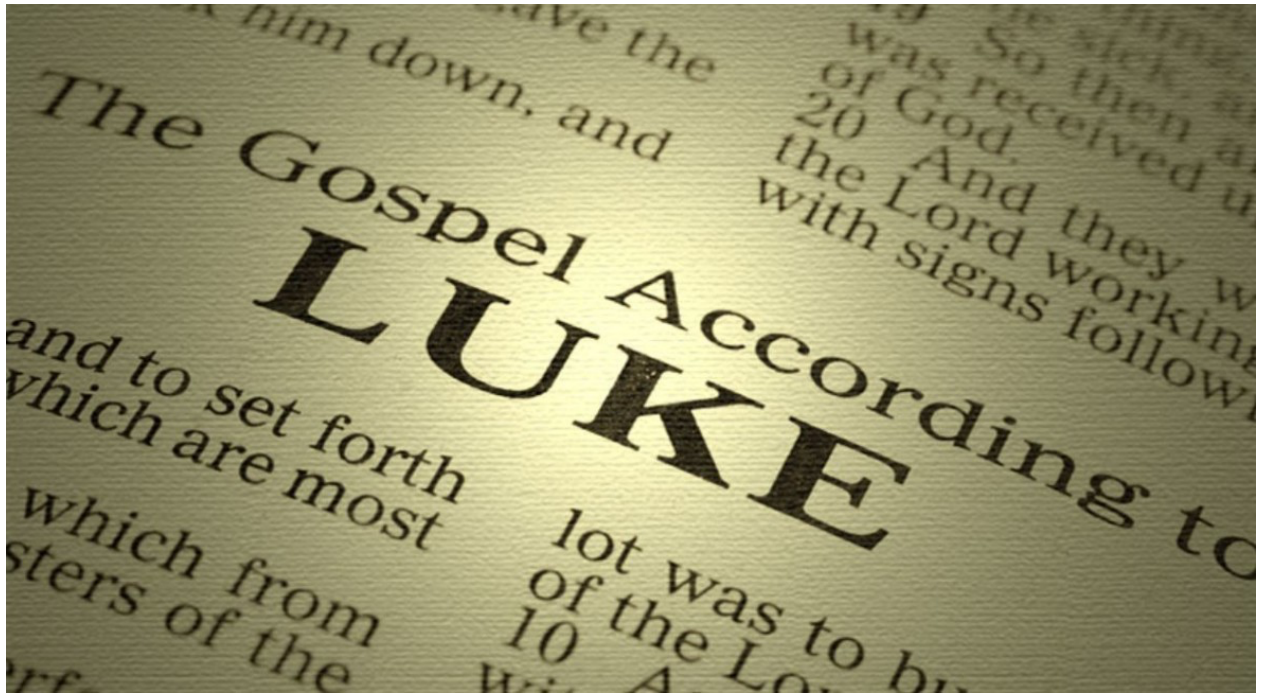


Luke 9, Part 1



T. M. AND SUSIE MOORE

A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

Luke 9, Part 1
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Introduction to Luke 9, Part

During His earthly sojourn, Jesus explained that, with His coming, the Kingdom was “at hand” (cf. Matt. 4.17). He was the Kingdom, and He had come to proclaim and demonstrate its rightside-upping power and to create desire and anticipation for its coming (cf. Acts 1.1-7). Those who saw and heard and followed Him were to believe that, when the Kingdom came, they would know and see it (v. 27).

Luke 9 shows us many facets of the coming Kingdom of God. It closes with a solid challenge and warning for all who think to find a place in this new realm under the new regime of Christ and His Word. It begins with Jesus sending His disciples to extend the ministry He had been fulfilling into new areas and to new peoples. And they would do this in His Name and by His authority.

Indeed, the Kingdom of God was at hand and increasing.

If you find these studies, or any of our other resources, helpful, we hope you will consider making a contribution to help support our work. You can do so by using the donate button at the website or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 360 Zephyr Road, Williston, VT 05495.

We hope you find this study of the gospel of Luke instructive and helpful to equip you for your walk with and work for the Lord. Thank you for joining us.

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1 Called, Sent

Pray Psalm 66.1-4.

Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth!
Sing out the honor of His name;
Make His praise glorious.
Say to God,
“How awesome are Your works!
Through the greatness of Your power
Your enemies shall submit themselves to You.
All the earth shall worship You
And sing praises to You;
They shall sing praises *to* Your name.”

Sing Psalm 66.1-4.

(Regent Square: *Angels from the Realms of Glory*)

Shout for joy to God, all people, sing the glory of His Name!
Give Him glorious praise and say, “How great Your pow’r and great Your fame!
All the earth shall worship gladly as they praise Your glorious Name!”

