

CHAPTER NINE

Outline

- A. Luke told about the extension of Jesus ministry (1-17).
1. The first mission of the twelve (1-6).
 - a) He called them together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases.
 - b) He sent them forth to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.
 - c) He gave them instructions for the journey: Take no staff, wallet, bread, money or extra clothes; go to someone's house and stay there until time to depart; if any reject your message, shake the dust off your feet to show your disapproval and their responsibility.
 - d) They went throughout the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.
 2. The reaction of Herod to His ministry (7-9).
 - a) He was perplexed by the rumors that John the Baptist had been raised from the dead, or that Elijah had appeared, or that one of the old prophets had risen.
 - b) He had beheaded John, but who was Jesus? He wanted to see Him.
 3. Feeding the five thousand (10-17).
 - a) The circumstances.
 - (1) It was after the apostles had returned and told Him what they had done that He took them and went to a city called Bethsaida.
 - (2) The multitudes were aware of it and followed.
 - (3) He welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those in need of healing.
 - b) The problem the twelve faced and what Jesus did about it.
 - (1) As the day began to wear away, they came to Him and urged that the crowds be sent to the villages to find food and lodging.
 - (2) He said, "You give them something to eat," but they had only five loaves and two fish. Should they

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go and buy food for all these people, about five thousand men?

- (3) Jesus told the disciples to have the people sit down in groups of fifty. Then He took the loaves and the fish and blessed and broke them and gave them to the disciples to set before the multitudes.

c) The result of the miracle.

- (1) They ate and were filled.

- (2) There was taken up of what remained of the broken pieces, twelve baskets.

B. Luke told how Jesus prepared His disciples for their ministry (18-62).

1. The necessity of the cross (18-27).

a) The cross in the mission of the Messiah (18-22).

- (1) Jesus was praying; the disciples were with Him.

- (2) He asked, "Who do the multitudes say that I am?"

- (3) They answered, "John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the old prophets risen again."

- (4) He asked, "But who do you say that I am?"

- (5) Peter answered, "The Christ of God."

- (6) Jesus made His point after charging them to tell this to no man by saying, "The Son of Man must be rejected by the leaders and be killed, and on the third day be raised up."

b) The cross in the life of His followers (23-27).

- (1) He said, "If any man would come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

- (2) He explained, "For whosoever would save his life shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, this one shall save it."

- (3) He asked, "What, indeed, is a man profited by gaining the whole world and losing himself?"

- (4) He explained this loss: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man shall be ashamed of him when He comes in glory that is His and the Father's and of the holy angels."

- (5) In contrast to that coming, He said that some of those present would not taste death till they should see the kingdom of God.

STUDIES IN LUKE

2. Complete dependence on Christ (28-45).

a) Revealed in the Transfiguration (28-36).

- (1) It occurred about eight days after the lesson about the cross when Jesus took Peter, John and James and went into the mountain to pray.
- (2) As He was praying, a change came over His face and His garments became white, flashing like lightning.
- (3) Then Moses and Elijah appeared to Him, speaking about His departure to be accomplished at Jerusalem.
- (4) Peter and the others had been asleep, but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two who stood with Him.
- (5) Peter proposed that they put up three tents, one for each of them, not realizing that they were not needed.
- (6) A cloud overshadowed them; they were afraid as they entered the cloud; a Voice said, "This is my my Son, my chosen; Hear ye Him!"
- (7) After the Voice spoke, Jesus was alone. The disciples told no one what they had seen.

b) Demonstrated in the cure of the epileptic boy (37-45).

- (1) On the next day when they had come down from the mountain, a man from the crowd asked Jesus to help his demon-possessed son.
- (2) The disciples hadn't been able to cast it out.
- (3) Jesus said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you?" Then He said, "Bring your son here."
- (4) The demon convulsed the boy, but Jesus rebuked it and healed the boy and gave him back to his father.
- (5) All were astonished at the majesty of God.
- (6) While they were marvelling, Jesus said to the disciples, "Listen carefully, The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men."
- (7) They didn't understand, but were afraid to ask Him what He meant.

