

The Gospel of Luke

Lesson 12

Luke 9:1 And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. ² And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing. ³ And He said to them, "Take nothing for *your* journey, neither a staff, nor a bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not *even* have two tunics apiece. ⁴ "Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that city. ⁵ "And as for those who do not receive you, as you go out from that city, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them." ⁶ Departing, they *began* going throughout the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

With instructions, the Lord sends the twelve Apostles out for the first time to preach the Gospel on their own. Without a doubt, the miraculous powers they now have make them unlike any other group of people in the world. They will stand alone and have no successors; they will not be able to pass their powers on to another generation of men. Only the Lord can give such power to a man. The Lord's words contain deep wisdom for Christians even in our age.

The Apostles' commission refers specifically to the devil and physical sickness. Jesus gave them power and authority over demons and the ability to cure diseases. Two important parts of the Apostles' work appears here as it relates to all other ministers. The Apostles can cast out evil spirits, but ministers cannot; however, ministers must resist the devil and his entire work. Further, Christians must not expect the ministers to perform miraculous cures, but they can expect the minister to take a special interest in all sick people. The Christian can expect a visit, sympathy and help as the Lord provides the means to do so. The minister who neglects the sick members of his flock is no true minister.

Jesus sends His twelve Apostles out and by this time, they should be able to teach others what they have received from the Lord. They must not be anxious to seek the people's esteem because of their outward appearances or positions as Apostles. The Lord Jesus is the fountain of power and authority to whom all creatures must, in one way or another, be subject; and if the Apostle goes with the Word as the LORD's ministers in power to deliver sinners from Satan's bondage, they may be sure that He will care for their needs. When truth and love go together and the message of God is still rejected and despised, it leaves men without excuse and turns into a testimony against them.

Luke 9:7 Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was happening; and he was greatly perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead, ⁸ and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen again. ⁹ Herod said, "I myself had John beheaded; but who is this man about whom I hear such things?" And he kept trying to see Him.

Herod Antipas was the son of Herod the Great. His guilty conscience was ready to conclude that John had risen from the dead. If he wanted to see Jesus, why did he not go and see him? Was it beneath him, or did he not wish to be reprov'd because of sin. By delaying seeing Jesus, his heart is hardened, and when he does see Jesus as recorded in Luke 23:11, he is as prejudiced against Him as are others. He says, "John I beheaded; but who is this about whom I hear such things?" Great and powerful as he was, news of the Lord's ministry brings his sins to mind and disturbs him even in his royal palace. Surrounded by everything that makes life enjoyable, he is filled with alarm at the news of another preacher of righteousness. The recollection of his own wickedness in killing John the Baptist flashes into his mind. He knows the wrong he has done. He feels guilty and self-condemned.

A conscience is the most powerful part of human existence. It cannot save the soul. It never leads a person to Christ. It is often blind, ignorant and misdirected. Yet, the conscience often testifies against sin in the sinner's heart and makes him realize that he is wrong in rejecting God. Happy are those who have find the only cure for a bad conscience. Nothing will ever heal it except the shed blood of Christ.

Luke 9:10 When the apostles returned, they gave an account to Him of all that they had done. Taking them with Him, He withdrew by Himself to a city called Bethsaida. ¹¹ But the crowds were aware of this and followed Him; and welcoming them, He *began* speaking to them about the kingdom of God and curing those who had need of healing. ¹² Now the day was ending, and the twelve came and said to Him, "Send the crowd away, that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside and find lodging and get something to eat; for here we are in a desolate place." ¹³ But He said to them, "You give them *something* to eat!" And they said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless perhaps we go and buy food for all these people." ¹⁴ (For there were about five thousand men.) And He said to His disciples, "Have them sit down *to eat* in groups of about fifty each." ¹⁵ They did so, and had them all sit down. ¹⁶ Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them, and broke *them*, and kept giving *them* to the disciples to set before the people. ¹⁷ And they all ate and were satisfied; and the broken pieces which they had left over were picked up, twelve baskets *full*.

