

Chuck Smith:

Let's turn in our Bibles to the gospel according to Luke, chapter 9.

Luke here records the sending of the twelve to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. This is not to be confused with the time that He sent out the seventy. We will get that in the beginning of chapter 10. But here He is sending out the twelve to go throughout the area of Galilee. In fact, to go as far as they can, they are to travel light. Which means that they will be traveling fast, and they will be getting out as far as they can in this period of time.

So he called his twelve disciples together, and he gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. 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. And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where. Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead; And others said, that Elias had appeared; and still others, that one of the old prophets was risen again. And Herod said, John I have beheaded; but who is this, of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see him (Luk 9:1-9).

A desire that was not fulfilled until Jesus was standing trial on the day of His crucifixion.

Now we noticed that when Jesus sent out His disciples, He told them that they were not to take a purse, nothing for their journey, neither script, nor bread, nor money, nor two coats. Wherever they would go, they were to abide with the people there, and eat what was given to them, and receive from the people, "For the labor," He said, "is worthy of his hire."

Traveling light they could travel fast, and they could travel far, which they were to do. Their mission was to preach the kingdom. Incidental to preaching the kingdom was the healing of the sick and the curing of deceases. But that was only incidental to the preaching of the kingdom. That was not their mission. Their mission was not to heal the sick or cure diseases. The mission was to preach the kingdom. And the healings were incidental to the mission. And so must it always be. The church should be involved with the total person. We should be interested in the needs of society, and we cannot ignore them. But we mustn't make the mistake of making the social work the mission of the church. It is incidental to the mission of the church of preaching the kingdom of God. That's the mission. We're to declare to the world of a glorious kingdom that is coming. That kingdom of God, of which a person can now become a part, by submitting himself to God as King.

Now as we proclaim the kingdom of God, we cannot ignore the hunger of people, the needs of people. And those incidental to our mission is that social work of the church in the community, but it should never become the primary mission of the church. And unfortunately today in the modern church, they have exchanged the message, really, for the social work, and the social gospel, and they are not really doing a good job with either.

Now the disciples, in a sense, were poor, in that they were to take no money, nor two coats, but yet they were very rich by what He gave them. He gave them power and authority to use that power. The word power is dunamis, the energy, the dynamic. And then that authority to use that power. Now they were evidently effective in their ministry, because word got around that what was happening; it even came to Herod. And he heard the various things that were being done, and he desired to see Jesus.

And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went a side privately into a desert place belonging unto the city of Bethsaida (Luk 9:10).

So they had come back now from their journey, they were suffering jet lag, and so He figured it's a good time to just go over to the other side of the lake and just be alone with them for a little bit. To get their reports. And to see how things went, and to sort of put things together. And so across to the sort of deserted side of the lake, a deserted area, near the village of Bethsaida.

And the people, when they knew it, they followed him (Luk 9:11):

So that when they arrived... actually leading from Capernaum, Bethsaida is just a short little ways, maybe five

miles across the northern end of the Sea of Galilee there. And visibility is good, and you can watch the ship that is going. You can tell the course that they are taking. You know exactly where they are going to land on the other side. And as soon as the people saw the ship going over that direction towards Bethsaida, they said, "That's where He is going, come on." And they jogged around the upper end of the Sea of Galilee. And as they were jogging through the villages, people would say, "Hey, where are you going?" "Oh, Jesus is going to be over here." So people joined them, so that by the time that Jesus arrived there was a huge crowd.

Trying to get away alone with your disciples, have a little quiet time, and He is greeted by a tremendous throng of people. Some five thousand men, besides women and children. So you can create your own estimates on the crowd, perhaps 15,000 or so.

Now at this point it would be very easy to be irritated. As you are trying to get away for some quiet time. But Jesus, it said,

received them, and he spoke unto them of the kingdom of God (Luk 9:11),

Last Sunday we dealt with the subject with the kingdom of God. If you weren't here, I would suggest that you get the tape of last Sunday morning. This was the central message of Jesus. He was proclaiming to man that there is a kingdom where God wants men to live. A kingdom of light and life. A kingdom that is marked by righteousness, and joy, and peace, and love. And that kingdom comes to a man when he submits himself to God as the King of his life. And that's what the kingdom of God is all about. When God reigns as King.

And so He preached to them of the kingdom of God, spoke to them of it.

and he healed those that were in need of healing. And when the day began to wear away, the twelve came to him, and said, Lord, you better send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and the country around here, and find a place to spend the night, and to get some food: for this is a deserted area (Luk 9:11-12).

There is no McDonald's around here.

And he said unto them, Go head and feed them. And they said, We don't have anything but five loaves and two fish; unless we would go into town and buy food for all of these people. For there were about five thousand men. And he said unto his disciples, Make them sit down in company of fifty. And so they did that, and they made them all sit down. And he took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and he broke them, and he gave the disciples to set before the multitude. And they did all eat, and they were gluttons: and then they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full (Luk 9:13-17).

We've commented on this when we were going through Matthew's, and Mark's gospel. And I don't feel that it is in need of any further comments than that which has already have been made.