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3. Necessary principles to direct them (46-62).
 - a) True greatness explained (46-50).
 - (1) The little child in their midst (46-48).
 - (a) The disciples were arguing about which of them was the greatest.
 - (b) Jesus, pointing to the child, said, "The least among you is the one who is great."
 - (2) The unknown miracle worker (49-50).
 - (a) He was casting out a demon in Jesus name.
 - (b) John said, "We forbade him because he didn't follow with us."
 - (c) Jesus said, "Don't forbid him; he that is not against you is for you."
 - b) Rashness forbidden (51-55).
 - (1) Jesus, approaching the time of the ascension, set out to go to Jerusalem.
 - (2) He sent messengers into the Samaritan village to prepare for Him.
 - (3) They didn't receive Him because He was going to Jerusalem.
 - (4) James and John asked, "Lord, shall we call fire from heaven and consume them?"
 - (5) Jesus rebuked their rashness, and they went to another village.
 - c) Complete dedication demanded (57-62).
 - (1) A volunteer who failed to realize the necessity of following Him unselfishly.
 - (2) One who was invited to follow who failed to realize the need to follow unconditionally.
 - (3) Another volunteer who failed to realize the need to follow Him unintermittently.

The Mission of the Twelve

Scripture

9:1-6 And he called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. 2 And he sent them forth to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. 3 And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staff, nor wallet, nor bread, nor money; either have two coats. 4 And

into whatsoever house ye enter, there abide, and thence depart. 5 And as many as receive you not, when ye depart from that city, shake off the dust from your feet for a testimony against them. 6 And they departed, and went throughout the villages, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere.

Comments

And he called the twelve together.—The account of choosing the twelve is given in 6:12-16. They are now being sent out on their first mission. The Master not only chose them, but He also instructed them and sent them out to share in the work that not even He could do alone. This became a training experience for the greater task of carrying the gospel into all the world (Mk. 16:15-16).

power and authority over all demons.—The message they would speak would be given them by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 10:20). The miracles were their credentials, proving the God spoke through them.

Jesus gave them power and authority to exercise it in casting out demons and curing diseases. Some, such as Jewish exorcists and some "faith healers" today, to whom no such power has been given have tried to exercise authority in these areas. Luke gives at least two examples of the utter failure of all such unauthorized efforts. See Acts 19:13-16 and Jesus reference to Jewish exorcists in Lk. 11:19.

to preach the kingdom of God.—They were to proclaim God's rule in the hearts of men. People needed to let God direct their lives. This is the same message John had preached. It must be proclaimed to every generation.

Take nothing for your journey.—On this first mission, they were to go among Jewish brethren who understood the meaning of hospitality and respect for teachers. But rejecting their message meant rejecting Christ; rejecting Him meant rejecting God's rule in their hearts.

The wallet or traveling bag was used for various purposes, sometimes to carry extra clothing or food. Since they were to have no extras, not even two coats, they didn't need the bag. Deissmann, in *Light From the Ancient East* (page 109), mentions a bag that was carried by pagan priests as they went about begging. But this could not apply to Christ's disciples since they were to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and be taken care of by them. They did face some dangers, however, for some would not believe their message.

Jesus pointed this out so that they might be prepared for it (Matt. 10:16-23).

And as many as receive you not.—The unwelcomed guests were to leave not only because of the lack of hospitality but also because the message of the kingdom of God was being rejected. They were to shake the dust from their feet and in this dramatic way indicate the unworthiness of those who did not accept their message. The responsibility for rejecting God's rule was left with those who refused to be taught by Christ's messengers.

preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.—The good news of the kingdom was accompanied by the miracles of healing which served to prove that they spoke from God. Mark says that "they preached that men should repent" (Mark 6:13). Matthew adds that Jesus said, "Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come" (Mt. 10:23). They were on an urgent mission. Jesus would meet them before they had time to finish this task. This, of course, is not a reference to His second coming.

The Reaction of Herod the Tetrarch

Scripture

9:7-9 Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done: and he was much perplexed, because that it was said by some, that John was risen from the dead; 8 and by some, that Elijah had appeared; and by others, that one of the old prophets was risen again. 9 And Herod said, John I beheaded: but who is this, about whom I hear such things? And he sought to see him.

Comments

he was perplexed.—Herod who had beheaded John the Baptist was disturbed by the reports he was hearing about the miracles of Jesus. Some tried to explain them by assuming that He was Elijah or one of the old prophets who had been raised from the dead (Mal 4:5; Deut. 18:15). Some were saying that He was John who had risen. Herod seems to have accepted this view for a time, for his disturbed conscience was searching for an answer to its guilt. He decided to kill Jesus too, assuming that that would ease his conscience (Lk. 13:31). The only thing, however, that cleanses an evil conscience is the blood of Christ that was shed on Calvary (Heb. 9:14; 10:22; I Pet. 3:21).

But Herod's conscience didn't bother him very long, for when Pilate sent Jesus to him during the trial "he was exceedingly glad: for he was of a long time desirous to see him, because he had heard concerning him; and he hoped to see some miracle done by him" (Lk. 23:8).