Read and meditate on Luke 9.1-6..

Preparation

1. What did Jesus send the disciples to do?
2. What did they do in response?

Meditation

Called, sent. This is what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Jesus called His disciples together so that He could instruct, equip, and send them (v. 1). We who have believed in Jesus are called to the Kingdom and glory of God (1 Thess. 2.12). Taught by God’s Word (2 Tim. 3.15-17) and equipped for ministry (Eph. 4.11, 12), we are sent by Jesus to the world in the same way He Himself was sent, to exemplify and proclaim the Kingdom of God (Jn. 20.21; Lk. 9.2).

We must be renewed in our calling and mission day by day. Jesus calls us to Himself, to meet Him in His Word and in prayer, that He might instruct and equip us for the day ahead. Then He sends us into our own Personal Mission Field, with authority to live and proclaim the Kingdom of God, to bring healing and refreshment from the Word of God and to demonstrate the life of discipleship and the Kingdom.

We must be anxious for nothing, but in everything, through prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, make all our requests known to the Lord Who calls and sends us (Phil. 4.6, 7). He will supply all our needs through His riches in glory by Christ Jesus, as these are distributed among those who hear and obey His voice and share in the benefits of our ministry (Phil. 4.19; Ps. 20.2; 1 Cor. 9.3-14; Gal. 6.6).

The worries and trappings of the world – symbolized here by staffs, bags, bread, money, and tunics – can keep us from fulfilling our calling and carrying out our mission. The Lord knows we need all these things (Matt. 6.31, 32), and He has promised to meet our needs as we are going to make disciples, according to all He has taught us (Matt. 28.18-20). When the disciples obeyed, their ministries flourished (v. 6). The same will be true for us.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.

The LORD said to Moses, “Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall

say” (Ex. 4.12).

Jesus said to His disciples, “. . .do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you” (Matt. 10.19, 20).

Called, and sent to preach the Kingdom of God and the Gospel (Lk. 9.2, 6).

In the same way that the man healed of the Legion of demons conflated God and Jesus (Lk. 8.39), the terms Kingdom of God and the Gospel are treated similarly herein—brought together, melded, and fused (Lk.9.2, 6).

The Good News of the Gospel’s saving power through Jesus’ life, suffering, death, and resurrection is incomplete without the needed knowledge and action of a new life lived in the Kingdom of God. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5.17). “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2.8-10).

The Gospel of grace unto our work in the Kingdom.

“The law of truth was in his mouth, and injustice was not found on his lips.

He walked with Me in peace and equity, and turned many away from iniquity” (Mal. 2.6).

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (Jms. 1.22).

The disciples were called and sent.

We too, as Christ’s disciples, are called and sent to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom in its entirety, unencumbered by fear of losing our stuff, rejoicing in His providential care for us. Always.

For reflection

1. What does it mean to you to be called to the Kingdom and glory of God?
2. What does it mean to you to be sent into the world as Jesus was sent?
3. How do you expect to seek and advance the Kingdom of God today?

Jesus sent the apostles without sandals, without money, gold and silver, so that they would not carry earthly things with them. The one who seeks to do good is praised not for his sandals but for the swiftness and grace of his feet. The Scripture says, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, of those who bring glad tidings of good things!” Ambrose of Milan (333-397), Flight from the World 5.25

Pray Psalm 66.5-9.

With whom will you share the good works of God today? What will you tell them about all the ways He has blessed and kept you? Offer your day and your witness to the Lord with praise and thanksgiving.

Sing Psalm 66.5-9.

(Regent Square: *Angels from the Realms of Glory*)

Great and awesome is our Savior in the works which He has done.

He the sea and river dried to let His people cross as one.

Then our joy was great to worship Him our mighty, sovereign One.

He the nations watches ever – all you rebels, humbled be.

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Bless our God, all men and nations, praise His Name eternally!
He preserves our souls, and He will keep His paths beneath our feet.

2 Who's Wondering?

Pray Psalm 72.7, 8.

In His days the righteous shall flourish,
And abundance of peace,
Until the moon is no more.
He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,
And from the River to the ends of the earth.

Sing Psalm 72.7, 8.

(Martyrdom: *Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed?*)

Let righteousness abundant be where Jesus' reign endures;
let peace increase from sea to sea 'til moonlight shall be no more.

Read Luke 9.1-9; meditate on verses 7-9.

Preparation

1. What did Herod hear?
2. How did he respond?

Meditation

Daily, God showers grace upon us. Grace is that divine disposition whereby our heavenly Father looks upon us with great favor. But grace is also His communicating His love to us, supremely through our Lord Jesus Christ, but daily also through His Word. And grace brings with it power for obedience, the end of which, as Paul explains, is that the grace we receive may spread to more and more people, issuing in thanksgiving to the God of all grace (2 Cor. 4.15).