Now from Bethsaida, the Sea of Galilee, the northern end there, our next little scene takes place around forty miles away. Jesus has now moved with His disciples from the area near Bethsaida. We know that He returned across the lake to Capernaum. But now Luke's next little scene that we have takes place up at Caesarea Philippi, which is the area that is today called Baneas. And it is right at the foot of the Mount Herman, where the Jordan River begins as a huge spring coming right out of the rocks. The water just begins to flow right there from the rocks. It's an interesting thing to go to Baneas today and see the beginning of that Jordan River, right there at Baneas, right at the base of Mount Herman.

And so we are moving now from the Sea of Galilee. We are at the upper end. It's like He is getting alone with His disciples, leaving the crowded areas around the Sea of Galilee, and coming up now to Caesarea Philippi.

And Luke again who is more careful to point out the prayer life of Jesus than the other gospels. For there are seven places in Luke's gospel where he points out the fact that Jesus was praying when certain things took place that are not recorded in the other gospels. But Luke is careful to report them, because Luke's emphasis is upon the humanity of Jesus. And because his emphasis is upon the humanity of Jesus, and one of the greatest needs that men has is contact with God through prayer. Something that Jesus felt important, and accentual, even in His God-man state. So Luke is careful to point out the prayer life of Jesus.

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

Now that's an interesting statement, isn't it? Sounds contradictory. As He was alone praying, His disciples were

with Him. But such is the case when a man is in prayer.

Prayer is a very private thing. It is communion between you and the Father. And you know that communion can be a very private thing, even in the midst of a large company. And sometimes I have found it's so strengthening and helpful in a crowd to get alone with God in prayer. Pressed by a situation, and so He was alone praying, His disciples were with Him.

and he asked them, Whom say the people that I am? (Luk 9:18)

What's the popular opinion? What are the people saying?

And they answered and said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah; and others, that one of the old prophets is risen again (Luk 9:19).

Now these are the stories that you remember Herod had heard. Herod had heard that John the Baptist was risen again, or that it was Elijah, or that it was one of the old prophets risen again.

And so he said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answering said, The Christ of God. And he immediately charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing (Luk 9:20-21);

Now you may wonder, "Why did Jesus tell them not to tell anybody?" I believe it is because at this point they had a totally false conception of the Messiah. "You are the Messiah of God," Peter said. Jesus said, "Don't tell anybody." For the disciples themselves did not understand this at this point. Because the whole Jewish concept of the Messiah was the establishing of the kingdom and the overthrow of the kingdoms of the world. And they did not understand that He was to come into the kingdom by His death. So because they did not fully understand the complete implications of Him being the Messiah of God, He said, "Don't tell anybody, you don't know enough about it yourself yet. Don't tell anybody about this." Because He knew that His mission was to be accomplished, not by establishing His throne in Jerusalem, and overthrowing the Roman powers, and bringing the world in submission, but His kingdom was to be established by Him hanging on a cross. Something the disciples did not understand, could not understand, would not understand, until He rose again from the dead. So these are things that they did not comprehend, and would not comprehend until after the resurrection. "So don't go out and publish this, because the crucifixion would then blast the hopes of all the people." If they went out and said, "Oh, the Messiah is here." The crucifixion would have destroyed everybody. It was premature until the resurrection of the dead, and then they could proclaim the fact that this was the Messiah. For they could now even point out the scriptures being fulfilled in His death. But they didn't understand it, so He said, "Don't tell anybody, it's premature, you don't understand this fully yourself."

And then he said, The Son of man must suffer many things (Luk 9:22),

Peter just said, "You're the Messiah of God." In their mind they thought, "Oh, oh, sitting on the throne, He is going to reign. Lord, can I sit at your right hand? I want to sit on your left hand." And so now He is beginning to break to them the news. "You're right, I am the Messiah of God, yet I am going to suffer many things."

and I am going to be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and I am going to be slain, but I will rise again on the third day (Luk 9:22).

Now He is beginning to tell them, though they don't understand, this is just going over their head. In fact, Matthew tells us that at this point Peter began to rebuke Him. Said, "Oh, Lord, be that far from thee. Don't talk like that." And Jesus said, "Get thee behind me, Satan." So they don't understand. "Don't go out and publish this yet, you're not ready, you don't understand."

And he said unto them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man's advantage, if he gained the whole world, and lose himself, or 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 in his Father's, and of the holy angels (Luk 9:23-26).

Now you see He is beginning to tell them now more about the truth about the Messiah. "Thou art the Messiah of God." "Don't tell anybody, because I am going to be despised, I am going to be rejected, I am going to be slain, but I am going to rise again the third day. And I am going to come again in the glory of the Father. That's when the kingdom is going to be established, when I come again with the glory of the Father, and all the

holy angels."

