



Luke 9

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Tape #8053
By Chuck Smith

Luke chapter nine. Jesus has been ministering around the sea of Galilee, most recently in Capernaum where He has raised from the dead the daughter of Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue.

Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach [or to herald] the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick (9:1,2).

Calling together the twelve, Jesus is entering into the final six months of His ministry. He knows that the time is coming, this is His final sweep through the Galilee region. He will now be making His way towards Jerusalem as He sets His face to go to Jerusalem where He knows that He will be offered up as a sacrifice for man's sins. He sends His disciples out with power and with authority over the demonic spirits, commissions them to proclaim, to herald, the kingdom of God.

When John the Baptist began his ministry, he began it with the words, "Repent: for the kingdom of God is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). When Jesus began His ministry, He began His ministry with the words, "Repent: for the kingdom of God is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). And now He sends His disciples forth, they are to go forth and to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. In the healing of the sick, they are in reality demonstrating a part of the kingdom of God.

When Jesus comes again in glory to establish His kingdom, there will be no sickness. There will be no physical infirmities. We will see the earth as God desired and intended the earth to be. No sickness, no suffering, no pain. "Former things will have passed away" (Revelation 21:4). We will be dwelling in that glorious kingdom of God. You will see how men could live if they lived all of them in obedience to the laws of God.

It is sin that has brought blight to mankind. It is sin that has introduced the aging processes. Sin that has brought in the sicknesses and the sufferings that men experienced. But when Jesus establishes God's kingdom and we see God's intent in His creation, His creation of man, man dwelling in obedience and in fellowship with God, we'll see the kind of world that could be if man could only catch that vision. But man will not catch that vision, it will not come until the King comes to establish that kingdom.

In a sense, as He sends the disciples out they're more or less an advance team. They didn't have television and radios and newspapers per se that you could set up advertisements and say, Billy Graham's going to be coming to the Los Angeles area and billboards and all. They didn't have that kind of ability to get the word out of what's happening, what's going on. And so Jesus sends His disciples out into the areas where He will be going in order that they might go before Him and prepare the hearts of the people for the coming King, for Jesus. They are there as advance teams given the power that they might demonstrate exactly what the people are going to see when King Jesus arrives at their villages.

And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece. And whatsoever house you enter into, there abide, and from there depart. And whosoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them (9:3-5).

It's interesting how that Jesus sent them forth. I believe that He was sending them forth that they might learn lessons of faith and trust in God. How vastly different it is from the way people often go forth today.

A while back we had a young couple who came to the board requesting missionary support. They were going to go down to Buenos Aires to be involved in a television ministry and all. And when they gave us their budget, interestingly enough, they had included a maid in the budget, and it was about \$3,800 a month that they figured that they needed to live in Buenos Aires to do this missionary work down there.

What a contrast to what Jesus said, "Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, bread, money; neither have two coats apiece." You're to go out and just trust in the Lord, live by faith, that's a great way to live.

It's good to know that God does, can and will supply your needs. I am so thankful for the early years of my ministry that were financially very difficult in that we went out much like this because we didn't have anything else. But to see and to know how God can supply. I learned lessons that are invaluable and I wouldn't trade those lessons for anything. As they say, experience is the best teacher if you can afford the tuition. It's great to learn those lessons of God's faithfulness because they have been lessons that have been rich through the years.

This thought of shaking the dust off their feet, that was sort of borrowing from the Jewish Rabbis. Whenever the Jewish Rabbis would be travelling in a foreign Gentile territory, when they came back to the territory of Israel, they would stop at the borders and they would knock the dust off. They didn't want to bring any Gentile dust into Jewish territory. And so you would see them at the borders as they would be knocking the dust off their sandals. So Jesus is saying, "If they don't receive you, just shake the dust off your sandals." Like the Rabbis do. And it will be a testimony against them.