This miracle is repeated more frequently than any other miracle performed by the Lord. Its repetition draws attention to its great importance. Jesus feeds a crowd of five thousand men with five loaves and two fish. He takes a handful of food, barely enough to feed himself and his Apostles for a single day, and uses it to feed a crowd the size of a Roman legion. There can be no mistake about the reality and greatness of this miracle. It is done publicly, before many witnesses. The circumstances of the whole event make deception impossible. Five thousand hungry men will not testify that their hunger is satisfied unless they are fed real food. Twelve baskets of leftovers could not have been collected if real loaves and fish had not been miraculously multiplied. The same hand that sent manna from heaven into the wilderness to feed Israel is the hand that made five loaves and two fish supply the needs of five thousand men and their families.

The people following Jesus have come without provisions, yet He gave them what they needed. The blessing of Christ will make a little go a long way. He fills every hungry soul and abundantly satisfies it with His goodness.

Luke 9:18 And it happened that while He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him, and He questioned them, saying, "Who do the people say that I am?" **19** They answered and said, "John the Baptist, and others *say* Elijah; but others, that one of the prophets of old has risen again." **20** And He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God." **21** But He warned them and instructed *them* not to tell this to anyone, **22** saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised up on the third day." **23** And He was saying to *them* all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. **24** "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. **25** "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? **26** "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and *the glory* of the Father and of the holy angels. **27** "But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

We read that the Lord says to his disciples, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" Notice in this passage the variety of opinions about the Lord which prevail during His earthly ministry. Some say He is John the Baptist, some say He is Elijah and some say that He is one of the old prophets risen from the grave. However, the Lord's teaching is not like that of the teachers of the law, the prophets or the Pharisees. All see in Jesus a bold witness against the evil that is in the world. We must never be surprised to find the same variety of opinions about Him today.

Notice in this passage the knowledge and faith displayed by the Apostles through Peter's answer, "The Christ of God." Today, we find it hard to appreciate an insight like this. To appreciate it fully, we must put ourselves in the shoes of one of Christ's Apostles. We should remember that the leaders of the cities in Israel do not see anything royal about the Lord. He has no crown, no army, and to them, no earthly power. They see a man who has nowhere to sleep at night. Yet, it is at this time and under this circumstances that Peter boldly declares his belief in Jesus as the Christ of God. Truly, this is a great statement of faith.

The Lord's message contains a lesson for all Christians and it applies to everyone without exception.

Daily Self-denial

Daily self-denial is an absolute necessity. Every day we should crucify the flesh, overcome the world and resist the devil. We should keep our bodies in submission. We should fight a daily battle, constantly engaged in warfare. Where is our self-denial? A crucified Savior will

never be content with self-indulgent people. No self-denial – no real grace! No cross – no crown!

The body cannot be happy if the soul be miserable, but the soul can be happy although the body is greatly afflicted and oppressed in this world. We must never be ashamed of Christ and His Gospel.

Luke 9:28 Some eight days after these sayings, He took along Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹ And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing *became* white *and* gleaming. ³⁰ And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, ³¹ who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. ³² Now Peter and his companions had been overcome with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him. ³³ And as these were leaving Him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah"—not realizing what he was saying. ³⁴ While he was saying this, a cloud formed and *began* to overshadow them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. ³⁵ Then a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, *My Chosen One*; listen to Him!" ³⁶ And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent, and reported to no one in those days any of the things which they had seen.

This passage shows the safety of all true believers who have been removed from the world through acceptance of the LORD as Savior. When our Lord appears in glory, Moses and Elijah are seen standing and speaking with Him. Moses has been dead nearly fifteen hundred years. Elijah was taken by a whirlwind from the earth more than nine hundred years ago. The mere vision of these two with the LORD should bring comfort from the blessed thought that there is a resurrection and a life to come and another world beyond the grave. We are ignorant about much of this future world. Where do people live? What knowledge do they have about the things on earth? These questions we cannot fully answer. However, it is enough to know that Jesus is taking care of those who belong to Him and He will bring them with Him on the last day. He shows Moses and Elijah to his Apostles on the Mount of Transfiguration, and he will show all those who have fallen asleep with Him at His Second Coming. Our brothers and sisters in Christ are in good hands; they are not lost, but have gone ahead.

