

SBCOD Bible Study Notes

2-26-25

Luke 9

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve – Verses 1-6

¹ When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, ² and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. ³ He told them: “Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt. ⁴ Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. ⁵ If people do not welcome you, leave their town and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.” ⁶ So they set out and went from village to village, proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere.

9:1 Note Jesus’ methods of leadership. He empowered his disciples (9:1), gave them specific instructions so they knew what to do (9:3-4), told them how to deal with tough times (9:5), and held them accountable (9:10). As you lead others, study the Master Leader’s pattern. Which of these elements do you need to incorporate into your leadership?

9:2 Jesus announced his kingdom by both preaching and healing, and he sent his disciples out to do the same. If he had limited himself to preaching, people might have seen his kingdom as spiritual only. If he had healed without preaching, people might not have realized the spiritual importance of his mission. Most of his listeners expected a Messiah who would bring wealth and power to their nation; they preferred material benefits to spiritual discernment. The truth about Jesus is that he is both God and man, both spiritual and physical; and the salvation that he offers is both for the soul and the body. Any group or teaching that emphasizes soul at the expense of body, or body at the expense of soul, is in danger of distorting Jesus’ gospel.

9:3-4 Why were the disciples instructed to depend on others while they went from town to town preaching the gospel? Their purpose was to blanket Judea with Jesus’ message, and by traveling light they could move quickly. Their dependence on others had other good effects as well: (1) It clearly showed that the Messiah had not come to offer wealth to his followers. (2) It forced the disciples to rely on God’s power and not on their own provision. (3) It involved the villagers and made them more eager to hear the message. This was an excellent approach for the disciples’ short-term mission; it was not intended, however, to be a permanent way of life for them.

9:4 The disciples were told to stay in only one home in each town because they were not to offend their hosts by moving to a home that was more comfortable or socially prominent. To remain in one home was not a burden for the homeowner, because the disciples’ stay in each community was short.

9:5 Shaking the dust of certain towns from their feet had deep cultural implications. Pious Jews would do this after passing through Gentile cities to show their separation from Gentile practices. If the disciples were to shake the dust of a Jewish town from their feet, it would show their separation from Jews who rejected their Messiah. This action also would show that the disciples were not responsible for how the people responded to their message. Neither are we responsible if we have carefully and truthfully presented Christ but our message is rejected. Like the disciples, we must move on to others whom God desires to reach.

Herod Hears Of Jesus' Ministry And Is Perplexed – Verses 7-9

7 Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was going on. And he was perplexed because some were saying that John had been raised from the dead,⁸ others that Elijah had appeared, and still others that one of the prophets of long ago had come back to life.⁹ But Herod said, “I beheaded John. Who, then, is this I hear such things about?” And he tried to see him.

9:7-9 People found accepting Jesus as the Son of God so difficult that they tried to come up with other solutions— most of which sound quite unbelievable to us. Many thought that Jesus must be someone who had come back to life, perhaps John the Baptist or another prophet. Some suggested that he was Elijah, the great prophet who had not died but had been taken to heaven in a chariot of fire (2 Kings 2:1-11). Very few found the correct answer, as Peter did (9: 20). Many people today still have difficulty accepting Jesus as the fully human yet fully divine Son of God. People are still trying to find alternate explanations— a great prophet, a radical political leader, a self-deceived rabble-rouser. None of these explanations can account for Jesus' miracles or especially his glorious resurrection. In the end, the attempts to explain away Jesus are far more difficult to believe than the truth.

Jesus Feeds The Five Thousand – Verses 10-17

10 When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida,¹¹ but the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing.¹² Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, “Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here.¹³ He replied, “You give them something to eat.” They answered, “We have only five loaves of bread and two fish— unless we go and buy food for all this crowd.”¹⁴ (About five thousand men were there.) But he said to his disciples, “Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each.”¹⁵ The disciples did so, and everyone sat down.¹⁶ Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people.¹⁷ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

9:10-11 Jesus had tried to slip quietly away from the crowds, but they found out where he was going and followed him. Instead of showing impatience at this interruption, Jesus welcomed the people and ministered to their needs. How do you see people who interrupt your schedule— as nuisances or as the reason for your life and ministry?

9:11 The kingdom of God was a focal point of Jesus' teaching. He explained that it was not just a future kingdom; it was among them, embodied in him, the Messiah. Even though the kingdom will not be complete until Jesus comes again in glory, we do not have to wait to experience it. The kingdom of God begins in the hearts of those who believe in Jesus (17:21). It is as present with us today as it was with the Judeans over 2,000 years ago.

9:13-14 When the disciples expressed concern about where the crowd of thousands would eat, Jesus offered a surprising solution: “You give them something to eat.” The disciples protested, focusing their attention on what they didn't have (food and money). Do you think God would ask you to do something that you and he together couldn't handle? Don't let your lack of resources blind you to God's power.