You and I will never know how many people are reached by the fragrance of God's grace through our daily faithfulness. Herod heard about Jesus by the word of mouth which was spreading throughout Galilee and beyond. Perhaps the healed demoniac testified of Jesus to a neighbor and was overheard by a Roman official, who sent the word along to the higher-ups. You just never know how God might choose to spread His grace when we are faithful to receive and act on it.

Luke is using this passage like a few bars of a minor chord inserted in a glorious symphony in C major: He forewarns us, despite all the good Jesus was doing, and all the evidence of His Kingdom coming on earth as in heaven, that dark days were ahead. The grace that spreads from us doesn't always lead to God-honoring intentions. To some, the fragrance of grace that issues from us will be like an aroma of death (2 Cor. 2.16).

This much we can know for certain: Grace always prevails. Herod's vicious repudiation of the grace of God, coming later in Luke's gospel, led to Good Friday, resurrection Sunday, and the progress of Christ's Kingdom. We can't go wrong by seeking to be agents of grace in everything we do.

Even though we many never know how far that grace spreads or who may be starting to wonder because of its fragrance.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Who is wondering? Who is wondering about the joys of following Jesus by being near us? Is there a melody or a fragrance that lingers about after we have been there? Anywhere?

The little touches of grace that fall from our lives are like the seeds thrown by the sower. Or a sprinkling of

grace to water a little sprout of faith.

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life...” (Ps. 23.6).

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen; to loose the bonds of wickedness,
to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke?
Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out;
when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh?
Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily,
and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard” (Is. 58.6-8).

The aroma surrounding us should be like the costly oil Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, poured out on Jesus’ feet that filled the house “with the fragrance of the oil” (Jn. 12.3). Everywhere.

“Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place” (2 Cor. 2.14). When we are diffusing the aroma of the grace of God in Christ Jesus to the Herods in our lives; they perhaps will inhale the fragrance, and truly seek to see Him (Lk. 9.9).

Hopefully, it is the people in our Personal Mission Field who are wondering about the aromatic melody of love emanating from within us.

*In my heart there rings a melody
There rings a melody with heaven’s harmony
In my heart there rings a melody
There rings a melody of love
(Elton Roth, 1923)*

For reflection

1. To whom will you spread the fragrance of grace today? How should you prepare for this?
2. How should you respond when, like Herod, someone takes offense at your gracious fragrance?
3. What believer will you encourage today to be a fragrance of grace to others?

*[Herod] sought an opportunity to see [Jesus], not that he might be improved by it but that he might satisfy his curiosity, or to see if it might be good that he should do the same to him that he had done to John. Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536),
Paraphrase on the Gospel of Luke 9:9.7*

Pray Psalm 72.9-15.

Pray that the blessings and grace of Jesus will reach through you, throughout your Personal Mission Field and far beyond, that others may begin to think about Him and wonder.

Sing Psalm 72.9-15.

(Martyrdom: *Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed?*)

And let the Righteous rule the earth, and let His foes bow low;
let nations praise His matchless worth, and all His bidding do.

The Lord the needy rescues when he cries to Him for grace;
all they who suffer violence find mercy before His face.

Let Christ be praised and all the gold of Sheba be His right;
let blessings to His Name be told, and prayers made both day and night.

3 No Deserts Where Jesus Is

Pray Psalm 107.35-38.

He turns a wilderness into pools of water,
And dry land into watersprings.
There He makes the hungry dwell,
That they may establish a city for a dwelling place,
And sow fields and plant vineyards,
That they may yield a fruitful harvest.
He also blesses them, and they multiply greatly;
And He does not let their cattle decrease.

Sing Psalm 107.33-38.

(Faithfulness: *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*)

You make the desert a river o'erflowing; You make a wasted life fruitful and strong!
You bless the hungry with fields for the sowing; bless and increase us who to You belong!

Refrain vv. 1-3

Lord, for Your wondrous works, and for Your steadfast love,
We give You thanks, we exalt Your great Name!
We who from east and west, north and south gather,
boldly redemption in Christ we proclaim!

Read Luke 9.1-13; meditate on verses 10-13.

Preparation

1. Where were all these people assembled?
2. How did the disciples react to this? How did Jesus react?

Meditation

Jesus loves deserts. Take away everything that might sustain Him, and He flourishes. Set some impossible task before Him in a place where resources are scant, and He performs a miracle.

No desert is truly a desert where Jesus is.