And they [the disciples] departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel (9:6),

Jesus had commanded them to go and to proclaim. Two Greek words are involved here, one is to evangelize, the other is to just proclaim. And in this case, it is evangelizing. They went around evangelizing in the towns as they evangelized the gospel.

and they were healing every where. Now Herod the tetrarch had heard of what was being done: and he was perplexed, because some were saying that it was John the Baptist risen from the dead; And others, that it was Elijah that had appeared; and others, one of the old prophets (9:6-8)

That is, Moses, as the promise was by Moses, "And there shall arise a Prophet, like unto myself; unto whom you shall give heed" (Deuteronomy 18:15). That was a prophesy of the Messiah. Interesting that when Jesus said, "Whom do men say that I am" (Mark 8:27)? These are the three that was suggested. The disciples said, "Some say, John the Baptist: some say, Elijah; and some say, one of the old prophets risen from the dead." So these are the words that had spread to Herod.

And Herod said, John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see him (9:9).

Jesus did not go to Tiberias where Herod had his palace and from where Herod ruled over that area. I think that because of Herod's beheading His cousin, Jesus had really nothing to say to him. He called him a sly fox. They said, Don't you know Herod's out to get you. He said, Go tell that sly fox (Luke 13:31,32).

When He was brought before Pilate to be judged, Pilate felt this dilemma because he knew Jesus was innocent. He knew that it was for jealousy, envy that He had been delivered to be tried and that there were no real charges and he was really trying to sort of skirt the whole issue and move himself out of it because he recognized that he was being forced by the crowd to do that which was not really just or right. And that was bothering him. So Pilate heard that Herod was there for the Passover feast and so he sent Jesus to Herod. And Herod was excited, he was delighted. He was wanting for Jesus to do some kind of a miracle. And so when Jesus stood before Herod, Jesus did not speak to him, not a word. Had nothing to say to him.

When Jesus has nothing to say to a person, that person is in big trouble. So Herod just sent Him back. Jesus, of course, wasn't going to perform any miracle to satisfy a person's curiosity. That was never a situation with the miracles, it was always to relieve or to aid the suffering. Never for display. Never for show. Never in showiness.

And this is the thing that bothers me about a lot of the TV evangelists today. There seems to be so much drama and show with the miracles. That wasn't the case with Jesus. Never did He do it with the showiness and all but it was only out of a compassion for the needs of the people and to alleviate their suffering and their pain.

And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went aside privately into a deserted place belonging to the city called Bethsaida (9:10).

I say deserted because that really isn't desert. When you think of desert, you think of something like the area out towards Blyth and all or Mojave Desert but it really is quite a lovely area. It's around the sea of Galilee, a lot of beautiful foliage and it's not desert but it is deserted. And so a place of quietness, a place where He can go with His disciples. They've been on this mission. They've seen exciting things. Now just to

spend some quiet time with them over near Bethsaida in a deserted area.

But the people (9:11),

When they saw the little ship going across, they sort of reckoned about where they would be landing and they ran around the upper part of Galilee so that when Jesus arrived with His disciples, there were thousands of people waiting for them.

and He received them (9:11),

I love that. He received them. He didn't say, Go away, don't you know we've come over here to rest. He received them. He didn't turn them away.

And He spoke to them of the kingdom of God, and He healed them that had need of healing. And when the day began to wear away [toward evening], then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away [get rid of them, Lord], that they may go into the towns and country round about, and find lodging, and get food: for we're in this deserted area. But he said unto them, Give them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all of the people (9:11-13).

Philip had already figured out it would take some two hundred denarius worth of bread to feed this multitude.

For they were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company. And they did so, and made them all sit down. Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and broke, and gave to the disciples and they set them before the multitude. And they did eat, and were all filled [the word in Greek is gluttony]: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets (9:14-17).

So the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand. It's interesting to me, so often what we think we have is so paltry in comparison to the need. We look at the needs and we feel like, What can we do? We have so little. How can we ever take care of the needs of these many with as little. But you know, the little that we have in the hands of Jesus can provide for a multitude. The whole key is take what you have and give it to Him and watch Him multiply it. Watch Him use it. Watch Him minister through it to the needs.

So it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him (9:18):

Though the disciples were there, He was praying to the Father alone. In other words, it was as though they were not there as far as His conversation with the Father. He was alone with the Father in conversation. Disciples were around Him but the prayer was alone.