"Now if you want to be a part of this kingdom, if you want to come after Me, you got to deny yourself, take up your cross daily, and follow Me." These are the requirements of discipleship. "If any man will come after Me." And they remain today for the requirements for discipleship, there is a denying of self, for the kingdom of God is not selfishness. It is not self-centeredness. The kingdom of God is not man-centered; it is God-centered. And a man whose life is centered in God cannot be centered in himself. But because it is centered in God, it will have as that proof the desire to give, and to help fellow man, because that is God's desire. And as I submit to God, God will lead me in giving myself, and of myself to others. So you must deny yourself and take up your cross daily. The taking up of the cross involves the total submission of your will to God.

Jesus in the garden prayed, "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me." Referring to the cross. "Nevertheless," He said, "not My will, Thy will be done." And if I take up my cross, what I am doing is saying, "Father, not my will, Thy will be done in my life." It is the submitting of myself totally to the will of the Father.

The third aspect is following Jesus Christ. Those are the requirements of discipleship. Now the rationale is next given by Jesus. These are the requirements, you want to be a disciple, but here is the rationale. "If you seek to save your life, you're only going to lose it. If you try to set your own destiny, if you follow your own ambitions, if you live to fulfill your own desires, you're just going to lose your life. If you try to save it, you're going to lose it, but if you will lose your life for My sake, you'll find what living is all about." Real life is found when you lose your life for Christ's sake. You lose your life in Him. When you submit yourself totally to Him. You really discover the real meaning and purpose of life itself. Why are you here? Why did God create you? Why did God place you here? In order that you might go out and fulfill all your desires, and follow after your ambitions? No way! In order that you might find all of the pleasure that you can, and live for pleasure? No way! If you live for pleasure, you're dead while you still live. The man who seeks to find his own pleasure and his own way in life is only losing it. But the man who will seek to bring pleasure to God is the man who has discovered life and it's meaning and it's purpose. And when you start living to please God, you'll find a very satisfying, fulfilling life.

Further rationale: what is a man's advantage if he would gain the whole world? Now you say, "My ambition is to be wealthy; my ambition is to have goods." Hey, wait a minute, what if you attain it, what if you achieve it, what if you gained the whole world? What advantage is it if you lose your own soul? Or you are cast out from the kingdom of God?

"Or whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of man be ashamed when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels."

He is coming again, in His glory, the glory of the Father with the holy angels. That's the kingdom of God.

"You say I am the Messiah of God, right, but you don't understand it. Keep it under your hat for a while, until you come to a more complete understanding of what that means." It doesn't mean the immediate establishing of the kingdom and of the throne of God upon the earth. It means there is going to be some hard times. And there is going to be some suffering. There is going to be rejection. There is going to be the cross. There is going to be the resurrection. And then there is going to be the service, the work of bringing others into the kingdom, which will come to pass as men deny themselves, and take up their cross, and follow Him.

But there is a glorious reward. If you are faithful in serving Him, not ashamed of Him, then He will not be ashamed of you, but you will share in the glory, in that day when He comes in His glory, and that of the Father's, to establish God's kingdom.

But I tell you of a truth, there are some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God (Luk 9:27).

Now they are up in Caesarea Philippi, and He is saying to them, "There is some of you right here, you're not going to die until you see the kingdom of God."

And so it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, that he took Peter and John and James, and he went up into a mountain to pray (Luk 9:28).

The purpose of going up there in the mountain again, Luke points it out, was to pray. He gives us these beautiful little insights to the prayer life of Jesus.

And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening (Luk 9:29).

That word glistening is an interesting old English word, and the word in Greek, is as lightning, as lightning flashing. His raiment became like lightning flashing. The glistening is flashes of light coming off of it. And here He is in prayer, and while in prayer, this, and the Greek word is metamorphosis. There was that change, the metamorphosis, the total change of body, so that they saw Him in the glory of the kingdom.

As He said, "There is some of you that are here, that you are not going to die until you see the kingdom of God." And there they got an insight into the kingdom of God as they saw Him in the glory.

In the seventeenth chapter of John, Jesus prayed to the Father, "Father, glorify Thy Son with the glory that I had with Thee before the world ever was." And the Father answered and said, "I have glorified Thee, and I will glorify Thee."

In the first chapter in the book of Revelation, John gives us a very graphic and beautiful description of Jesus in His glory. And again John speaks of that His face shining like the sun with brightness. Here His clothes like flashes of lightning, glistening.

And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elijah: who appeared in glory, and they were talking to him of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem (Luk 9:30-31).

Or the word deceased is departure, His departure from the earth and coming back into glory that would be accomplished there in Jerusalem.

Now how did they know it was Moses and Elijah? Did Jesus say, "Peter, I want you to meet Moses. This is Peter"? People oftentimes ask me, "Will we know our friends when we get to heaven? Will we know each other there?" Oh, God help us, I pray we are not going to be more stupid there than we are here. If we know each other here, surely we will know each other there. "Oh, but I want scripture." Alright, "When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be put away, then shall we see face to face, and then shall we know, even as we are known" (I Corinthians 13:10-12). I'll know you, just like I know me. I am not going to need introductions to anybody in heaven. The Lord will plant DNA, or whatever into my consciousness, so that I will immediately and automatically know everybody. I say, "Oh, there is David over there, I never have seen him before." And you'll immediately know.