But then, that's a matter of perspective. They were in a barren wilderness, like Israel, wandering in the desert for 40 years. The words, "deserted place" (v. 12), don't quite capture the meaning of the Greek, ἐν ἐρήμῳ, *en eremo*, "in a wilderness". This is how the disciples saw their surroundings, and, of course, they were correct. But they had seen Jesus calm a stormy sea. They assisted Him as He taught and healed "those who had need of healing" (v. 11). They should have known He would have some "manna" for these people about whom He cared so much, just as God had fed the multitudes in the wilderness of old.

Their idea was to send the people away to fend for themselves. Jesus' plan was to continue caring for them and shaping His disciples for their callings. Resources were indeed scant (v. 13). But Jesus was still Jesus.

So when you find yourself struggling through a wilderness, desperate in a dry place, thirsting for something to strengthen your soul, look to Jesus. He can turn your wilderness into pools of refreshment and make springs of water abound in your dry land.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Jesus never missed an opportunity to teach! Ever. Everything He did was to show others how to do it. How to be filled with His Spirit, after He ascended to heaven, and how to carry on His work.

This teaching moment for the disciples should not have come as a surprise to them. He had recently bestowed upon them power and authority to journey through towns and cities preaching and healing. During this adventure they had had all their physical needs met – food, housing, clothing, etc. The lack of food in this wilderness setting should not have thrown them into a tizzy. Jesus commanded them to do this task because He knew they were able and capable, with His power, to do it. They had personally just been sustained in this very same way (Lk. 9.1-6). In fact, hadn't they just returned from this experience; thus, they were being treated to this desert getaway? And having a serious memory lapse in the process.

But don't we do the very same thing? We're prepped. We're ready. We are blessed daily with God's sustaining grace and power, and then, poof! We forget that we are filled with His Holy Spirit.

We are schooled by the epitome of wisdom to:

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” (Prov. 3.5, 6). But do we?

Moses warned us to: “Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe—all the words of this law. For it is not a futile thing for you, because it is your life...” (Deut. 32.46, 47). If Moses said that directly to us, would we have believed him? Do we believe him now?

God told Joshua: “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success” (Josh. 1.8). God says these same words to us: do we believe Him?

Jesus said to one who questioned Him about the Law: “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets” (Matt. 22.37-40). He also teaches us this same truth through His Word: Do we believe Him enough to do what He says?

When Jesus said to the empowered disciples: “You give them something to eat” (Lk. 9.13), it was because He knew they could do it. When God tells us what to do in His Word, He knows that He has given us the power to do it (Acts 1.8). He knows that we can trust and obey Him. He knows we can follow His Law. He knows we can feed His sheep.

But do we believe Him? Or are we content to be dry and dusty wilderness-walkers? There is another option: As the disciples learned, we could offer our Personal Mission Field something a little more lush.

Jesus longs to teach us as He taught other learners in His day: “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water” (Jn. 7.37, 38).

No deserts where Jesus is!

For reflection

1. What can keep us from believing that we can do what Jesus instructs us to do?
2. How can you tap into the refreshment Jesus can bring to your soul?

3. Whom will you encourage today in the Name of Jesus?

Hence we learn how wide is the difference between the knowledge of the goodness, and the knowledge of the power, of God. Power strikes men with terror, makes them fly from the presence of God, and drives them to a distance from him: but goodness draws them gently, and makes them feel that nothing is more desirable than to be united to God. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Luke 8.38

Pray Psalm 107.1-3

Praise and thank the Lord that He is good and merciful, that His redemption overcomes the power of our enemy, and that He has gathered you to Himself.

Sing Psalm 107.1-3.

(Faithfulness: *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*)

Lord, You are good, we give thanks and we praise You!

Your steadfast love will forever endure.

Let the redeemed, who from trouble You rescue,

gather and say that Your mercy is sure!

Refrain v. 1-3

Lord, for Your wondrous works, and for Your steadfast love,

We give You thanks, we exalt Your great Name!

We who from east and west, north and south gather,

boldly redemption in Christ we proclaim!

4 Five Thousand, Fed and Full

Pray Psalm 104.31-35.

May the glory of the LORD endure forever;
May the LORD rejoice in His works.
He looks on the earth, and it trembles;
He touches the hills, and they smoke.
I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.
May my meditation be sweet to Him;
I will be glad in the LORD.
May sinners be consumed from the earth,
And the wicked be no more.
Bless the LORD, O my soul!
Praise the LORD!

Sing Psalm 104.31-35.

(Creation: *The Spacious Firmament on High*)

Lord, let Your glory long endure. Rejoice! His works are ever sure!
He looks on earth, it quails and quakes, as we our songs of praises make.
Lord, let our meditation rise and bring great pleasure in Your eyes.
Consumed shall sinners ever be. O, bless and praise the Lord with me!

Read Luke 9.1-17; meditate on verses 14-17.