9:16-17 Why did Jesus bother to feed these people? He could just as easily have sent them on their way, but Jesus does not ignore needs. He is concerned with every aspect of life— the physical as well as the spiritual. As we work to bring wholeness to people’s lives, we must never ignore the fact that all of us have both physical and spiritual needs. It is impossible to minister effectively to one type of need without considering the other.

Peter Declares That Jesus Is The Messiah – Verses 18-20

18 Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, “Who do the crowds say I am?” **19** They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life.” **20** “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “God’s Messiah.”

9:18-20 The Christian faith goes beyond knowing what others believe. It requires us to hold beliefs for ourselves. When Jesus asks, “Who do you say I am?” he wants us to take a stand. Who do you say Jesus is?

Jesus Predicts His Death – Verses 21-27

21 Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. **22** And he said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.” **23** Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. **24** For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. **25** What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? **26** Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. **27** “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.”

9:21 Jesus told his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ because at this point they didn’t fully understand the significance of that confession— nor would anyone else. Everyone still expected the Messiah to come as a conquering king. But even though Jesus was the Messiah, he still had to suffer, be rejected by the leaders, be killed, and rise from the dead. When the disciples saw all this happen to Jesus, they would understand what the Messiah had come to do. Only then would they be equipped to share the Good News that the Messiah had come and brought his kingdom to people’s hearts.

9:22 This was the turning point in Jesus’ instruction to his disciples. From then on he began teaching clearly and specifically what they could expect, so that they would not be surprised when it happened. He explained that he would not now be the conquering Messiah because he first had to suffer, die, and rise again. But one day he would return in great glory to set up his eternal kingdom.

9:23 To take up the cross meant to carry one’s own cross to the place of crucifixion. Many Galileans had been killed that way by the Romans— and Jesus would face it as well. With this word picture, Christ presented a clear and challenging description of the Christian life. Being his disciple means putting aside selfish desires, shouldering one’s “cross” every day, and following him. It is simple and yet so demanding. For the original Twelve, this meant literal suffering and death. For believers today, it means understanding that we belong to him and that we live to serve his purposes. Consider this: Do you think of your relationship with God primarily in terms of what’s in it for you (which is considerable) or in terms of what you can do for him? Are you willing to deny yourself, take up your

cross daily, and follow him? Anything less is not discipleship; it is merely superficial lip service. (See also the note on 14: 27.)

9:24-25 If this present life is most important to you, you will do everything you can to protect it. You will not want to do anything that might endanger your safety, health, or comfort. By contrast, if following Jesus is most important, you may find yourself in unsafe, unhealthy, and uncomfortable places. You may risk death, but you will not fear it because you know that Jesus will raise you to eternal life. Nothing material can compensate for the loss of eternal life. Jesus' disciples are not to use their lives on earth merely to please themselves; they should spend their lives serving God and others.

9:26 Luke's Greek audience would have had difficulty understanding a God who could die, just as Jesus' Jewish audience would have been perplexed by a Messiah who would let himself be captured and killed. Both would be ashamed of Jesus if they did not look past his death to his glorious resurrection and second coming. Then they would see Jesus not as a loser but as the Lord of the universe, who through his death brought salvation to those who believe.

9:27 When Jesus said some would not die without seeing the kingdom, he may have been referring to: (1) Peter, James, and John, who would witness the Transfiguration eight days later; (2) all who would witness the Resurrection and Ascension; (3) all who would take part in the spread of the church after Pentecost. Jesus' listeners would not have to wait for another, future Messiah. The kingdom was among them, and would soon come in power.

The Transfiguration – Verses 28-33

28 About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. **29** As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. **30** Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. **31** They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. **32** Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. **33** As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." (He did not know what he was saying.)

9:28-30 Jesus took Peter, James, and John to the top of a mountain to show them who he really was— not merely a great prophet, but God's own Son. Moses, representing the Law, and Elijah, representing the Prophets, appeared with Jesus. Then God's voice singled out Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah, who possessed divine authority. Jesus would fulfill both the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 5: 17).

9:33 When Peter suggested making three shelters, he may have been thinking of the Festival of Tabernacles, where shelters were set up to commemorate the Exodus, God's deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Peter wanted to keep Moses and Elijah with them, but this was not what God wanted. Peter's desire to build shelters for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah may also show that he wished to build on three cornerstones: the Law, the Prophets, and Jesus. But Peter grew in his understanding, and eventually he would write of Jesus as the "chosen and precious cornerstone" of the church (1 Peter 2: 6).

The Voice From The Cloud Of Glory – Verses 34-36

³⁴ While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and covered them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. ³⁵ A voice came from the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.” ³⁶ When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves and did not tell anyone at that time what they had seen.

9:34-36 As God’s Son, Jesus has God’s power and authority; thus, his words should be our final authority. If a person’s teaching is true, it will agree with Jesus’ teachings. Don’t be hasty to seek advice and guidance from merely human sources and thereby neglect Christ’s message. Test everything you hear against Jesus’ words and you will not be led astray. If we believe he is God’s Son, then we surely will want to do what he says.