They didn't need introductions to Moses, and Elijah. They just knew that's who it was. You just know intuitively, you have the oedis, the intuitive knowledge. Interesting that Moses and Elijah were alive. And interesting that they were talking with Jesus, as the disciples were privileged to see, this glitch into the spiritual world.

But Peter and those that were with him were sleeping heavily: and when they woke up, they saw the glory, and the two men that stood with him (Luk 9:32).

Now Peter, it seemed, like to sleep when Jesus prayed. And he was in a heavy sleep. Can you imagine this? They are up on the mount of Herman, and it's a steep mountain, good climb, so you are probably real tired. And Jesus is there praying, and the three disciples, Peter, John, and James, they were in a heavy sleep. And they probably heard voices, probably woke them up. "Who is He talking to?" And when they looked, they saw Jesus in the transformed glory. His clothes like lightning flashes, and there is Moses, the giver of the law, and Elijah. They are talking with Jesus. And Peter,

When it came to pass that Moses and Elias departed, Peter said to Jesus, Oh Master, it was good for us to be here (Luk 9:33):

Now you remember just a few days earlier Jesus told them that He was going to die. "I am going to go to Jerusalem; I am going to be rejected by the scribes and the Pharisees. They are going to kill Me." Peter said, "Lord, it's good to be here. Let's stay right here. Let's built three tabernacles. Let's not leave this place. Let's not go back to Jerusalem. Let's stay right here, Lord. Let's built three tabernacles. It's good for us to be here, not to be in Jerusalem. If that's what's going to happen there, let's just stay right here, Lord. It's good to be here."

let's built three tabernacles and stay here; one for you, one for Moses, one for Elijah: not knowing what he said (Luk 9:33).

Another gospel said, because he didn't know what to say. If you don't know what to say, it's better you just shut up. You can get in a lot of trouble just saying something because if you think you ought to say something, but many times in that place it's better to just keep silent.

I guess Peter's idea began that, which to me has become a curse in the land of Israel, and that is building a tabernacle over the sight of some event. And to me one of the disappointing things of going to the holy land is all of the churches that have been built on supposed sights of scriptural events. And there is nothing to take away the awe, and the wonder of the birth of Christ than to go in to the church of Nativity. It will just spoil it every time. You go in and see all of the tinsel and the babels, and the priest with the hand out, and somehow it just doesn't fit.

And Peter, I guess, was the one that started that whole custom. "Lord, let's build a tabernacle right here to commemorate this glorious event. Three of them in fact: one for you, one for Moses, one for Elias. It's good to be here."

And while he was thus speaking, there came a cloud, and it overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him (Luk 9:34-35).

Now there appeared who? Moses, who was the spokesman to the nation through the law. They saw Elijah, who was the spokesman to the nation through the prophets, and represented the prophets. And the Old Testament is made up of the law and the prophets. "You've heard the law and the prophets, but this is My beloved Son, hear Him." "God, who at sundry times and in diverse ways spoke to our fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by His own dear Son" (Hebrews 1:1). "This is my beloved Son, hear Him." And so the words of Christ supersede the law and the prophets, which He summed up to be: love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, strength and mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.

And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. They kept it close, and they told no man in those days of those things which they had seen (Luk 9:36).

When they came down from the mountain, they didn't share it with the others.

And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, there where many people there to meet him [there in the area of Caesarea Philippi]. And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee [I beg you], look upon my son; he is my only child. And, lo, there is a spirit that takes him, and he suddenly cries out; and it tears him and he foams at the mouth, and it bruises him and it hardly ever leaves him. And I begged your disciples to cast them out; but they couldn't. And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring your son to me. And as he was yet bringing his son, the devil threw him down, and tore him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again unto his father. And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all these things that Jesus did, he said to his disciples, Let these sayings sink down into your ears [now pay attention, and let it sink in]: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men (Luk 9:37-44).

Let it sink in now. They still could not conceive this. They were still in their mind rejecting the idea of suffering. They were rejecting the idea of the cross.

"So let this sink in. I am going to be delivered into the hands of men."

But they did not understand this saying, as it was hid from them, and they did not perceive it: and they were afraid to ask him what it meant. And there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be the greatest (Luk 9:45-46).

You see this is again an indication that they didn't understand. He is talking about His cross, His rejection, His suffering. And they are talking about themselves, and the greatness that they might enjoy in the kingdom.

And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and he sat him by him, and he said to them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receives me; and whosoever shall receive me, receives him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great (Luk 9:47-48).

You want to be great in God's kingdom, learn to be the servant.

And John answered saying, Master, we saw one who was casting out devils in your name; and we forbid him, because he did not follow with us (Luk 9:49).

The beginning of sectarianism, denominationalism.

And Jesus said unto him, Don't forbid him: for he that is not against us is for us (Luk 9:50).

Ready to stop others who don't follow along with us. The Lord says, "No, no, no, if they are not against us, they are for us."