Feeding the Five Thousand

Scripture

9:10-17 And the apostles, when they were returned, declared unto him what things they had done. And he took them, and withdrew apart to a city called Bethsaida. 11 But the multitudes perceiving it followed him: and he welcomed them, and spake to them of the kingdom of God, and them that had need of healing he cured. 12 And the day began to wear away; and the twelve came, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages and country round about, and lodge, and get provisions: for we are here in a desert place. 13 But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more than five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy food for all this people. 14 For they were about five thousand men. And he said unto his disciples, Make them sit down in companies, about fifty each. 15 And they did so, and made them all sit down. 16 And he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake; and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude. 17 And they ate, and were all filled: and there was taken up that which remained over to them of broken pieces, twelve baskets.

Comments

a city called Bethsaida.—It is generally agreed that this is Bethsaida Julias, a city located on the east side of the Jordan near the point where it empties into the Sea of Galilee.

According to Mark 6:45 and 53, Jesus sent the disciples back across the lake after feeding the five thousand, and they landed at Genessaret, the west side of the lake. John says that it occurred on the other, that is, east side of the sea of Galilee and that after the miracle the disciples went down to the sea and got into the boat to go over the sea to Capernaum (John 6:1, 17). It was at Capernaum on the next day that the multitudes came to Jesus and asked, "Rabbi, when camest thou here?" (John 6:24-25). These Scrip-

tures seem to indicate that the miracle took place on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee and that after the miracle the disciples returned to Capernaum which was located on the northwest side of the sea.

But the multitudes perceiving it followed him.—By this time the popularity of Jesus was reaching its climax; people were following Him everywhere He went. Even when He tried to get away for a little rest, they followed Him; and He "welcomed them and spake to them of the kingdom of God and them that had need of healing he cured."

Send the multitude away.—As evening drew on, these practical men realized that something had to be done for the welfare of the people. "Send them away" to the stores and places of lodging was all they could think to do. They knew that the "two hundred shillings"—all that they had—wouldn't buy enough to begin to feed them even if there had been a place where they could buy food.

But Jesus said, "You give them something to eat." At His suggestion, they took stock and found that they had only five loaves and two fish—just a lunch that belonged to a boy in the crowd (Mk. 6:38; John 6:9). What was that for so many? Were they to go and buy food for them? Apparently it didn't occur to them that Jesus could solve the problem, even though they had seen Him perform many wonders by this time.

Make them sit down in companies, about fifty each.—Jesus knew what He would do. In that desert place where there was virtually no food, He was the only one who could supply the need. The crowd was to sit down in groups of about fifty so that no one would be overlooked. He would provide the food; but the apostles were to do the rest, for that was within their ability. Organization was necessary to the success of the task.

Jesus took the loaves and the fish and looking up to the heavenly Father He blessed them and broke them and gave them to the disciples to give to the people. Was anyone in the crowd aware that a miracle was taking place? They were slow to grasp the lesson about the Bread of Life which He taught them when they came to Him after the miracle that had fed them physically.

remained over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets.—The miracle had demonstrated that He was the Creator, for "all things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made" (John 1:3). Gathering the broken pieces conserved

the food, but more than that it demonstrated that a genuine miracle had taken place. The people said, "This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world" (John 6:15). But they didn't see that He was the Bread of Life (John 6:41). Their real selfishness is revealed in their reference to the manna which their fathers had eaten for the forty years in the wilderness; Jesus had fed them just once. And it was not Moses, but the Father who had sent the manna; Christ was the true bread that the Father had sent to those who believe on Him.

The Necessity of the Cross

Scripture

9:18-27 And it came to pass, as he was praying apart, the disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Who do the multitudes say that I am? 19 And they answering said, John the Baptist; but others say, Elijah; and others, that one of the old prophets is risen again. 20 And he said unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Peter answering said, The Christ of God. 21. But he charged them, and commanded them to tell this to no man; 22 saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up. 23 And he said unto all, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. 24 For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. 25 For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose or forfeit his own self? 26 For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in his own glory, and the glory of the Father, and of the holy angels. 27 But I tell you of a truth, There are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

Comments

And it came to pass.—Luke was aware of many things that he did not include in his narrative. See Mark 6:45-9:1. His purpose was to present Jesus as the Son of God and the Son of Man, and it did not take all that He did to establish the claim. But all that he did write concerned Jesus' work and teaching (Acts 1:1-2). John suggests

that "even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" if the complete record were made (John 21:25).

as he was praying.—Jesus constantly communicated with the Father about all that He did. Just before Peter expressed the conviction of the apostles that He was the Christ, Jesus was praying. Matthew reminds us that this incident occurred in the region of Caesarea Philippi.

