? 9:46-48

- Jesus might have answered the question, “who is the greatest?” by pointing to Himself
- Instead, Jesus drew their attention to a *little child* as an example
- Greatness in heaven is measured by child-like humility, obedience, self-emptying and total dependence on God
- Whoever is more child-like in this way is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven
- Jesus then challenged His followers to be the *least*
- The desire to be praised and to gain recognition should be foreign to a follower of Jesus
- Jesus wants His followers to embrace *least* as a choice, allowing others to be preferred, and not because we are forced to be *least*

The Disciples and Serving Others 9:49-50



- The question of John was evidently suggested by Jesus' words spoken in connection with His teaching respecting little ones
- *Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me* said the Master
- But John and others had just been severely rebuking someone not of their company, who had been using, to some effect evidently, that same Master's Name, which possessed, as John saw, wondrous power
- Perhaps the man's success has evidently sparked the jealousy of the Apostles who were unsuccessful in casting the demon out of the boy earlier

The Disciples and Serving Others 9:49-50



- It is clear from the Lord's answer that this man was not against Christ by his mouth or by his heart, and neither did he do any individual thing of his own; but maybe his circumstances was not appropriate for him to be a follower with the disciples in an apparent way
- But he was with them in the faith
- The Master's reply contained a broad and far-reaching truth
- No earthly society, however holy, would be able exclusively to claim the Divine powers inseparably connected with a true and faithful use of His Name

The Disciples and Serving Others 9:49-50



- The Lord wished His disciples to have a big and loving heart, and that each one practices his talents, and so all world work together for the account of God's kingdom without any fanaticism, but rather in a unity of faith, and a unity of thought that is spiritual
- "Forbid him not. Our Lord is not moved by this event, to teach us that perfect virtue entertains no thoughts of revenge, and that anger cannot be found where the fulness of charity reigns. The weak must not be driven away but assisted. Let the breast of the religious man be ever unmoved by passion, and the mind of the generous undisturbed by desires of revenge." St. Ambrose

A Samaritan Village Rejects the Savior 9:51-56



- This is the turning point in the Gospel of St. Luke as Jesus begins the journey to His death
- His teaching ministry in the Galilee has come to an end, and Jesus now prepares Himself and His disciples for what Luke literally calls the days *to be received up* in Jerusalem
- Luke's "travel narrative" of Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem is divided into three parts with the beginning of each part marked by the reference to Jesus going to Jerusalem and the third part beginning and concluding with the same reference just prior to His entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday

A Samaritan Village Rejects the Savior 9:51-56



- The three events are:
- *Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51)*
- *And He went through the cities and villages teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem (Luke 13:22)*
- *Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee, (Luke 17:11)*
- *When He had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem (Luke 19:28)*

A Samaritan Village Rejects the Savior 9:51-56



- Instead of traveling down the eastern side of the Jordan River to avoid passing through Samaria, Jesus and His disciples are traveling the more dangerous route through Samaria on the way to Jerusalem
- Only the Gospels of Luke and John record Jesus' dealings with Samaritans, Luke 10:30-37, 17:11-19; John 4:4-42
- The term "Samaritan" was originally a geographic distinction for one from the city of Samaria, the old capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel founded by King Omri in the early 9th century BC
- After the 8th century BC, it became an ethnic and religious name for the people who came to inhabit the region between the Galilee and Judea to the west of the Jordan River

A Samaritan Village Rejects the Savior 9:51-56



- We read in 2 King 17:6, 24-41 about the origin of the Samaritans
- The Jews despised the Samaritans as Gentiles who falsely claimed to worship the God of Israel
- These mixed Jews-Gentiles developed their own translation of the Pentateuch (Samaritan Pentateuch), built their own temple of worship on Mt. Gerizim which was later destroyed by John Hyrcanus (128 B.C.), and celebrated their own Passover
- Because Jesus was going to Jerusalem these particular Samaritans did not welcome Jesus

A Samaritan Village Rejects the Savior 9:51-56



- James and John Zebedee are offended by the attitude of the Samaritans and perhaps because they are filled with confidence after their successful earlier mission, offer to destroy the town for rebuffing Jesus
- Their angry reaction shows why Jesus sometimes called them *Boanerges*, meaning *Sons of Thunder*, Mark 3:17
- Their outburst of temper, revealed in their truculent proposal, probably indicated the attitude of the whole company

A Samaritan Village Rejects the Savior 9:51-56



- The Zebedee brothers' desire to punish the offenders with fire brings to mind what work of the prophet Elijah in dispensing judgment 2 King 1:1-12
- Jesus explained their failing at this point came in two ways
- They didn't know themselves, perhaps they thought they were being like Jesus, or showing the character of God
- They were mistaken, and did not represent God and His heart
- He loved the Samaritans and wanted them to repent and be saved
- They didn't know Jesus and His mission, He came to save the lost, not to burn them up with fire from heaven