Have you ever thought that when Jesus prayed it really wasn't like when we pray? When we pray, it is usually petitions that we are asking the Father for. When Jesus prayed it was just more or less discussion as They were talking over the issues. And He didn't have to go through a mediator but could just directly speak to the Father at any time, just concerning the issues. But no need for Him to make petition.

and then he asked His disciples, Whom do men say that I am? They told Him (9:18,19)

what Herod had heard and what the common beliefs were that He was perhaps,

John the Baptist (9:19);

Maybe He is Elijah. Malachi had promised that Elijah would come before the Lord to prepare the hearts of the people. And maybe He was,

one of the old prophets risen from the dead (9:19).

As we suggested earlier, the prophet Moses, that they were expecting the Messiah to be a prophet like unto Moses.

He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am (9:20)?

This is always bottomline. It's not what others are saying about Jesus. What do you say about Him? What's your opinion? You say, What difference does it make? All the difference in the world. The difference between life and death.

Who do you say that He is? Is He the only begotten Son of God? Is He God manifested in flesh? Is He the Saviour of the world? Or is He just in your mind perhaps a good man, a moralist, a man who taught virtuous things? The problem is you can't really just say that He was a good man, a moralist, a philosopher, without also acknowledging that He was the only begotten Son of God because He said He was the only

begotten Son of God. If He was not, then He was a liar. He was a fraud. He was a deceiver. And so you see, people today who try to just look at Jesus as a good man; no, He was an evil man if He was not the Son of God because He was guilty of deceiving the people and lying to the people.

He taught moral virtues. No, no, He didn't. If He is not the Son of God, He's a liar. He's a great philosopher; no. He's not a great philosopher. If He is not the Son of God, then all that He said is meaningless. There is no truth. He said He was the truth. So who do you say that He is?

Peter answered and said, The Christ of God (9:20).

The word Christ is our Anglicized form of the Greek word Christos. The Greek word Christos is a translation of the Hebrew word, Mashiyach. The word Christos and Mashiyach mean anointing or the anointed one. The Messiah was to have a threefold office: prophet, priest and king. It is interesting that both the priests and the kings were anointed for their offices.

When a high priest would die and a new high priest would be inaugurated, they would take the oil and they would pour it over his head acknowledging that he was anointed by God to be the mediator for the people, for the nation.

When a king was crowned, there was the pouring of the oil over his head to recognize that he was the one that was anointed by God to reign and to rule over the people. And so the word Mashiyach became one of the names for the coming Saviour, the Messiah, who had many different names given to Him and ascribed to Him in the Old Testament; one of them being the Messiah. The name Messiah seem to catch on more than the others. And our word Messiah is again the Anglicized form of the Hebrew Mashiyach. But it is the recognition that Jesus is the One that had been promised by God who would come and rule on the throne of David over the world.

"For unto us a child is born," the prophet Isaiah said, "unto us a son is given: and the government will be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, and The Prince of Peace." And so these are all names for the Messiah. "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, to order it, and to establish it in righteousness and in justice from henceforth even for ever" (Isaiah 9:6,7). So the eternal reign of God's King, the Anointed One, the Mashiyach.

So Peter is saying, "You are the Mashiyach of God." You're the One.

And so Jesus [in response to Peter], strictly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing (9:21);

Don't tell people. The question is, Why would Jesus tell them not to tell? When Peter said, You are the Messiah of God, Peter and the other disciples were thinking of the King that is going to reign. Going to rule the world in righteousness and in peace. And they were thinking of subduing the nations and establishing this kingdom of God and that's what was in Peter's mind and the minds of the apostles when Peter said, You are the Messiah of God.

Jesus did not want that concept of the reigning Messiah to get out. If they begin to proclaim He is the Messiah, in the Jewish mind there was only one thought concerning the Messiah and that is He is going to establish a kingdom, He's going to overthrow the Roman rule, He is going to bring Israel into an apex of glory as He reigns over the earth from Jerusalem. And that was in their minds and Jesus did not want that concept spread because at this point, He began to tell them the other aspect of the Messiah that they did not understand and had rejected in their mind. And that is that He was going to be rejected, that He was going to be slain, but He would rise again the third day. And so Jesus said unto them,

The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and to be slain, and to be raised the third day (9:22).