Who do men say that I am?—This question was designed to lead the disciples to think clearly about Jesus and to prepare them to see that He must go to the cross. The cross was not only necessary for Him, it was also necessary in the life of each of His followers.

And they answered, John the Baptist.—Herod and others were saying this (Matt. 14:1-2). Others were saying that he was Elijah, basing their claim on the prophecy of Malachi 4:5 which said, "Behold, I will send you Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes." Others were explaining Jesus' powers by saying that He was one of the old prophets who had risen. After the feeding of the five thousand, the people came to take Him by force and make Him king, for they said, "This is of a truth, the prophet that cometh into the world" (John 6:14-15). Later, Peter positively identified Him as the prophet about whom Moses had written (Acts 3:20-24).

But who say ye that I am?—Peter said, "The Christ of God." Christ means anointed and refers to His office of prophet, priest and king. According to Peter's confession as given in Matthew 16:16, he added the words, "the Son of the living God." This explains His person, for He is Son of God as well as Son of Man. He was often called "Son of David" referring to Him as Messiah, that is, Christ.

According to Matthew, Jesus said to Peter, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). The rock upon which the church was to be built is the truth expressed in Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Perhaps the best proof of this is Peter's own statement in which he quotes Isaiah's prophecy and shows that Jesus Christ is the foundation of the spiritual temple, the church. See I Pet. 2:3-8. See also Paul's statement in I Cor. 3:11.

The gates of Hades refer to the power of death. In this context, Jesus was speaking about His own death which was to take place in Jerusalem (Matt. 16:21; Lk. 9:21-22). Peter explained this when he quoted the sixteenth Psalm, on the Day of Pentecost (Acts

2:24-31). The antecedent of "it" (Matt. 16:18) is not "church" but "rock." The truth that He is the Christ, the Son of the Living God is the rock that could not be destroyed by the powers of Hades. He was to be put to death, but He was to be raised from the dead to prove that He was Prophet, Priest, and King. If He had not been raised, He could not have been any one of these. The victory of the church over death depends on Christ (I Cor. 15:22-26), but this is not in the context of Matthew sixteen.

tell this to no man.—A similar order is given after the transfiguration with the added word, "until the Son of man be risen from the dead" (Matt. 17:9). The apostles were to wait until they had positive evidence that could be shared with others before telling of their conviction that Jesus is the Christ. The resurrection established it beyond doubt. See Acts 4:2, 10-11, 19-20; Rom. 10:9-10. *take up his cross daily.*—The cross was necessary for Jesus in His office of Prophet, Priest, and King. The cross was necessary in the daily life of His followers as they went out to preach the Word of the Cross.

The meaning of the cross for the follower of Christ depends on the meaning of the cross to Him. His cross is a symbol of death to sin. Then the cross to His disciples must be more than some burden to be patiently borne. Paul says, "our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away" (Rom. 6:6). Those who belong to Jesus Christ "have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof" (Gal. 5:24). See also Col. 2:20-3:17; Gal. 2:20; 6:14.

The cross, death to sin, must be taken up daily by those who follow Him. Peter said that "Christ left us an example that we should follow in his steps who did no sin" (I Pet. 2:21-22). Should we stumble, as Peter did, there is the gracious provision of the loving Father for the cleansing of the erring Christian (I John 2:1-2). But habitual sinning cannot be practiced by the Christian (Rom 6:1-4). The standard of Christ is high, but not impossible. His commandments are not grievous (I John 5:3).

Self-denial is not merely denying oneself of some material thing. It means to disown self, to act in a completely selfless manner. Paul is a good example: All that he had once counted dear, he set aside for the privilege of gaining Christ (Phil. 3:7-11). Jesus illustrated this in the parable of the Pearl of Great Price. The man who sought goodly pearls had to sell all in order to gain the one pearl

of great price. Nothing short of complete dedication to Christ will satisfy the demand of self-denial.

save his life shall lose it.—This is Jesus' own explanation of what He had just said about self-denial. Lose it for Christ, if you would save your life! There is no diluting this to mean partly save, or partly lose; it means complete dedication.

