

## ***Luke's Gospel: Chapter 9 v 1 to 50***

### ***The Kingdom of God is preached...***

#### ***Jesus sends out the twelve apostles (Luke 9 v 1 to 6)***

- Jesus tells the apostles (a) what they are to do (v 1, 2); and (b) how they are to provide for themselves (v 3 to 5). What principles of Christian service are implied here, which are always applicable?
- What did the disciples do (v 6), and what effect did their work have on those who saw and heard them?

“Gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases” (v 1) – Jesus never tells us to do something without giving us the ability and authority to do it. “To proclaim the kingdom of God” (v 2) – that is, to announce that there is a king and we are in his kingdom. This kingdom needed to be proclaimed, for it was not the same kingdom that most of the Jewish people expected. “To heal” (v 2) – Jesus wanted the disciples to bring healing. God does more than save souls: he ministers to the whole person. This “power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases” is vitally connected with preaching the gospel.

“Take nothing for your journey” (v 3) – ‘travelling light’ kept them dependent upon God. They had to trust God for everything. If a preacher isn’t trusting God, how can he tell others to trust him?

#### ***Herod is perplexed by Jesus (Luke 9 v 7 to 9)***

“It was said by some that John had been raised from the dead” (v 7) – the last time we saw John the Baptist in Luke’s gospel was in Luke 7 v 18 to 23: John was in prison and wondered if Jesus really was the Messiah. Here, Luke tells us that Herod had John executed in prison, because John rebuked Herod about his sin with his brother’s wife (Matthew 14 v 1 to 12). Herod said, “John I beheaded” (v 9) – Herod’s confusion came from his own guilty conscience: it is hard to see clearly who Jesus is, when we are in sin and rebellion.

#### ***Jesus feeds the five thousand (Luke 9 v 10 to 17)***

“On their return the apostles told him all that they had done” (v 10) – when they left Jesus in v 1, they were called ‘disciples’, i.e. ‘learners’, but when they came back after their preaching mission, they were called ‘apostles’, i.e. ‘those sent with authority and a message’. Jesus wanted to know how they had done – he is concerned with the results of our work for him. “And he took them and withdrew apart” (v 10) – Jesus wanted to take them to a “desolate place” (v 12), to minister to their needs.

- What light do these verses throw upon the love of Jesus, and on his concern for both physical and spiritual needs? If you had been one of the twelve, what would you have learned from this miracle?

“Send the crowd away” (v 12) – the disciples saw the crowd as a problem, but Jesus saw the crowd with love, care, and compassion. “Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples” (v 16) – Jesus didn’t bless the food: he blessed God for supplying it: saying ‘grace’ before a meal is to thank God for blessing us with the food.

“And they all ate and were satisfied” (v 17) – Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes, until far more than 5,000 were fed. The miracle happened in the hands of Jesus, not in hands of the disciples – who simply distributed what Jesus had miraculously provided. The assurance that Jesus can provide – even miraculously – for all of our needs is precious, as it was to the earliest Christians. On the walls of the catacombs, loaves and fishes are common pictures. What we have in ourselves to give others is insignificant, but when we put it in Jesus’ hands, he can do great things with our gifts and talents, for the blessing of others.

***[MORE OVER...]***

### ***Peter confesses Jesus as the Christ (Luke 9 v 18 to 20)***

- Why would people think that Jesus was John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or some other prophet? What answers do people give today when asked who Jesus is? Who really *is* Jesus?

Perhaps in seeing Jesus as John the Baptist or Elijah, the people hoped for a political Messiah, one who would overthrow the corrupt powers oppressing Israel. But Peter knows that Jesus is “the Christ of God” (v 20), God’s Messiah – the Messiah from the heart of God, not the Messiah from the desire of man...

### ***Jesus foretells his death (Luke 9 v 21 to 27)***

“The Son of Man must suffer many things” (v 22) – the important word is ‘must’. This isn’t just a plan or a prediction: this is the fulfilment of what was planned before the world began, for our salvation (1 Peter 1 v 20; Revelation 13 v 8). But the resurrection was also a ‘must’: Jesus had to rise from the dead.

- What does Jesus say is the cost of true discipleship (v 23)? How would the disciples have interpreted the words “take up his cross”? What reward does Jesus promise (v 24), and what encouragement would this give? Seeing the “kingdom of God” (v 28) probably refers to the Transfiguration in the next verses.

Are you self-centred or Christ-centred? Here Jesus challenges us at the deepest level. Jim Elliot was an American missionary to the Waodani Indians in Ecuador. In 1956, at the age of 26, he was killed by the people he sought to evangelise, along with four fellow missionaries. A few years previously he expressed in his journal his belief that missionary work was more important than life itself – he wrote: “*He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, in order to gain what he cannot lose.*”

### ***The Transfiguration (Luke 9 v 28 to 36)***

- What is the significance of the appearance of Moses and Elijah, and the voice from the cloud? When the disciples grasped what was going on, how did they react (v 33)? Compare with similar reactions in Isaiah 6 v 5 and Revelation 1 v 17, but remember that if we ‘abide in Jesus’ we can have confidence before God (1 John 2 v 28). How would this experience have encouraged Peter, James and John?

Why Moses and Elijah? (i) They represent the Law and the Prophets; (ii) Moses ‘died’ in the ordinary sense (despite Jude v 9) and represents the ‘dead in Christ’, whereas Elijah was ‘caught up’ to God (2 Kings 2 v 11) and thus represents the ‘*harpazo*’ Church (1 Thessalonians 4 v 17); (iii) they are the two witnesses that appear in Revelation 11 v 3 to 6. Moses and Elijah “spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem” (v 31), but they may also have talked about his Second Coming in glory, as suggested by 2 Peter 1 v 16 to 19. “A cloud came and overshadowed them” (v 34) – as Peter speaks, they are overshadowed with the cloud of God’s glory. This is the same idea as in Luke 1 v 35, when Gabriel said that the Holy Spirit would overshadow Mary, where the word ‘overshadow’ translates ἐπισκιάζω (*episkiazō*), which literally means to ‘cover with a cloud’, the same word used here.

### ***Jesus heals a boy with an unclean spirit (Luke 9 v 38 to 43a)***

Why could the disciples not cast this demon out (v 40), when they had previously been given that authority (v 1)? In Mark 9 v 29, Jesus said that their failure was due to a lack of prayer and fasting.

### ***Jesus again foretells his death (Luke 9 v 43b to 50)***

“They were all marvelling at everything he was doing” (v 43) – Jesus had revealed his glory in two spectacular ways: the Transfiguration and the casting out of a difficult demon. Yet, he reminds his disciples that his mission has not changed: he has still come to die on the cross for our sins, and “the Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men” (v 44). But these reminders about Jesus’ suffering and resurrection were not understood by the disciples (v 45) until after His resurrection (see Luke 24 v 6 to 8).

- What is Jesus teaching the disciples in verses 46 to 48? What qualities does the child serve to illustrate?