Preparation

1. How many men did Jesus feed?
2. What did the disciples do?

Meditation

There is certainly here a recollecting of Moses' experience in leading the people of Israel. The comparison with Jethro's counsel (Ex. 18) seems quite clear. The disciples are the rulers of God's people, and the nature of their rule can be summarized as serving. Jesus represents the people before God, as Moses did, and He instructs the rulers so that they can fulfill their calling to serve the people in an orderly and efficient manner (v. 14). The Lord provides the resources for meeting the need at hand. Our duty is to be faithful and to obey all His Word, even though its counsel may seem unlikely or insufficient for the need.

We marvel at the miracle of Jesus feeding so many with so little. But the fact that He provides our daily bread is no less marvelous. Every good and perfect gift comes down to us from our heavenly Father (Jms. 1.17). Everything. Our daily food, warm homes, clothing, cars, jobs, possessions – everything. God provides it all, and if we ever lose sight of that, two things will happen, neither of which is good. First, our gratitude to God for His many wondrous gifts will wither and wane. We will thank and praise Him less and less. And second, our confidence in our own wits and prowess will rise, and we will begin to think that we are the providers of every good thing.

Jesus' miracle is only a condensed and startlingly specific demonstration of what He does all the time. And He never just meets our immediate needs. There are always baskets and baskets of leftover grace to sustain and keep us. Don't take this for granted. Give Him constant thanks and praise.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“Man goes out to his work and to his labor until the evening” (Ps. 104.23).

“So we built the wall, and the entire wall was joined together up to half its height, for the people had a mind to work” (Neh. 4.6).

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15.58).

“But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does” (Jms. 1.25).

Work. It is what people were created to do. “Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it” (Gen. 2.15).

Jesus gave the disciples an opportunity to do creative work; but because of their lack of faith and obedience to step out and do what Jesus told them to do, “You give them something to eat” (Lk. 9.13), their workload changed to one of a custodial nature. “Make them sit down in groups of fifty” (Lk. 9.14). From creative to custodial.

We have each been placed in the garden of our Personal Mission Field to creatively tend and keep it. We have been given work to do therein to glorify God. Make no mistake. We are doing something there, and it is either for good or for evil. We do not live in an unpopulated vacuum.

God thinks the best of us and offers us creative work to do: sowing seeds, watering sprouts, clearing away thorns and rocks, shining the love of Jesus into places that need light to thrive. So, when He tells us to give them something to eat, we should gladly jump at the chance to do so. Otherwise, we will be seating people in groups of fifty and wondering why we don’t feel fulfilled.

*Living for Jesus a life that is true, striving to please Him in all that I do;
yielding allegiance, gladhearted and free, this is the pathway of blessing for me.*

*O Jesus, Lord and Savior, I give myself to Thee, for Thou in Thy atonement, didst give Thyself for me;
I own no other Master, my heart shall be Thy throne; my life I give, henceforth to live, O Christ, for Thee alone.*
(Thomas O. Chisholm, 1917)

Our work should leave people feeling fed and full.

For reflection

1. How do you understand the work God has given you to do in your Personal Mission Field?
2. What do you need each day to do your work creatively unto the Lord?
3. Why do we always need to remember that it is God Who is at work within us, willing and doing according to His good pleasure (Phil. 2.13)?

And with five loaves of bread and two fishes, Christ fed five thousand men. He will not see those that fear him, and serve him faithfully, want any good thing. When we receive creature-comforts, we must acknowledge that we receive them from God, and that we are unworthy to receive them; that we owe them all, and all the comfort we have in them, to the mediation of Christ, by whom the curse is taken away. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Luke 9.10-17

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Pray Psalm 104.12-15.

Praise and thank the Lord for all the good things He provides day by day. Be specific. Name as many as you can, praising Him as you do.

Sing Psalm 104.12-15.

(Creation: *The Spacious Firmament on High*)

The birds beside the waters dwell and sing in the branches, full and well.
You drench the mountains from above; the earth is sated by Your love.
You cause the grass for beasts to grow, and plants for food to feed us so;
and wine to gladden man's poor soul, and bread and oil to make us whole.

5 The Christ of God

Pray Psalm 22.23-25.

You who fear the LORD, praise Him!
All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him,
And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!
For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;
Nor has He hidden His face from Him;
But when He cried to Him, He heard.
My praise *shall be* of You in the great assembly;
I will pay My vows before those who fear Him.

Sing Psalm 22.23-25.

(Darwall: *Rejoice, the Lord is King*)

All you who fear the Lord, now praise His holy Name!
You children of His glorious Word, declare His fame!
We stand in awe of our eternal God, and on His mercy call.

For He has not despised the anguish of our King,
Nor from Him hid His eyes, Who knew such suffering.
Let praise arise from all who love and serve the Ruler of the skies!