Christ's transfiguration is a specimen of the glory in which He will come to judge the world; it is an encouragement to His Apostles to suffer for Him. Prayer is a transfiguring, transforming duty that makes the face shine. Jesus, even in His transfiguration, is willing to speak concerning His death and sufferings. Let us remember that our greatest glories on this earth are temporary. We have a need to pray to God for quickening grace to make us lively! Yet, the Apostles are allowed to be witnesses of this sign from heaven so that they can give a full account of what transpired. They do not understand what they are saying when they ask if they can build tabernacles on earth for glorified saints in heaven.

Luke 9:37 On the next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met Him. ³⁸ And a man from the crowd shouted, saying, "Teacher, I beg You to look at my son, for he is my only *boy*, ³⁹ and a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly screams, and it throws him into a convulsion with foaming *at the mouth*; and only with difficulty does it leave him, mauling him *as it leaves*. ⁴⁰ "I begged Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not." ⁴¹ And Jesus answered and said, "You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here." ⁴² While he was still approaching, the demon slammed him *to the ground* and threw him into a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy and gave him back to his father.

Jesus does not stay on the Mount of Transfiguration. His communion with Moses and Elijah is very short. He soon returns to His work of doing good for a sin-stricken world. During His life on earth, to receive honor and have visions of glory is the exception. To minister to others, to heal all oppression by the devil and to perform acts of mercy on sinners, is the rule. Happy are those Christians who have learned to live for others more than for themselves. Happy are those who understand that it is "more blessed to give than to receive."¹⁴

The case of this child is deplorable! He is under the power of an evil spirit. Disease of this nature is more frightening than those that arise merely from natural causes. What mischief Satan imposes when he can get possession! Nevertheless, happy are those who have access to Christ! He can do for those who believe in Him what His Apostles cannot. A word from Jesus heals the child.

Luke 9:43 And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. But while everyone was marveling at all that He was doing, He said to His disciples, ⁴⁴ "Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men." ⁴⁵ But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement. ⁴⁶ An argument started among them as to which of them might be the greatest. ⁴⁷ But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart, took a child and stood him by His side, ⁴⁸ and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great."

These verses contain two important warnings. They are directed against two of the most common evils that exist in Christ's church: pride and conceit. Jesus gives a warning against these sins. The Scripture says, "An argument started among them as to which of them might be the greatest." This little group of fishermen and tax collectors is not beyond the plague of a self-seeking and ambitious spirit and it appears in Christ's presence despite all his teaching. Such is the heart of man!

¹⁴ Acts 20:35 KJV

Of all the sins, none needs prayer for deliverance from more than pride. It can wear the clothes of humility. It can lurk in the hearts of the ignorant, the ungifted and the poor as well as in the minds of the great, the learned and the rich.

A little child is the emblem by which Christ teaches simplicity and humility. What greater honor can any man attain in this world than to be received by men as a messenger of God and to receive His welcome and well-done decree! If ever a society of Christians in this world could have reason to silence those not of their own communion, the twelve Apostles had it at this time. Nevertheless, Jesus warned them not to do it again.

Luke 9:49 John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow along with us." ⁵⁰ But Jesus said to him, "Do not hinder *him*; for he who is not against you is for you."

The Apostles are jealous. Together, the nine of them are unable to drive out a single evil spirit even though they have seen a man, not part of their group, driving out demons. They tell the man to stop! Why? Our pride is hurt when someone else succeeds where we have failed, but Jesus says there is no room for such jealousy in the spiritual warfare of His kingdom. This story is important to the life of the Church today. Ministry should be openly shared with with Christian workers outside our group.