So it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem (Luk 9:51),

So He has come back now from Caesarea Philippi, and He is back in the area of Capernaum, but now He is getting ready to go to Jerusalem for the last time. And they are in their journey southward. And they are coming now towards Jerusalem through Samaria.

Now Jesus often took the typical Jewish route, through the Jordan valley, so you wouldn't have to go through the area of the Samaritans, but this time He is coming through the area of Samaria.

The time that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.

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

Actually, they find a place for Him to lodge. There was a good company of people that traveled with Jesus, maybe forty or fifty people in their company that were traveling with them. And so it took preparations, it took arrangements. People had to go ahead, buy the food, get places for them to stay, and all, as Jesus would move with His company.

And so they went into this village of the Samaritans to make preparations. But they did not receive Him, because it was obvious that He was heading towards Jerusalem. And because the time of the feast of the Passover was approaching, they no doubt figured He was going to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of the Passover. Which the Samaritans felt should be celebrated on Mount Gerizim, there in Samaria.

And to the present day the Samaritans still celebrate the Passover on Mount Gerizim by offering a sacrificial lamb, even to the present day. There are only about two hundred Samaritans left in the world. Most of them have sort of traces of idiocy, because of the close inner marriages now that are taking place between the Samaritans. They are almost extinct. There is only about two hundred left today. But on the Passover they still offer a sacrificial lamb on the Mount Gerizim.

And so they felt that was the place where God was worshipped. That was where Abraham build his altar to sacrifice Isaac. And they held that as the sacred place to worship God. And so because of this animosity, antagonism, that existed between the Jew and the Samaritan, for they had no dealings with each other. When it appeared that Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem, they just wouldn't allow Him in the village. They wouldn't give them any hospitality at all.

And so when the disciples James and John (Luk 9:54)

And now we know why Jesus called them the sons of thunder,

when they saw this, they said, Lord, would you have as to command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, as Elijah did? (Luk 9:54)

Of course these guy's had just been up on the mountain, they saw Elias, and so probably got inspired again by what this prophet did. And so, "Why don't we wipe them out, Lord? Show them a thing or two. You teach them a lesson for snubbing You."

But Jesus turned, and he rebuked them, and he said, You don't know the manner of spirit that you are of. [You don't know, because I didn't come to destroy]. The Son of man has not come to destroy, but to save (Luk

9:55-56).

And here again, Jesus announces Himself the purpose of His coming. And that is something that should concern us at the Christmas season. Why Jesus came, what is the purpose of His coming? Jesus in many places has declared the purpose of His coming. One of the purposes of His coming is that He might seek and save those that are lost. He didn't come to condemn the... He didn't come to destroy, He did come to save. But He came for other reasons too. And He tells us the reasons why He came. And for special credit, look them up and find out the purposes for His coming at this Christmas season.

So they went to another village. Now it came to pass as they went in the way, a certain man said to him, Lord, I will follow you wherever you'll go (Luk 9:56-57).

And Jesus basically says to him, "Fellow, count the cost." There are a lot of people that are touched by emotion when they come to Jesus. "Oh Lord, I do anything for You." Jesus said, "Wait a minute, count the cost." "Lord, I go with You, wherever You go." The Lord says, "Count the cost."

Foxes have holes, the birds of the air of nests; but the Son of man doesn't have anywhere to lay his head (Luk 9:58).

"You say you're going to follow Me wherever I go, hey, it's going to cost you, man. Are you willing to pay that cost? Are you willing to pay the price?" And that's what Jesus is just saying, "Weigh the price and determine, don't just take off without first considering, weighing the price."

Now there is another, and Jesus said unto him, Follow me (Luk 9:59).

The first one volunteered, Jesus discouraged him. Or at least encouraged him to count the cost before he did. But to another He said, "Follow Me."

And he said, Lord, allow me first to go and bury my father (Luk 9:59).

Now right here in the words me first, you see the reason why he couldn't follow Jesus. No man can follow Jesus who is a me first man. You see, to follow Jesus you've got to deny yourself. And the minute you say, "Me first," you're disqualifying yourself from following Jesus. And so he said, "Allow me first." No, can't allow that. If you let, and if you acknowledge Jesus as Lord, and you're determined to follow Him, it's Jesus first.

"Allow me first to go and bury my father."

And Jesus said to him, Let the dead bury their dead: but you go and preach the kingdom of God (Luk 9:60).

You say, "Wow, how cold and insensitive Jesus must have been. Wouldn't even allow this fellow to go and attend his father's funeral. Why anybody lets you off work to attend your dad's funeral." But that phrase, "Allow me first to bury my father," is an interesting phrase of procrastination. It doesn't mean that your father is dead. It is a phrase that they still use to the present day, that says, I want to stick around home for a while. I want to wait till my father dies, and then I'll come. And it didn't mean that his father was dead and was ready to be buried, because they always buried people within two hours after they were dead. So when he says, "Allow me first to bury my father," he is saying, "Maybe down the road a ways, I've got a few things I want to do first, and down the road a ways maybe I'll do it. Me first."