For what is a man profited?—Jesus explained what He meant by losing or saving life. What profit is it if you gain the whole world but lose your life? Reason tells us He is right! The Bible gives us true perspective so that our sense of values may not be limited by what we see at the moment. See Psa. 37:1-40; 73:16-17.

ashamed of me and of my words.—The one who is ashamed of the Christ of the cross or of the Word of the cross will not be recognized by Christ when He comes to judge the world. See also Matt. 7:22-23. Mere profession of obedience is not enough; Jesus demands sincerity in relation to Him. James warns, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves (James 1:22).

when he cometh in his own glory.—that is, at the last judgment. See Matt. 25:31-46; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20:11-15.

till they see the kingdom of God.—This is in contrast to what He had just said about the final judgment. All will be present on that day. But some of those who heard Him speak were to be present on another occasion, that is, when they would see the kingdom of God. The kingdom, the earthly phase of it, came on the Day of Pentecost when Jesus was proclaimed both Lord and Christ, reigning at the right hand of the throne of God (Acts 2:33-36).

Some have assumed that Jesus and the apostles expected His second coming within the lifetime of some of those who heard Him speak. But the language of this context shows the contrast He made between His coming at the Judgment and His coming in the kingdom on the Day of Pentecost. Paul wrote II Thessalonians to correct the mistaken view that the coming of Christ was to be expected in his day (II Thes. 2:1-3). His kingdom did come on Pentecost; He will come at the end of the age. "Amen: come, Lord Jesus."

The Transfiguration

Scripture

9:28-36 And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, that he took with him Peter and John and James, and went up into

the mountain to pray. 29 And as he was praying, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment *became* white *and* dazzling. 30 And behold, there talked with him two men, who were Moses and Elijah; 31 who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. 32 Now Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: but when they were fully awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. 33 And it came to pass, as they were parting from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah: not knowing what he said. 34 And while he said these things, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. 35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my Son, my chosen: hear ye him. 36 And when the voice came, Jesus was found alone. And they held their peace, and told no man in those days any of the things which they had seen.

Comments

about eight days after.—Matthew and Mark say, "And after six days" (Matt. 17:1; Mark 9:2). Luke says *about* eight days. If we count the day on which Jesus had been speaking plus an interval of six days and add the day on which the Transfiguration took place, it would make the eight days, that is, about a week as they counted time.

he took with him Peter and John and James.—Peter gives his own version of the transfiguration in II Peter 2:16-18. This was not a cleverly fabricated tale, but the testimony of an eyewitness of the majesty of Jesus Christ. He heard the Voice that brought honor and glory to Jesus when the Father said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; Hear ye Him." This is more reliable than the "cunningly devised fables" of the men who sought to deny the Master who bought them (II Pet. 2:1).

and went into the mountain to pray.—Since Matthew says that they were in the vicinity of Caesarea Philippi, it is reasonable to assume that the mountain, although not named by any of the writers, was Mount Hermon which has an elevation of some 9100 feet. Luke alone says that He went into the mountain to pray and that He was praying when the transfiguration took place. This was an important example for the apostles, for they would need to keep in constant

contact with the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ in their mission of spreading the gospel in all the world.

the fashion of his countenance was altered.—The change of His face and the gleaming white garments are a fitting symbol of the honor and approval which He received from the Father (II Pet. 1:17).

there talked with him two men.—How the disciples were able to recognize Moses and Elijah is not stated. They were in glory but had not lost their identity. They were talking about Jesus' "decease" which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem. He was soon to leave this earthly experience and return to "the glory which He had with the Father before the world was" (John 17:5). It is fitting that these two representatives of the Old Testament should be speaking to Christ about His death and the glories that were to follow since that is the message of the Law of Moses and the Prophets (I Pet. 1:10-12; Lk. 24:44-47).

Now Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep.—On another occasion these same men were found sleeping while the Master was undergoing the agony of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36-44; Lk. 22:45-46). Before condemning them too harshly, we might do well to examine our own lack of alertness at prayer meeting. But because they were asleep, they were not prepared for what they saw when they were fully awake. As Moses and Elijah were departing, Peter proposed that they make three booths or tents, one each for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. Apparently he didn't realize that Moses and Elijah were not remaining with them permanently or that Jesus was soon to be taken from them, although He had told them several times that He would be. The suggestion that Peter was placing Jesus on the level with Moses and Elijah in importance and honor does not seem to agree with the context. He really didn't know what he was proposing, but out of fear felt that he had to say something (Mark 9:6).

And a voice came out of the cloud.—This was the voice from the Majestic Glory, the voice of God who said, "This is my Son, my chosen: hear ye him." God's approval of His Son and the assurance to the apostles who heard Him speak form the two-fold purpose of the Transfiguration. When the Voice came, Jesus was found alone. In this dramatic way, God showed the men that they were to hear His Son.

and told no man.—They obeyed the instruction Jesus gave them, but they did discuss the coming of Elijah (Matt. 17:9-13). This led

Jesus to tell them how John fulfilled the prophecy about the coming of Elijah (Mal. 4:5).