The Cost of Discipleship 9:57-62



- This next section Jesus gives three teachings about discipleship that are warnings to those who want to join Jesus' mission
- They evidently did not occur together, but most probably they took place about this time in the ministry
- They are placed in one group as examples of the way in which the Master replied to numerous offers of service made to Him under different conditions
- The focus of the teachings is that one needs to count the cost of discipleship weighed against personal relationships and commitments



The Cost of Discipleship 9:57-62

- Three men express the desire to follow Jesus, but Jesus counters each man's spoken desire to follow Him with a warning on the cost of discipleship
- Jesus tells the first one that in His mission He lives like a homeless wanderer with no home or family or any comforts
- Even animals have more "creature comforts"
- Jesus didn't tell the man "No, you can't follow Me"
- But He told him the truth, without painting a glamorized version of what it was like to follow Him

The Cost of Discipleship 9:57-62



- In the second case Jesus takes the initiative
- Something He read in this man's heart, or words He had heard him speak, moved the Redeemer's great love, so He gave him a special call
- So Jesus extends the invitation to discipleship, but the man places a condition on his acceptance, placing his family obligation to bury his father before Jesus' call
- Jesus tells him that the importance and urgency of His mission to call mankind to the blessing of eternal life must take precedence over family obligations and calls for personal sacrifice



The Cost of Discipleship 9:57-62

- He tells him to let those in his family who are not committed to the imminent coming of the Kingdom and who are dead spiritually to take care of burying the dead physically
- It is noticeable that the home duties, which Jesus suggested should give place to other and more imperative claims, were in connection with *the dead*
- It was not the *living* father who was to be left, only the dead body
- It was rather a society call than a home or family duty which was to give place to work for the Master

The Cost of Discipleship 9:57-62



- The second was a very different character from the last
- The first was impulsive, and even thoughtless in his enthusiasm, one who would begin to act without counting the cost, this one was overcautious, cold and calculating to an ungenerous excess; yet there was evidently genuine substance in the character, for Jesus argues with him

The Cost of Discipleship 9:57-62



- This third example of our Lord's method of dealing with half-hearted disciples is peculiar to St. Luke
- Here, as in the first instance, there is what has the appearance of a spontaneous offer, coupled with a plea for delay
- The man pleads a wish to take a formal farewell of his family
- The form of expression, the absence of any definite mention of father, or wife, or children, half-suggests the thought that the man was free from the closer and more binding ties of relationship, and that the plea urged was therefore hollow and unreal

The Cost of Discipleship 9:57-62



- His request recalls the wish that was granted to Elisha when he was called to become Elijah's disciple, 1 Kings 19:19-21
- Elijah permitted Elisha to kiss his parents good-bye and to have a farewell feast with his family
- But Jesus tells would-be disciple 3 that commitment to the Kingdom leaves no time for ordinary family affections and requires the sacrifice of placing the needs of the Kingdom above all human connections and affiliations
- It is the time to move forward with God's plan for humanity and to not look back

The Cost of Discipleship 9:57-62



- The image which our Lord used was, as usual, one that went home to the personal experience of His hearers
- They were of the peasant class, and they knew that the eye of the farmer if he is to do his work well, must look straight before him at the line of the path which he is making
- To look back, while working, is to ruin the work entirely
- The man who so looks is therefore disqualified for the work of God's kingdom
- In following Jesus, we are to keep our eyes on Jesus, and never take our eyes off Him
- More than anyone else, Jesus lived this; He *steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem*, Luke 9:51



Discussion

- What power did Jesus give His apostles? What work did He send them to do?
- What were they not to take with them? Why not? Do these rules apply the same way today? Explain.
- How should they treat cities that rejected the message? Explain the significance.
- How many people were present, and how many leftovers were there – 9:17?



Discussion

- Who did Peter say Jesus was? What would have led Peter to this conclusion?
- Explain what it means to deny self.
- How are people sometimes ashamed of Jesus? What will happen if we do this?
- What is the significance of the fact Moses and Elijah disappeared?

Discussion



- Do you think Jesus wants all of His disciples to, without reserve, follow Him? Is this what this passage is about? Why or why not?
- Why does Jesus three times not encourage but warn His disciples after they express their willingness to follow Him? Usually we never add any caution to them following Jesus. Is this good or bad?
- As we think about Luke 9:60, we find Jesus challenging those disciples who make bargains with Jesus. They think that they are in charge of their choices in life. How does a 'Master-servant' concept help us understand the problem here? Which approach do you use in your everyday life?