Jesus Heals a Demon-Possessed Boy – Verses 37-43

³⁷ The next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met him. ³⁸ A man in the crowd called out, “Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. ³⁹ A spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams; it throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It scarcely ever leaves him and is destroying him. ⁴⁰ I begged your disciples to drive it out, but they could not.” ⁴¹ “You unbelieving and perverse generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you and put up with you? Bring your son here.” ⁴² Even while the boy was coming, the demon threw him to the ground in a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the impure spirit, healed the boy and gave him back to his father. ⁴³ And they were all amazed at the greatness of God.

9:37-43 Peter, James, and John experienced a wonderful moment on the mountain, and they probably didn’t want to leave. Sometimes we too have such an inspiring experience that we want to stay where we are—away from the reality and problems of our daily life. Knowing that struggles await us in the valley encourages us to linger on the mountaintop. Yet staying on top of a mountain prohibits our ministering to others. Instead of becoming spiritual giants, we would soon become dwarfed by our self-centeredness. We need times of retreat and renewal but only so we can return to minister to the world. Our faith must make sense off the mountain as well as on it.

Jesus Predicts His Death A Second Time – Verses 43b - 50

^{43b} While everyone was marveling at all that Jesus did, he said to his disciples, ⁴⁴ “Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.” ⁴⁵ But they did not understand what this meant. It was hidden from them, so that they did not grasp it, and they were afraid to ask him about it. ⁴⁶ An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. ⁴⁷ Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. ⁴⁸ Then he said to them, “Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest.” ⁴⁹ “Master,” said John, “we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him, because he is not one of us.” ⁵⁰ “Do not stop him,” Jesus said, “for whoever is not against you is for you.”

9:45-46 The disciples didn’t understand Jesus’ words about his death. They still thought of Jesus as only an earthly king, and they were concerned about their places in the kingdom he would set up. So they ignored Jesus’ words about his death and began arguing about who would be the greatest.

9:48 Our care for others is a measure of our greatness. How much concern do you show for others? This is a vital question that can accurately measure your greatness in God's eyes. How have you expressed your care for others lately, especially the helpless, the needy, the poor— those who can't return your love and concern? Your honest answer to that question will give you a good idea of your real greatness.

9:49-50 The disciples were jealous. Nine of them together had been unable to drive out a single evil spirit (9: 40), but when they saw a man who was not one of their group driving out demons, they told him to stop. 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. Share Jesus' open-arms attitude toward Christian workers outside your group. Rejoice when they are able to bring people to Christ.

Samaritan Opposition – Verses 51-55

⁵¹ As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. ⁵² And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; ⁵³ but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" ⁵⁵ But Jesus turned and rebuked them. ⁵⁶ Then he and his disciples went to another village.

9:51 Although Jesus knew he would face persecution and death in Jerusalem, he was determined to go there. That kind of resolve should characterize our lives as well. When God gives us a course of action, we must move steadily toward our destination, regardless of the potential hazards that await us there.

9:53 After Assyria invaded Israel, the northern kingdom, and resettled it with its own people (2 Kings 17: 24-41), the mixed race that developed became known as the Samaritans. "Purebred" Jews hated these "half-breeds," and the Samaritans in turn hated the Jews. So many tensions arose between the two peoples that Jewish travelers between Galilee and southern Judea often would walk around rather than through Samaritan territory, even though this would lengthen their trip considerably. Jesus held no such prejudices, and he sent messengers ahead to get things ready in a Samaritan village. But the village refused to welcome these Jewish travelers who were headed for Jerusalem.

9:54 When the Samaritan village did not welcome Jesus and his disciples, James and John didn't want to stop at shaking the dust from their feet (9: 5). They wanted to retaliate by calling down fire from heaven on the people, as Elijah had done on the servants of a wicked king of Israel (2 Kings 1). When others reject or scorn us, we too may feel like retaliating. We must remember that judgment belongs to God, and we must not expect him to use his power to carry out personal vendettas.

The Cost Of Following Jesus – Verses 57-62

⁵⁷ As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." ⁵⁸ Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." ⁵⁹ He said to another man, "Follow me." But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." ⁶⁰ Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." ⁶¹ Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family." ⁶² Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

9:59 Luke does not say whether the father is already dead or terminally ill. It seems likely that if the father were dead, the son would have been fulfilling the burial duties. Jesus was saying that true discipleship requires instant action. Jesus did not teach people to forsake responsibilities to family, but he often gave commands to people in light of their real motives. Perhaps this man wanted to delay following Christ and was using his father as an excuse. Following Jesus has a cost, and each of us must be ready to serve, even when it requires sacrifice.

9:62 What does Jesus want from us? Total dedication, not halfhearted commitment. We can't pick and choose among Jesus' ideas and follow him selectively; we have to accept the cross along with the crown. We must count the cost and be willing to abandon everything else that has given us security— without looking back. With our focus on Jesus, we should allow nothing to distract us from following him.