The Epileptic Boy

Scripture

9:37-45 And it came to pass, on the next day, when they were come down from the mountain, a great multitude met him. 38 And behold, a man from the multitude cried, saying, Teacher, I beseech thee to look upon my son; for he is mine only child: 39 and behold, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth, and it hardly departeth from him, bruising him sorely. 40 And I besought thy disciples to cast it out; and they could not. 41 And Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and bear with you? bring hither thy son. 42 And as he was yet a coming, the demon dashed him down, and tare *him* grievously. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. 43 And they were all astonished at the majesty of God.

But while all were marvelling at all the things which he did, he said unto his disciples, 44 Let these words sink into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered up into the hands of men. 45 But they understood not this saying, and it was concealed from them, that they should not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

Comments

a great multitude met him.—Jesus and the three disciples had been in the mountain; the crowds were waiting for Him to return. Their anticipation was evidently heightened by the failure of the disciples to meet the request of the distressed father.

Teacher, I beseech thee.—The father turned to Jesus for help, for his only son was demon-possessed and in desperate need of help. Luke calls the demon an unclean spirit. The symptoms were those of epilepsy, but Luke says it was demon-possession. The technique which Jesus used in dealing with the case shows that it was not the ordinary disease, but real demon-possession. He, of course, had power to cast out demons as well as heal diseases.

I besought thy disciples.—Why couldn't they cast out the demon? Jesus, according to Mark, said that this kind came out only by prayer and fasting (Mark 9:29). He also said that it was because of their

little faith (Matt. 17:20). If their faith had been as much as a grain of mustard seed, they could have removed mountains. This case clearly called for a miracle, and the least amount of faith that had to do with the power to perform miracles could have accomplished it. To assume that this refers to mountains of difficulty that can be removed by trust in Jesus is to overlook the meaning of Jesus' explanation. He had given them power over demons, but they lacked the faith—not faith like that of the woman in the crowd—by which that power was made operative. Had they, in the absence of Jesus, attempted to cast out the demon without relying on Him? Without the faith that kept them in contact with the power they were utterly unable to perform the miracle. See *Studies in First Corinthians*, pages 224-25 and 238, for additional comment of faith to remove mountains.

O faithless and perverse generation, how long.—Jesus had already given ample evidence of His deity, but many were looking at the cure—understandably so—and not at the evidential value of the miracle (John 20:30-31). Jesus was nearing the climax of His earthly ministry and knew that He would not be with them much longer. His complaint seems to be that they had not yet, even at this late date, grasped the truth about Him.

Astonished at the majesty of God.—Jesus cast the demon out and gave the boy back to the father. As usual, the crowds were astonished; but this time, at the majesty of God.

But while they were marvelling.—They marvelled at the miracle, but Jesus reminded the disciples that He was soon to be delivered up into the hands of men to be crucified. That's why He had asked, "How long shall I be with you?" It was important that they realize that His mission called for the cross by which He was to destroy the power of the devil (Heb. 2:14). He said, "Let these words sink into your ears." Don't let them go in one ear and out the other.

But they understood not this saying.—There seemed to be no place in their thinking for the cross. They had their minds centered on the kind of kingdom that they wanted Him to establish—an earthly kingdom. They were afraid to ask what He meant, lest it be the end of their dream. See Luke 24:21.

True Greatness

Scripture

9:46-48 And there arose a reasoning among them, which of them

was the greatest. 47 But when Jesus saw the reasoning of their heart, he took a little child, and set him by his side, 48 and said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this little child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same is great.

Comments

which of them was the greatest.—Peter's prominence and avowed loyalty to Jesus may have given him some notion that he was of special importance. James and John who may have been relatives of Jesus were evidently hoping to be elevated to positions of importance in the kingdom when Jesus established it (Matt. 20:20-21).

he took a little child.—Jesus took this an occasion to teach His disciples a much needed lesson on true greatness. He said, "Whosoever shall receive this little child in my name receiveth me." Then He made the point, "He that is least among you all is the one who is great." See also Mark 10:43-45 for Jesus' own example of true greatness.

The Unknown Miracle Worker

Scripture

9:49-50 And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. 50 But Jesus said unto him, Forbid *him* not: for he that is not against you is for you.