Read Luke 9.1-22; meditate on verses 18-22.

Preparation

1. What did Jesus ask His disciple first?
2. What did He ask them next?

Meditation

It is important that we be clear about who Jesus is. Many people will agree that Jesus was a good man, a very clever and interesting teacher, and even an excellent moral example. Many who call themselves Christians will go no further than that. It's nice to think of Jesus in noble terms, like "the crowds" of His day, who considered Him in the same category as the prophets and John the Baptist (vv. 18, 19).

But if we stop there, we've missed the point. And everything else. Peter got it right: "The Christ of God" (v. 20). The "Christ" is the "Anointed One" of Psalm 2, Whom God declares to be His Son and Whom He has exalted to the highest place of honor and rule (cf. Phil. 2.5-11). The Christ of God *is* God, the very Word and Wisdom of God, Whom God appointed to redeem and gather His people from the far corners of history and the world.

But to do this He must suffer by bearing the sins of His people and enduring God's wrath on their behalf (vv. 21, 22; cf. Ps. 22.1-21; Matt. 1.21). But God would not leave Him to His suffering and death. He would not allow His holy and anointed One to endure the corruption of death (Ps. 16.10), but would raise Him on the third day and exalt Him to glory.

Jesus is the Messiah of God, the Anointed One, the Son of God and the Savior of His people, the Ruler of all creation and every person. If we don't get this right, nothing we might say positively about Jesus will bring us any lasting value. Who do *you* say that Jesus is?

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

The answer to that question is the Great Divider. It is what makes one group of people Christians,

and the other group not.

“The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God”” (Ps. 53.1).

But “...if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10.9).

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household” (Acts 16.31).

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”
“If you love Me, keep My commandments.” “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you” (Jn. 14.6, 15; 15.14).

That Jesus asks you, “Who do you say that I am?”
The Savior. The Christ of God.

What are you going to do with Him?

*To Christ the Lord be given all
who humbly embrace Him and on Him call.
Be wise, be warned: His judgment comes
to break the prideful, sinful ones.*

*Rejoice with fear in Jesus’ grace,
and worship before His exalted face!
Beware His anger and judgment grim.
How blest are all who rest in Him!
(Psalm 2.9-12)
(Moore, *The Ailbe Psalter*)*

For reflection

1. What does it mean to say that Jesus is “the Christ”?
2. Why is it not enough to believe in Jesus as a good man or an excellent teacher?
3. Do all the people in your Personal Mission Field know Jesus as the Christ? Do you pray for them?

*Oh! how full of meaning is that word you! He separates them from all others, that they may also avoid the opinions of others. In this way, they will not conceive an unworthy idea about him or entertain confused and wavering thoughts. Cyril of Alexandria (375-444), *Commentary on Luke, Homily 49**

Pray Psalm 22.27, 28.

Thank and praise our Lord Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords, and call on Him to advance His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven, in you and throughout your Personal Mission Field.

Sing Psalm 22.27, 28.

(Darwall: *Rejoice, the Lord is King*)

All nations shall repent and hasten to the Lord.

All those to whom His truth is sent shall praise His Word.

The Lord is King! His sovereign rule on high now we His people sing!

6 See the Kingdom

Pray Psalm 106.1-3.

Praise the LORD!

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good!

For His mercy endures forever.

Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD?

Who can declare all His praise?

Blessed are those who keep justice,

And he who does righteousness at all times!

Sing Psalm 106.1-3.

(Trust in Jesus: *'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus*)

Praise the Lord! Give thanks and praise Him! He is good, His love endures!

More His works than can be spoken; let His praise be ever sure!

Refrain v. 48

Blessèd be our God and Savior, evermore His praise proclaim!

Let all those who know Your favor praise Your holy, glorious Name!

Read Luke 9.1-27; meditate on verse 23-27.

Preparation

1. What did Jesus promise concerning the Kingdom?

2. To whom does this promise apply?

Meditation

Let's start at the end of these verses, because here Jesus holds out the great promise motivating the early part of our passage. The Kingdom, Jesus had been insisting, is coming. He was giving a foretaste of its glory, power, and abounding goodness by all His words and deeds. Now, He explained, the Kingdom would come in ways that can be *seen* by people who were hearing him speak at that moment.

And if the Kingdom was coming visibly to them, then we may expect that we can see the Kingdom as well.

The Old Testament is full of references to the Kingdom in all its glory, goodness, might, and extent. Jesus spoke eloquently and astonishingly about the “upside-down” nature of the Kingdom and the lives of those who enter it. To see the Kingdom is to see the rule of King Jesus active and progressing in and through the lives of those who come after and follow Him. It is to see righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit coming powerfully as a witness to Jesus Himself (Rom. 14.17, 18; 1 Cor. 4.20; Acts 1.8).