He told them actually four things about Himself. Number one, I'm going to be rejected by the rulers. Number two, I'm going to be slain. Number three, I'm going to rise again. And number four, I'm going to come again in glory. In other words, those prophecies of the glorious reign of the Messiah will be fulfilled but not now. Now the prophecies will be fulfilled concerning "His taking our iniquities and being wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5). The other part, the glorious reign.

So in verse twenty-six, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of man

be ashamed, when he shall come.” Going to come again. In His own glory and in His Father’s and of the holy angels. So He is telling them, Don’t spread this around because people had the false concept of the Messiah. They were thinking of what the Messiah will do when He returns. But it was first necessary that our sins be forgiven on a righteous basis. And so He came to be as John the Baptist said, “The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” (John 1:29). He was to be God’s sacrifice for man’s sin. That’s why Jesus said, Don’t tell anybody.

And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me (9:23).

The three requirements. The denial of self, the self-life. Paul the apostle testified, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet it’s not I, but Christ that is living in me: and the life that I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20). I’m not living for myself anymore. I’m living for Jesus Christ. He again in another place said, “And when Christ, who is our life, shall appear” (Colossians 3:4). The denial of self. Those things which were gain to me, I counted loss [he said] for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ: and do count them but refuse, that I may know Him, And be found in him” (Philippians 3:7-10).

Those ambitions, those things that were once a positive. And I was priding myself, I counted those loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus. The denial of self, the self-life. O how painful and how difficult and slow and torturous is death by crucifixion. And we’re to reckon ourselves to be crucified with Christ. But we all know how painfully slow and torturous the death of self is, as we seek to reckon our own man dead, crucified with Him.

The second thing Jesus said is, Take up the cross daily. In the life of Jesus, the cross represented a full and complete surrendering of His will to that of the Father. It is the same thing in our lives. It is the submitting and the surrendering of ourselves to the will of the Father. You remember in the garden of Gethsemane when He was facing the cross and He was praying, His prayer was, “Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not what I will, but Thy will, be done” (Luke 22:42). And taking up your cross is just that. It is saying, Father, not my will but Thy will be done. It is submitting and surrendering myself fully and completely to the will of God. You’re going to follow Jesus, that’s what you’ll have to do.

The third thing He said is, Follow Me. And that to me is an exciting adventure, following Jesus Christ, because you never know where it will lead you. What an exciting adventure to just follow Him. It’s a thrill. But then He sort of gave a rationale for it all. He said,

Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it (9:24).

If you live for yourself, you’re going to lose it. All that you gained, all of your efforts is going to be lost. But if you will just lose your life for Jesus, then you’ll really find out what living is all about.

For what is a man advantaged, if he would gain the whole world, and lose his own soul (9:25)?

I might at this point ask you if suddenly a genie would pop out of the bottle and grant you three requests, what would they be? What is the secret of your heart? What is your secret desire, ambition, goal? What is it that if at all possible, you would have or you would do or you would be? Now let me ask you this. What advantage would it be to you if in having that, you lost your own soul? In other words, if Satan would come to bargain for your soul, what would you sell it for? What would you be willing to give your soul for? And so Jesus said, what advantage if you gained the whole world but lose himself,

and be cast away? For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and that of his Father's (9:25,26),

So the declaration that He’s coming again in glory, the glory of the Father, His glory, with His holy angels. But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God (9:26,27).

There are those who say that Jesus was declaring that those disciples that were there would actually see the kingdom of God coming in power and that Jesus was referring that they wouldn’t die before He came in glory. If that is what Jesus meant, then He was wrong. And I can’t believe that Jesus was wrong. If in my interpretation of the scripture it makes the scripture ridiculous, then my interpretation is wrong because the

scripture doesn't say anything ridiculous. And if my interpretation makes the scripture seem to be contradictory, then my interpretation is wrong because the scripture is not contradictory. It's my interpretation that is wrong, not the scripture.

What was Jesus saying? It would be a reference to the very next verse.

And it came to pass about a eight days after these sayings (9:28),

He relates this next event to what Jesus just said that,

he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering (9:28,29).

That word glistering means flashing. It's sort of like lightning flashes. His garments became flashing. His countenance was changed. The word there is metamorphous which is a change of body. It's what a chrysalis goes through when it becomes a caterpillar. The essential essence is the same but a different body.