And another said to Jesus, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first (Luk 9:61)

Oh, come on you guys, learn your lessons. It can't be that way. It can't be me first when I am following Jesus.

let me first go bid those farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said to him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God (Luk 9:61-62).

It takes a commitment, a total commitment to Jesus Christ. It may cost family relationships. You can't go forward looking backwards.

Chapter 10

Now in chapter 10, we read of this commissioning in the sending forth of the seventy, in the contrast to the

twelve of chapter 9.

After these things (Luk 10:1)

Now He is on His way towards Jerusalem.

and the Lord appointed another seventy also, and he sent them two by two before him into every city and place, where he himself would come (Luk 10:1).

So they were to go as advance teams in the villages that He would be passing through, as He is on His way to Jerusalem.

And therefore he said unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest. Now go your ways: and behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. Don't carry a purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: nor greet any man in the way. And into whatsoever house you enter, first say, Peace [or shalom] be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: and if not, it shall turn to you again. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking the things that they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire. And just don't go from house to house (Luk 10:2-7).

Remain in the house, and eat and drink what they give you. The laborer is worthy of his hire.

And whatsoever city you enter, and they receive you, eat the things that are set before you: and heal the sick that are there, and say to them, The kingdom of God is come near unto you (Luk 10:8-9).

They were advanced messengers to go before Him, to do His work. The work of the kingdom, and the healing of the sick, and the proclaiming of God's good news to men.

And whatsoever city you enter, if they receive you not, go your way out into the streets of the same city, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaves on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding, be sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come near to you (Luk 10:10-11).

There are people who have come near to the kingdom of God and have never entered in, and that is always to be a tragic thing. That Herod Agrippa should say to Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian." He came near to the kingdom of God, but He didn't enter.

And the Lord said, "If they don't receive you, just go out into the street, dust off your shoes in front of them, and say, 'We dust off the dust of the city that it might remain, but know this, the kingdom of God came near to you.'"

And I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day [that is, the day of judgement that is to come] for Sodom, than for that city (Luk 10:12).

The sin against light is the greatest sin that man can commit. God holds us responsible for the knowledge that we have. God does not hold a man responsible for knowledge that he does not have. To whom much is given, much is required. To whom little is given, little is required. God is fair in judgement.

Now for this city, it would be more tolerable than Sodom, because the kingdom of God came near. They had the exposure, but they did not enter in. And thus, for that city it would be more tolerable for Sodom than for that city, because Sodom did not have the same exposure to the truth.

Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee Bethsaida! (Luk 10:13)

These are two cities around the Sea of Galilee where Jesus had ministered, where His light did come, who rejected that light. They rejected the kingdom.

for if the mighty works that had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which were done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes (Luk 10:13).

Instead of being destroyed by subsequent nations of Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander the Great. But it will more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you.

Interestingly enough, the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida are both totally obliterated. In another denunciation Jesus also said, "Woe unto thee Capernaum." It also was obliterated. They just recently in the last view years even found the sight of Bethsaida. It was so totally obliterated. Woe unto you, and judgement surely came upon the Bethsaida, on Chorazin, upon Capernaum.

And thou, Capernaum, which are exalted to heaven, shall be thrust down to hell. He that heareth you (Luk 10:15-16)

Now He is talking to His disciples, still commissioning them as they are going.

He that hears you hears me; he that despises you despises me; and he that despises me despises the one that sent me (Luk 10:16).

Now this is true for everyone that the Lord commissions to go out and do His work. If the person hates you, you should not take that personally. They only hate you because of the one that you represent. Because you are a representative of Jesus Christ, they actually hate Him, and thus, they vent their hatred of Him upon you. But if they hate Him, then they hate God. They hate the one that has sent Him.

"Now he that hears you hears me. He that despises you despises me." We are so identified with the One who has sent us.

And the seventy returned again with joy (Luk 10:17),

He had sent them out in advance, and now they were coming back, and they said, "Lord, it was neat."

even the devils were subject unto us through thy name (Luk 10:17).

In the name of Jesus we have authority of power over the demon spirits.

And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy (Luk 10:18-19):

God help us, let that sink into your heart. You as a child of the kingdom, the power that God has made available to us, over all the power of the enemy. That's why Martin Luther wrote, "The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not at him, one little word will fell him." That name, or that word above all words, the name, the power of the name of Jesus. And yet, we see the church so often trembling before the forces of darkness. We need not to tremble. The Lord has given us authority and power over every power over the enemy. But it's time that we start exercising this power and using it.

and nothing shall by any means hurt you (Luk 10:19).

You remember when Paul was there cast up on the shore after the shipwreck, and they were building the fire, and this poisonous viper fastened on Paul, and the natives said, "Wow, he must be a murderer, or something, because even though he escaped the storm, the god's aren't going to let him live." And Paul just shook the thing off into the fire. And they kept watching him, because they knew that he should soon go into convulsions and die. And as he just kept sitting there, warming himself, talking and all, then they changed their mind, they said, "He must be a god. Nothing will hurt you."