Comments

one casting out demons in thy name.—They had just gone through the experience that taught them that no man could cast out demons except in relation to Jesus. This one whom they had forbidden was casting out a demon in His name. It, therefore, was not pretense as in the case of certain Jewish exorcists (Acts 19:13).

we forbade him, because he followeth not with us.—Their pride was offended. It was not a question of relieving the demon-possessed person; it was simply that he did not follow with these disciples. *Jesus said unto him, forbid him not.*—Since he was doing the work in the name of Christ, he was not to be forbidden. This is the real

basis for unity of action, each one acting in the name of Christ. And to act in the name of Christ is to act by His authority. "He that is not against you is for you." Even the one who does such a lowly task as giving a cup of cold water because he belongs to Christ shall not lose his reward (Mark 9:41).

The Inhospitable Samaritans

Scripture

9:51-55 And it came to pass, when the days were well-nigh come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, 52 and sent messengers before his face; and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. 53 And they did not receive him, because his face was *as though he were* going to Jerusalem. 54 And when his disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven, and consume them? 55 But he turned, and rebuked them.

Comments

that he should be received up.—That is, the closing days of His ministry that led to the ascension (Acts 1:9). But the incident of sending the seventy shows that the ascension, while approaching, was still several months away. According to John's record, Jesus went first to the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:1-2) and later to the Feast of Dedication (John 10:22). Why did Luke include this section which is not given by Matthew and Mark? It was to give Theophilus information which Luke considered important as he reassured him of the things in which he had been instructed.

entered into a village of the Samaritans.—This was not the first time that Jesus had been in Samaria. See John 4:1-4. See II Kings 17:24-28 for the origin of the Samaritans. The old controversy over the correct place to worship continued from the rebuilding of Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity until the days of Jesus (John 4:20-24). The Samaritans held to the Pentateuch as their sacred scriptures, disregarding the other portions of the Old Testament which mention Jerusalem and the place or worship.

And they did not receive him.—The fact that He was going to Jerusalem—probably to the feast of Tabernacles—stirred the old

prejudice and led them to refuse lodging to Jesus and His disciples. But see John 4:39-42 for their reaction to the invitation of the woman at the well, and Acts 8:5-40 for the account of Philip's ministry in Samaria.

bid fire come down from heaven.—James and John were not nicknamed "sons of thunder" without cause (Mark 3:17). Their rash proposal was met with prompt rebuke by Jesus. There were other villages in which to spend the night. Violence seldom serves to abolish prejudice. By contrast, Luke shows the power of preaching Christ to bring joy to the lives of the people in the city of Samaria (Acts 8:4-8).

Dedication Demanded

Scripture

9:57-62. And as they went on the way, a certain man said unto him, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. 58 And Jesus said unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. 59 And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. 60 But he said unto him, Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but go thou and publish abroad the kingdom of God. 61 And another also said, I will follow thee, Lord; but first suffer me to bid farewell to them that are at my house. 62 But Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Comments

I will follow thee.—Jesus had already said that whoever would come after Him would have to deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Him. Later, He challenged them with the necessity of counting the cost of discipleship, for anything short of complete dedication would not do (Luke 14:25-35). This volunteer failed to realize the necessity of following Him unselfishly.

And Jesus said unto him, The foxes have holes.—Foxes have dens, birds have roosts, but the Son of Man did not have a place to lay His head. The Samaritans had just refused Him lodging; His own home town, much earlier, had rejected Him; before Him loomed the cross.

And he said to another, Follow me.—The first man had volunteered,

but Jesus challenged this one to follow Him. He wanted first to go bury his father. If the father was actually dead, why wasn't he attending to the arrangements for the funeral? He said "Let me go bury my father." In all probability the father was old and the dutiful son wanted to be present when death came so that he might properly care for his burial. He put this first, but the followers of Christ must do so unconditionally.

Leave the dead to bury the dead.—Those who were spiritually dead could take care of the physically dead. The greater task was to publish abroad the kingdom of God. This will raise the dead in trespasses and sin to a new life in Christ. See Eph. 2:5-6; Rom. 6:4-5.

I will follow thee, but.—Another volunteer; he wanted time to say goodbye to those at his house. But those who follow Christ must do so unintermittently.

No man, having put his hand to the plow.—The plow in that day was a forked stick and difficult to handle at best. Undivided attention was necessary to do a good job. The one with the hand to the plow who looks back is not fit for the kingdom of God.

The three cases—two volunteers and one who was invited—may be summarized as follows: To the first one, Jesus is saying, "Think it through first;" to the second, "Let nothing interfere with your following Me;" and to the third, "Stay with it to the end."