And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elijah (9:30):

Here is the representative head of the law, Moses. Here is the greatest of the prophets in the Old Testament, Elijah. And they appear with Jesus there on the mount and

they are talking to Him of his decease which should be accomplished at Jerusalem (9:31).

So here they're talking about His pending crucifixion when He gets to Jerusalem. They're talking about what's going to happen to Him there, how He's going to be dying in Jerusalem. Interesting conversation with Moses and Elijah there on the mount.

Peter when he wrote his epistle said, "We did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we declared to you the glory of the Lord, but we were eyewitnesses of that glory when we were with Him on the holy mount" (2 Peter 1:16,18). We're just not making up stories, we were there, we actually saw it, we were eyewitnesses. And Peter's bearing testimony to this particular experience when he was there with James and John on the mount of transfiguration. But then he went on to say, "But we have a more sure word of prophecy" (2 Peter 1:19). In other words, I'm an eyewitness, I saw it but I've got something even more certain that what I saw and that's the word of God and the prophecies of the word of God. A more sure word, testimony.

So it came to pass, as they departed from him [that is, Moses and Elijah], *Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here [this is good]: let us make three tabernacles; one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah: not knowing what he said (9:33).*

As another gospel writer said, Not knowing what to say. If you don't know what to say, sometimes it's better to keep quiet. But Peter is moved by this and he says, Lord. Now you see, Peter is confused because acknowledging that Jesus is the Messiah of God and then having Jesus begin to talk to him about His being rejected by the rulers—He's going to be crucified, going to be slain, third day He'll rise again—Peter doesn't like that. He likes what he just saw. Let's stay here. Let's don't leave here. I don't like the thought of going to Jerusalem and dying, let's just stay here Lord. Let's not go from here.

There are those experiences that we have in our Christian walk where the presence of God and the glory of God becomes so real to us that we really don't want to leave. We want to just stay right there and bask in the glory of the experiences that we just had. But you can't live forever on the mountaintop. There's a valley down there where people are in need, need of the love of the Lord and need of His help and we need to go down to the valley to minister to them. So Peter, "not knowing what he was saying," just said, Let's build three tabernacles, let's stay here, and

While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and it overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into this cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen (9:34-36).

They kept it to themselves until after His resurrection. Then Peter actually wrote about it in his epistle.

And so it came to pass, on the next day, when they were come down the hill (9:37),

Now Jesus coming down the hill with Peter, James and John.

There were many people there to meet him. And, behold, there was a man among the company of people who cried out, saying, Master, I beg thee, look upon my son: for he is my only child. And, lo, a spirit taketh

him, and he suddenly cries out; and it then tears him and he foams again, and it bruises him hardly ever departing from him (9:37-39).

Some commentators and writers have said that this young man was afflicted with epileptic seizures. Far from the truth. That's tragic actually to make that kind of a judgment because that would then cause people to look at a person with epilepsy and say, It's some kind of a demonic spirit. And that is far from the truth. Epilepsy is a brain disorder. It's not demonic spirits. Yes, there were symptoms like symptoms of epilepsy but the Bible tells us that this was an evil spirit that had invaded this young man's body. And in another gospel, it tells us that oftentimes it would throw this boy in the fire, trying to destroy him. So don't buy that epileptic seizure kind of a bit because there is no relationship between epileptic seizures and demon possession. And it would be cruel, unscriptural, and unjust to associate the two. He said,

I besought your disciples to cast him out; and they could not (9:40).

Here Jesus is on the mountain and Peter, James and John and they're having this fantastically glorious, heavenly experience. Jesus is transfigured. They see Him in glory. In the glory of His kingdom. God's voice is speaking to them out of a cloud. And as they come down the hill, what do they find? The devil is waiting for them at the bottom of the hill.

Have you ever discovered that? Right after your great spiritual experiences, you're going to have an encounter with Satan and his whole purpose is to rob you of the joy and the glory of that experience. You just sometimes have those wonderful experience where you're just basking in the glory of what God is and what God has done and all. And then Satan comes right along and he tries to rob you.