I think that until God is through with us, that not much can happen to us. I really feel that God has a purpose for my life, and until that purpose is complete, God is going to preserve me. Now I don't go out and just live recklessly, and drive one hundred miles an hour down the freeway, saying, "Oh God has got a purpose, nothing can happen to me, nothing can hurt me, until God's purposes are fulfilled." That's stupid. God also gave us brains and prudence. But I do feel that there is sort of a divine protection over a person who is walking according to the purposes of God, and that nothing can happen to you until your purpose is fulfilled.

In the book of Revelation it tells us about the two witnesses whom God sends to bear witness during the time of the great tribulation, and it said, "And when the days of their testimony were complete, the antichrist had power over them to slay them." He didn't have that power until their days were complete.

I feel that until the days of my testimony and witness are complete, that I am sort of indestructible. That God is going to keep me, God is going to preserve me until His purposes are fulfilled. And the minute the purposes of

God are fulfilled, and I have finished my testimony, I believe God is going to be gracious, and good to me, and take me home immediately. The minute He is through with my witness here upon the earth. Why would He want to leave me here any longer once I have finished those purposes. So I have that confidence. My life is in God's hands, and until His purposes are complete, I am going to be around. Not necessarily around here. I don't know that God wants me to always be around here. It would appear that way right now, but who knows. I don't know, I live from day to day. And you see, I am not my own to say where I am going to preach, or in what manner, or whatever. I am His servant. And as His servant I have to wait upon Him for instructions. And He is the one who guides me. And He has a plan and a purpose, and He is working in me to prepare me for those works that He wants me to do for Him. And when they are finished, I am going home.

So Jesus said that I have given you power over all the power of the enemy. Nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Oh interesting, because the twelve apostles, with the exception of John and Judas, were all martyred. Some of them in very vicious ways for their witness of Jesus Christ. But not until they finished their testimony.

Now Herod stretched forth his hand against the church, and he beheaded James, one of these that Jesus was talking to. And when Herod saw that it pleased the Jews, he had Peter thrown in prison intending to bring him forth on the next day, and no doubt to execute him. But that night an angel of the Lord came to Peter in prison, and woke him up, and said, "Peter, put your sandals on, let's get out of here." And Peter followed the angel as the doors automatically opened in front of them, and closed behind them. And Peter walked right out of the prison. And when he was out on the street, the angel left him. And Peter said, "I guess it isn't a dream, it's real, I am out, wow." And he headed for the house of John Mark's mother, where the church was having a prayer meeting. Praying that the Lord would help poor Peter in prison. And he knocked on the door, and the young girl came to the door and she said, "Who is it?" He said, "It's Peter." And she got so excited, she didn't even unlock the door. She ran back and told those who were praying, "Oh God help poor Peter. Peter is at the door." And they said, "Oh, you've seen a ghost."

Don't tell me it was their prayer of faith that released Peter. It was God's sovereign work. God wasn't through with Peter yet. Yet there came a day when God was through with Peter's witness, and Peter, when they came to execute him, said, "Fellows, please do me one favor." They said, "What is it?" He said, "Well, you're going to crucify me, but don't crucify me in an upright position. I am not worthy of that. That's the way my Lord was crucified. Crucify me upside down." And so Peter was crucified upside down. But not until he had finished his testimony. God will preserve you. Nothing will hurt you. He's got a purpose and a plan for your life.

But Jesus said:

You rejoice in that the devils are subjects to you (Luk 10:20);

Don't rejoice in this, not that the spirits are subjects unto you. Don't rejoice in the phenomena. Don't get all excited over the phenomena that you see.

but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven (Luk 10:20).

If you want to rejoice over something, rejoice over the fact that, hey, you're a citizen of the kingdom. Your name is written on the rolls of the heavenly kingdom. That's what you need to rejoice in.

And in that hour Jesus rejoiced in the spirit (Luk 10:21),

Now that's an interesting phrase. He rejoiced in the spirit. Have you ever rejoiced in the spirit? It's an exciting experience to rejoice in the spirit. When God's Spirit is moving upon your heart, and just to be rejoicing in the spirit. It's a beautiful experience.

And Jesus rejoiced in the spirit,

and said, I thank you, Father, the Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hid these things from the wise and the prudent, and you revealed them unto these babes: even so, Father; for it was good in your sight (Luk 10:21).

Jesus is looking at these simple people. He sees their excitement, as they are saying, "Oh Lord, it was glorious. O, we had such a neat time, the devils were subject to us, and we were doing this... oh, you should have seen that, and all." And the Lord will say, "Oh, that's good, but don't rejoice really in these things, rejoice that your

name is written in heaven. You're part of the kingdom." And then He just says, "Oh, it's so beautiful, see these simple people," they weren't the Pharisees, they weren't the rulers. They were just plain, simple people. And He says, "Oh Father, it's so great that You hid these things from those self-important people. You've revealed them unto these babes, because it seemed good to You."

I am glad that I am just a simple person. God is so good to make me just a simple person. I hate complexities.