But who can see this Kingdom? In and through whom does it come? Those who accept their calling to follow in Jesus' footsteps of self-denial, sacrifice, service, and bold witness for Christ (vv. 23-26). And for this, we must be born from above and become children of the heavenly Father, conveyed into the Kingdom of Jesus, endowed with His Spirit, and ready for good works (Jn. 3.3-8; 1.12; Col. 1.13; 1 Cor. 2.12, 13; Tit. 3.11-14; 3.1).

Pray for the Kingdom (Matt. 6.10). Seek the Kingdom (Matt. 6.33). Press on toward the King Himself, that you might be made more like Him (Phil. 3.14; 2 Cor. 3.12-18). Then everyone who knows you will see the Kingdom.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Jesus had just told His disciples that He would:

1. Suffer many things.
2. Be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes.
3. Be killed.
4. Be raised from the dead. (Lk. 9.22)

Then He invited them to sign up for the same treatment for their own lives (Lk. 9.23). “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head” (Matt. 8.20). Jesus’ invitation had a distinctly different ring to it than the altar calls of today. His call to live for Him and to follow Him did not have a “health and wealth” clause attached to it.

He made sure to warn folks not to flippantly decide to follow Him, because there was a cost involved. How refreshing His honesty, and how loving His preaching! He was not desperate for large numbers of people to sign up for Kingdom living; but what He did, and does want, are followers who will not turn back when things get rough (Lk. 9.62). He wants followers who will follow Him to the end (Ps. 119.112). He wants followers who are following out of love for Him and a wholehearted desire to obey Him (Jn. 14.15; 15.14). And to work hard to offer this same Kingdom to others through good works and good words (Eph. 2.10).

“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Lk. 9.23). “If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me...” (Jn. 12.26).

After Jesus had told Peter of the very horrendous death that he would suffer and thereby glorify God, He said to him, “Follow Me.” When Peter questioned Jesus about John’s predicted style of death, Jesus basically told him to mind his own business: “If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me” (Jn. 21.19, 22). Hard words to Peter; but honest and loving words as well. What happens around us makes no difference to our calling. We are to “Follow Him” regardless. Circumstances are irrelevant. We are to follow, and thereby, “See the Kingdom”.

As Peter later wrote: “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps...” (1 Pet. 2.21). And when this is the truth of our life: “Then everyone who knows you will see the Kingdom” through you. As we daily take up our cross, whatever it is, and follow Him.

For reflection

1. What does it mean for you to “follow Jesus”?
2. How do you expect to “see the Kingdom” coming in and through you today?
3. How can you encourage your fellow believers in following Jesus and seeing His Kingdom?

[Jesus] says that it will not be very long until he will come with great power and that some of those who were present at that time would see it. So who would not now follow him, and for his sake deny himself and take up his cross, when he knows that very shortly he will reign gloriously in divine power, and that he himself will reign along with Christ? For whoever suffers with Christ will reign with him. Martin Bucer (1491-1551), An Ecclesiasticall Exposition upon Saint Mathewe 17.9

Pray Psalm 106.44-48.

Pray that God’s salvation would spread far and wide, that He would favor us with grace to fulfill our callings as witnesses to Jesus and ambassadors for His Kingdom. Pray for a great worldwide awakening to Christ and the Gospel, that we might see multitudes coming into the Kingdom and salvation of the Lord.

Sing Psalm 44-48.

(Trust in Jesus: *’Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus*)

Look upon us, Lord, with favor, see us in our sore distress!

Hear our cries, with love surround us – turn again to heal and bless!

Luke 9, Part 1

Refrain v. 48

Blessèd be our God and Savior, evermore His praise proclaim!
Let all those who know Your favor praise Your holy, glorious Name!

Save us, Lord, from every nation; gather us from all our ways.
And we to Your Name will offer glorious thanks and endless praise!

Refrain

7 The Kingdom in This World

Pray Psalm 72.7, 8.

In His days the righteous shall flourish,
And abundance of peace,
Until the moon is no more.
He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,
And from the River to the ends of the earth.

Sing Psalm 72.7, 8.

(Martyrdom: *Alas! and Did My Savior Bleed*)

Let righteousness abundant be where Jesus' reign endures.
Let peace increase from sea to sea 'til moonlight shall be no more.

Read Luke 9.1-27; meditate on verses 6, 13, 20, 27.

Preparation

1. How do these verses show us that the Kingdom of God had indeed come near with Jesus?
2. What other glimpses of the coming Kingdom do you see in verses 1-27?