How many people after being baptized with the Holy Spirit have some of the greatest spiritual struggles they've ever known, as Satan comes and even challenges the experience. Tries to rob you of the joy of it. Tries to take away the glory of what you've just experienced. And so here it was at the bottom of the hill. And when he said, I came to your disciples they couldn't do anything,

Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? [He said,] Bring the son to me. And as he was yet coming, the devil threw him down, and tore him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father. And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples, Let these sayings sink down into your ears [He said, Listen, let it sink in]: the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men (9:41-44).

Let that sink in. You see, still they weren't ready to accept that He was going to be crucified. That He was going to be rejected. They still had this Messiah concept of ruling and reigning and we're going to have positions of authority and power. Now He says, Let this sink in, the Son of man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.

But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they were afraid to ask him what He was talking about. Then there arose a reasoning among them (9:45,46),

He just said, Look, let it sink in. And what's the next thing? They're arguing as to who will be the greatest when He sets up His kingdom. No wonder He said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long do I have to suffer you?" I think that this should be an encouragement to every one of us when we see the kind of men the Lord used to do His work. Look what He had to work with. So many times we look at ourselves and, what can God do through me? What have I got? I often say that but then I look at Peter and some of the others and well, you know, I don't know. Look a lot like me. If God can use them, He can use me. And that's really why God uses people like us. So that other people will say, If God can use them, He can sure use me. To realize that God uses just plain, ordinary people who have flaws, who have faults, who do dumb things, who can't perceive when it's just given to them straight. And yet God uses them.

So here Jesus is, Get this straight, let it sink in. And then they start arguing,

which of them is going to be greatest. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and He set the little child by Him [took him on His lap], And He said unto them, Whosoever will receive this child in my name receives me: and whosoever receives me receives him that sent me: for he that is the least among you all, the same shall be great (9:46-48).

The path of greatness is taking the lesser place, the least. Whoever will be the least among you shall be

great.

So John answered and said, Master, we saw one who was casting out devils in your name; and we stopped him, because he didn't follow with us (9:49).

Here's the first attempt to develop a denomination. We stopped him, Lord. I'm sure, don't you know that John was looking for points and wanting the Lord to say, Well good boy, John.

But Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us (9:50).

When Moses brought the seventy elders into the tabernacle to receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit that they might help him in the administration duties of the great numbers of people who had been brought into the wilderness, and as the Spirit of God came upon the seventy and they began to prophesy, someone came running in and they said, "Eldad and Medad are out in the camp prophesying." They're not in here with us. They're out there in the camp. "And Joshua said, My lord Moses, shall I go and stop them? And Moses said, No, don't stop them. Would to God that all of Israel were prophesying, that His Spirit was upon them all" (Numbers 11:27-29)!

Let's not try to corral everything within our borders. Let's just rejoice and say, God, bless them all. We don't have any corner on God. It would be my desire that every church in this community was teaching the word of God in a systematic way so that they could know how God blesses His word. It doesn't matter if they follow us or not. If they're serving God and bringing people to Jesus Christ, let's rejoice. God deliver us and keep us from party spirit. That's a mark of carnality.

Paul writing to the Corinthians said, "While some of you say, I'm of Cephas; and another says, I'm of Apollos; another says, I'm of Paul" (1 Corinthians 1:12). He said, "Are you not carnal, walk you not like men" (1 Corinthians 3:3)? "Is Christ divided" (1 Corinthians 1:13)?

May God help us not to see ourselves as some exclusive little club and everybody has to follow and march to our drumbeat. Not so. And may God ever keep us from that kind of a mental attitude. But let us always be able to rejoice in the moving of God's Spirit no matter where it may be or to whom it might be happening to.

So it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up (9:51),

That is the time when His crucifixion and received back into heaven. Received up is a reference to His ascending again into heaven after His resurrection. So "the time was coming that He should be received up,"

he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem (9:51),

In His heart, the die is cast. Not going to stay on the mountain of transfiguration. Not going to stay within the relative security of the Galilee. He's going to go to Jerusalem to be delivered to the high priest, then delivered to the Gentiles to be crucified and to rise again the third day. So "setting His face to go to Jerusalem,"

And He sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him (9:52).