I had a lady in my church one time that use to call me up and say, "Now Pastor Smith, the other day when you said, good morning, what did you really mean by that?" When I say, good morning, I mean, good morning. I don't mean anything else. I don't have hidden meanings. I don't try to use subtleties, and complexities, and hide the true meaning. I say what I mean, and I mean what I say. I am not smart enough to speak in these subtle kind of things, and say one thing, and really mean another. You can't really know what I mean, until you discern it, and study it, and find the hidden meaning in what I said. I am not that way. Jesus wasn't that way. And it's tragic that a lot of people try to make Jesus that way in their interpreting of the scripture.

Now what did Jesus really mean by this? And then they get into the spiritualizing of the scripture, where they lose the sense of it all. Because Jesus meant what He said. And He said what He meant. And you can just believe it, and trust it.

"Father, I thank You, that You've hid these things from those big shots, and You've just revealed them to these babes, so it seemed good in Your sight."

And then He said:

All things are delivered to me of my Father (Luk 10:22):

Quite a statement, isn't it?

All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knows who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him (Luk 10:22).

No one really knows who God really is, except those to whom Jesus has revealed the truth of the Father to. No man can come to the Father, except he is drawn. So if you have been drawn to God through Jesus Christ, be thankful, because unless there was that work of God's Spirit in your life, you would have never made it.

And he turned again to his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that you see (Luk 10:23):

How blessed it is for a person to see, to understand the things that you see. To have the same understanding. To perceive these things.

And I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things which you see, but they didn't see them; and to hear those things which you hear, but they have not heard them (Luk 10:24).

Many important people would give everything to have what you have, in that glorious relationship with God, through Jesus Christ.

"Oh," He said, "you're blessed that you have seen these things."

Now, there was a certain lawyer who stood up, tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, What is written in the law? how do you understand it? And he answered saying, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And Jesus said, That's correct: do it, and you'll live. [But he wasn't satisfied.] He was wanting to justify himself in front of the others, and he said, Well, who is my neighbor? And Jesus said, There was a certain man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among thieves, which stripped him of his clothes, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise also a Levite was at that place, and he came and looked at him, and he passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and he saw him, and he had compassion on him, and he went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring oil in and wine, and he set him on his own beast, and he brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the next day, when he was leaving, he took out two pence, and he gave it to the host, and he said to

him, Take care of him: and whatsoever you spend more than this, when I come again I will repay you. Now which of these three, do you think, was his neighbor to the man who fell among the thieves? And he said unto him, The one who showed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go and do likewise (Luk 10:25-37).

Who is your neighbor? Whoever is in need. Love your neighbor as yourself. Who is my neighbor? The man who is in need.

Now, of course, suddenly Jesus is again making an outsider the hero of the story. You see the priest and the Levite do nothing in all of their self-righteousness, they do nothing. Who is the one that helps him? A hated Samaritan. He becomes the hero in the story. The one that they have such strong, racial prejudice against, is the one that Jesus lifts up in the hero's role, knowing good, and well that it would irritate them. But He didn't care.

Now it came to pass (Luk 10:38),

That's an interesting phrase, Luke uses it over and over again. Have you noticed that whenever he introduces a new little scene, he usually introduces it with the phrase, "and it came to pass"? One of Luke's special little phrases.

Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman name Martha received him in to her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, listening to his words (Luk 10:38-39).

Now we know from other gospels that this is Mary and Martha, who lived in Bethany with their brother Lazarus. So Luke doesn't identify this village, nor does he identify the sisters anymore than Mary and Martha, but we know from other accounts that it is Mary and Martha from the city of Bethany, the sisters of Lazarus.

And Martha was cumbered about with much serving. Now the big crowd came in. Jesus you remember traveled with a lot of people. And here were at least seventy traveling with Him, because He sent them out two by two, to go into the villages ahead of Him. So imagine this crowd coming in for lunch.

And Martha was cumbered with much serving [and frantic], she came to him, and said, Lord, don't you care that my sister is left me to serve alone? order her to help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Oh Martha, Martha, you are so full of care and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her (Luk 10:40-42).

What was it? Sitting at the feet of Jesus and learning. You know, so often we get so concerned about our serving God. And we get so busy in activities. And we get so worried, and encumbered in our service for God, that we forget the better part of just sitting at the feet of Jesus and learning. God help us, that we don't fall into that trap of over-involvement in service, to the extent where we don't have time to just sit and worship at His feet as we learn of Him.

Next week we'll go on to chapters 11 and 12.

May the Lord be with you. May the Lord bless you. May the good hand of our Lord be upon your life. May you experience that power in your life. And may you experience the rejoicing in the Spirit, and above all, may you have that joy of just sitting at His feet to learning to worship rather than being encumbered about, and full of care and troubled about what I'm going to get Aunt Jane and Uncle Charlie. It's an easy time of the year to be a Martha. You better take time to be a Mary, because you never can be a good Martha until you learn to be a good Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus. May that be your joy, your strength, your delight this week. In Jesus' name.