Meditation

During His earthly sojourn, Jesus was the trailer for the coming Kingdom of God. His life, teaching, miracles, and other good works all pointed to that which would come to earth with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 (cf. Dan. 7.18; Is. 9.6, 7).

During His earthly sojourn, Jesus explained that, with His coming, the Kingdom was “at hand” (cf. Matt. 4.17). He was the Kingdom, and He had come to proclaim and demonstrate its rightside-upping power and to create desire and anticipation for its coming (cf. Acts 1.1-7). Those who saw and heard and followed Him were to believe that, when the Kingdom came, they would know and see it (v. 27).

But what an exciting foretaste of the Kingdom He gave! Ordinary men invested with extraordinary power to bless, heal, and preach (vv. 1-6). Resources for sharing and serving abounding out of the grace of God (vv. 10-17). The greatest truth the world had ever known or seen revealed with transforming power to unschooled men, demoniacs, sufferers of every sort, rich and poor alike (vv. 18-20). Multitudes called to follow in the footsteps of Jesus in self-denying, sacrificial, loving service (vv. 23-27).

Could you see that if suddenly it began to be apparent throughout your community? Yes, you could.

Yet all this depended on one Man, called to embody and announce, to suffer, to die, and to rise from the dead (vv. 21, 22). “‘Tis mystery all” indeed! A mystery to which you and I and all who believe in Jesus have been called (1 Thess. 2.12).

Look at Jesus and see the Kingdom to which we are called, for which we pray, and which to seek is our highest privilege and priority.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Years ago, a Hush Puppies shoes commercial featured a rather benighted lad who, upon receiving his new shoes proclaimed, “I can wear shoes. I can be somebody!” It was memorable for its cleverness, humor, and in-your-face exaggeration and complete joy.

How about us? We live in the Kingdom of God. The Creator of the entire world (Gen. 1.1; Jn. 1.1-3) is the

Father of the King of kings and Lord of lords (Jer. 10.10; Rev. 19.16). Our leader. Our King. Our Ruler, Savior, Teacher. The Christ of God for goodness' sake, and we can hardly get excited, let alone live obediently and with gratitude.

The imaginary lad with the shoes showed more enthusiasm than we who are the children of God and citizens of His Kingdom. So, "since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12.28). And perhaps throw in some unabashed joy.

We are so blessed. We are so loved. We are so called (1 Jn. 3.1). "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy" (1 Pet. 2.9, 10).

We can not only wear shoes, but we are somebody! We are God's somebodies and are His children, residents of His Kingdom. Proclaimers of His Law and co-laborers with Him (1 Cor. 3.9) to bring others into this glorious Kingdom of goodness, love, and light.

*We've a story to tell to the nations that shall turn their hearts to the right,
A story of truth and mercy, a story of peace and light, a story of peace and light.*

*For the darkness shall turn to dawning, and the dawning to noonday bright,
And Christ's great kingdom shall come to earth, the kingdom of love and light.*
(H. Ernest Nichol, 1896)

For reflection

1. Why do you suppose we believers don't get more excited about the Kingdom than we do?
2. What are you learning about the Kingdom of God by watching Jesus in His ministry?
3. What do you think it means to "seek first" the Kingdom of God and His righteousness?

*The kingdom of God had already come, which is why he preached at the beginning that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. . . . But because the kingdom of God was not yet glorious, as it would be in all the world after his resurrection, he said truly, "until they see the kingdom of God after it has come." Martin Bucer (1491-1551), *An Ecclesiastical Exposition upon Saint Mathewe 17.10**

Pray Psalm 72.9-20.

What evidence do you see that the Kingdom of God is coming on earth as it is in heaven? Spread all that evidence before the Lord, giving Him abundant thanks and praise. Ask Him to use you in furthering His Kingdom today.

Sing Psalm 72.9-20.

(Martyrdom: *Alas! and Did My Savior Bleed*)

And let the Righteous rule the earth, and let His foes bow low.
Let nations praise His matchless worth, and all His bidding do.

The Lord the needy rescues when he cries to Him for grace.
All they who suffer violence find mercy before His face.

Let Christ be praised and all the gold of Sheba be His right.
Let blessings to His Name be told, and prayers made both day and night.

Luke 9, Part 1

And let the earth abound with grain, let fields His fame proclaim.
And may our King forever reign and nations bless His great Name.

Now bless the God of Israel Who wondrous works performs.
And bless His Name, His glory tell both now and forever more!

Luke 9, Part 1

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. In what sense are you, like the disciples, “called and sent”?
2. How did Jesus use the disciples in the feeding of the multitude? How does He use you in “feeding” others?
3. What does it mean to confess that Jesus is “the Christ of God”?
4. Jesus calls you to take up your cross and follow Him day by day. What does this require of you?
5. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from our study of Luke 9.1-27?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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