They went in to get lodging and to prepare for Jesus to spend the night in the Samaritan village.

But they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem (9:53).

Such a contentious spirit between the Gentiles and the Samaritans. As the woman of Samaria had said to Jesus earlier, "Why do you ask me for a drink? The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" (John 4:9). And so here we find the same kind of ethnic strife and just because it appeared that Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem, they said, Can't stay here. They wouldn't receive Him.

And when his disciples James and John saw this [still looking for points, I think], they said, Lord, you want us to command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, like Elijah did (9:54)?

Don't like us? Alright, we'll crisp you. Zap you, call fire from heaven and consume. Lord, you want us to do that? Now you understand why Jesus gave them the nickname of Boanerges, the sons of thunder. They're ready to bring the thunder and lightning on this village of the Samaritans to destroy it because they didn't receive. But instead of saying, Good boys.

He turned, and rebuked them, and said, You know not what manner of spirit you're of (9:55).

Not come to destroy, come to save. To seek and to save those that are lost. So the gentleness with which Jesus received this rejection by the Samaritans.

For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but He's come to save them. And they just went to another village. And it came to pass, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest (9:56,57).

Touched emotionally. Lord, I'll go with you wherever you go. And there are a lot of people that have those moments of emotion where their hearts are touched. They say, Lord I'll go with you, and Jesus more or less said, Consider the cost, fellow. Don't just make an emotional commitment. Consider the cost.

And He said unto him, Foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head (9:58).

Foxes they have their dens. Birds have their nest. I don't have any place to lay My head. Now don't feel sorry for Jesus. He wasn't looking for sympathy. Really, how blessed to say there's nothing in this world to which I'm attached. I'm free. I'm free to do what the Father wants.

And then to another, Jesus called him (9:59),

This fellow was voluntary. To another Jesus called him and said,

Follow me. But he said, Lord, allow me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God (9:59,60).

Is Jesus being heartless? Is He being cruel? Is He saying, Don't attend to the family affairs, taking care of the dead? No, this business of saying, I must first bury my father is actually a phrase of postponement. It's saying, I'll do it after my father dies. Now his father might be in the peak of health. The young fellow could have been twenty years old, his father forty years old, still healthy, working hard. He says, Allow me to bury my father first. No, his father wasn't dead. It's just that, I'm going to hang around the house, I'll come later. Postponing the commitment.

And there are many people that are in that place of, as soon as I take care of this. Get this all taken care of and all, then I will. The postponement of commitment. And then,

Another one said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God (9:61,62).

In other words, when you put your hand to the plow and you start to plow the furrow, you'll never plow a straight furrow if you're looking back. You got to be looking ahead if you're going to plow a straight furrow. And there are so many people who are trying to live in the past, in the past experiences. They are always looking back at what God had done in their life in a past experience that they had. A commitment that they once made. A work that they once did.

But Paul said, "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high" (Philippians 3:13,14). No looking back. A lot of people look back to the old life.

The children of Israel, they looked back to Egypt. And as they looked back, what did they remember? Did they remember the bondage? Did they remember the slavery? Did they remember the beatings? Did they remember their tired, aching bodies; their bruised bodies that were beat? Did they remember the blisters and all of the suffering and all? No, no, no, they remembered the leeks and the garlic, the meat that they ate. And isn't it interesting how so many times as we look back, we forget the bitterness and all we can remember is, Wow, remember when we. And we think of only that, we forget the bondage. We forget the pain. We forget the suffering.

No, not looking back but looking ahead to what God has in store for us in the future. Let's always keep our face ever forward. Looking ahead because God wants to do so much more. Let's not just stop and revel in the past. Let's move on to what God wants to do with each of us.

Father, we thank You for Your word and for the strength and encouragement it gives to us. For the learning opportunities to learn of Your nature. To learn what manner of spirit we're of. To learn who we really are. To learn the power Lord that You've made available to us. Lord, to learn the lessons that we need to learn of commitment, surrender, obedience. Lord, You got a lot to do in our lives and we thank You for what You're doing. We thank You Lord that we're not what we were. But we realize there's a long way to go. So keep us ever pressing towards the mark, looking forward. In Jesus' name, Amen.