Summary

The incidents recorded in this chapter may be gathered up under two general headings: (1) Those things which Jesus did to extend the influence of His ministry, and (2) what He did to prepare His disciples for their work after His ascension. The importance of this preparation is seen in the fact that He was depending on them to take His gospel into all the world.

The mission of the Twelve to the lost sheep of the house of Israel was a training experience to prepare them for their worldwide mission.

Rumors of Jesus' miracles reached the ears of Herod the tetrarch. An aroused conscience asked, "Who is this?" Herod answered, "John the Baptist whom I beheaded." His only thought was, "Kill him too." A little later, the Pharisees warned Jesus to leave the district, for, they said, "Herod wants to kill you."

People by the thousands were following Jesus wherever He went.

In a lonely place where no food was to be found except a boy's lunch, He fed the five thousand on the loaves and fish. Even though He had worked such a miracle, He reminded the disciples that there was a cross to be borne, a cross for Him and a cross that meant self-denial for all who would follow Him.

The Twelve were completely dependent on Him. In the Transfiguration they were taught the necessity of obeying Him. In the cure of the epileptic boy they learned the meaning of faith in Him who had given them power to perform miracles. He taught them the meaning of true greatness, and stopped their wrangling over which one was to have first place among them. He rebuked their rashness that would have destroyed the Samaritan village and left the door open for the preaching of the gospel by Philip the evangelist.

Jesus dramatically demonstrated what His demand for complete dedication meant. He rejected the volunteer who offered to follow Him but who had not counted the cost. He rejected another whom He had invited to follow Him when he said, "Yes, but first let me bury my father." A third one volunteered, but Jesus demanded full-time service, for, He said, "the one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is not fit for the kingdom of God."

Questions

1. How did Jesus extend the effectiveness of His ministry?
2. How did He train His disciples for the task of carrying the gospel into all the world?
3. What made the difference between the power of the disciples to cast out demons and the attempts of the Jewish exorcists to do so?
4. What were the disciples to preach on their first mission?
5. Why take nothing for the journey?
6. What did they mean by shaking the dust off their feet?
7. What did Jesus say He would do before they finished the task he gave them on this first mission?
8. Why did Herod think that Jesus was John the Baptist?
9. What can cleanse an evil conscience?
10. How does the feeding of the five thousand show the influence of Jesus' ministry?
11. Where did it take place?
12. What lesson did Jesus teach the people after it was over?
13. Why did Jesus tell the apostles to give the crowd something to eat?

CHAPTER NINE

14. How did Jesus demonstrate the necessity of organization in carrying out His work?
15. Why gather up the broken pieces?
16. What was Jesus doing just before Peter made the good confession?
17. Why did He ask, "Who do men say that I am?"
18. Why would some say "John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the old prophets"?
19. What does "Thou art the Christ" mean?
20. What does "Son of God" mean?
21. On what was the church built?
22. Why did Jesus mention the gates of Hades? What is Hades?
23. Why did Jesus restrain them from telling others that He is the Christ?
24. Why was the cross necessary for Jesus?
25. What does the cross mean in the life of His followers?
26. How did He explain self-denial?
27. What of the one who is ashamed of Jesus and His words?
28. How was it possible for some to see the kingdom of God before they died?
29. Whom did Jesus take with Him into the mountain where He was transfigured?
30. What is the name of the mountain?
31. What did Peter write about his experience in that mountain?
32. Why had Jesus gone into the mountain?
33. What was the meaning of the Transfiguration to Christ? to the apostles?
34. Why were Moses and Elijah permitted to appear with Jesus?
35. What did they talk about?
36. Why did Peter want to build the three tabernacles?
37. What is the significance of the message of the Voice that came out of the cloud?
38. What explanation did Jesus make about the disciples' question concerning the coming of Elijah?
39. What had the disciples tried to do while Jesus was in the mountain?
40. Why did they fail?
41. What is the difference between the faith of the woman in the crowd and the faith which the apostles lacked?

STUDIES IN LUKE

42. Why did Jesus refer to "the faithless generation"?
43. Why didn't the disciples understand Jesus' prediction of His crucifixion?
44. Why did the disciples discuss the issue of greatness?
45. How did Jesus answer their problem?
46. Why did Jesus tell them not to forbid the unknown miracle worker?
47. Why did the Samaritans refuse lodging for Jesus and the disciples?
48. What did James and John propose that justifies their nickname, "Sons of thunder"?
49. How did Jesus' attitude affect the Samaritan situation later?
50. Why did Jesus reject the man who volunteered to follow Him?
51. What does this mean: "Let the dead bury the dead"?
52. Why did putting the hand to the plow and looking back make one unfit for the kingdom of God?