Luke 9:51 When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem; ⁵² and He sent messengers on ahead of Him, and they went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make arrangements for Him. ⁵³ But they did not receive Him, because He was traveling toward Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ When His disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" ⁵⁵ But He turned and rebuked them, [and said, "You do not know what kind of spirit you are of; ⁵⁶ for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."] And they went on to another village.

Jesus knows that it is time for His death, burial, resurrection and ultimate ascension. He has disclosed these details in earlier discussions. They will all take place in Jerusalem and He turns His attention steadfastly to journey to that city. Because He is in Galilee, He will have to cross the area called Samaria before entering Judea.

During this time in the life of Jesus, the relationship between Jews and Samaritans is difficult. It is typical for the Jew to go out of his way around the Samaritan area when traveling to Galilee. It is common for a Jew to travel to the other side of the Jordan into the desert area to stay far away from Samaria. However, for Jesus, He is its Savior also and He will not go around that land. The straightest line between Galilee and Judea is directly through Samaria and Jesus is resolved to go directly to Jerusalem. When Jesus' Apostles want to bring doom upon the Samaritans, Jesus heals a Samaritan leper, gives honor to a good Samaritan, drinks water from the well attended by a Samaritan woman, and preaches

the Gospel to the people before continuing on to Jerusalem. Jesus is never too busy with His own desires to take time to preach a message in word and deed.

The Jews are prejudiced against the Samaritans. When they do not accept the Apostles, the followers of Jesus do not think for one minute that the attitude of the Samaritans is a repayment of the same attitude they received from the Jews. Notice that while the Samaritans do not help the Apostles, they do no harm to them either. More than that, the actions of these Apostles shows their true motives and the intent of their hearts. They are filled with pride and fleshly ambition. Remember, they have just argued over who will be the greatest in the kingdom. We must also realize that it is very easy to be zealous for the Lord and think we are faithful to His cause when we think we are "working for Him." Rather, when we have the attitude of these Apostles, it simply shows that we are seeking our own desires and bruising the fruit of potential followers with our words and deeds.

Luke 9:57 As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go." **58** And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

A new disciple is making his commitment to follow Jesus; however, the reply from Jesus is somewhat puzzling. Everything has been provided for Jesus and His disciples by the people for the last three years but now Jesus replies with a somewhat hopeless answer. The cunning foxes have a burrow to lurk within, the flying fowls have a place to perch, but Jesus does not have a place to rest His head. What He is saying is that He must be about His business. He has much to do and a short time until His appointment in Jerusalem. Basically He is saying, follow if you will, but the journey from this point on will be difficult.

Luke 9:59 And He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." **60** But He said to him, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God." **61** Another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home." **62** But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

With the promise of a difficult road to a place called Calvary, Jesus invites others to join Him in this most difficult time. One wants to follow Him, but he needs to bury his father first. What a most difficult and emotional topic! Burying the dead, especially one's parents, show respect, especially with family present, and it seems only right. What good does it do the dead? Nothing! It is important that we say everything we need to say and do everything we need to do for people while they are still alive. At their deaths, we can truly do nothing more for them. While they are sick, we need to comfort them and wait on them. When they die, we must go on with the living, caring for them with zeal. Many spend more time and effort on someone after death than while alive. It is out of a spirit of guilt, rather than strength.

We should not quickly participate in Christianity to seek a worldly advantage. A second man seems resolved to follow Christ, but he begs for a short delay. To this man Christ says, "Follow me". Religion teaches us to be kind and good, to show piety at home and to honor parents, but we must not make these an excuse for neglecting our duty to God.

Another is willing to follow Christ but he must have a little time to talk with his friends about it and to set his household affairs in order and give directions concerning them. He seems to have worldly concerns upon his heart more than he ought to have and he is willing to enter into a temptation leading him from his purpose of following Jesus. No one can do any business in a proper manner if he is tending to other things. Those who begin with the work of God must resolve to go on or they will make nothing of it. Looking back only leads to drawing back, and drawing back leads to perdition.