

Day 145, Luke 9

by David Servant

David Servant explores the themes of discipleship, commitment, and the true identity of Jesus in Luke 9.

Scripture: Luke 9:1-46, Acts 2:31

Topics: "Divine Authority", "Christ's Mission"

Description

David Servant preaches on the divine visitation where Jesus sent out the twelve and later 70 others to heal the sick and cast out demons, despite knowing they would face rejection in some cities. Jesus prioritized ministering to the common people over accommodating a great political figure like Herod. The multitudes thought Jesus was a reincarnation of John the Baptist, Elijah, or another prophet, revealing their misunderstanding of His true identity. Jesus warned His disciples not to reveal that He was the Christ of God, possibly to prevent premature reactions that could have interfered with His ultimate mission of salvation through His crucifixion and resurrection.

Transcript

Luke 8 begins with an account of Jesus expanding His outreach as He traveled from "one city and village to another, proclaiming the kingdom of God" (8:1). Today, at the beginning of chapter nine, we read of His sending out the twelve (9:1). They could obviously reach more villages than He could by Himself. And at the beginning of the next chapter, we'll read of Him sending out 70 others (10:1). All 82 were commissioned by Him to heal the sick and cast out demons, which they did (9:1-2, 6; 10:9, 17). It was an unprecedented divine visitation, and all Israel was stirred. Yet Jesus knew that those He sent would be rejected in some cities, and He told them to shake the dust off their feet as they departed from such places (9:5). Woe to those cities.

We read that Herod "kept trying to see" Jesus (9:9) because of all that was happening. You would think that Jesus would have taken special time to accommodate a great political figure, but He didn't bother. Jesus took time to minister to little children, but had no time for a king (the murderer of His relative, John, incidentally).

It is interesting that Jesus was curious to know who the multitudes thought He was. It is also interesting that the mostly-Jewish multitudes thought He was someone who had been reincarnated, either John the Baptist, Elijah, or some other prophet from the past! Their idea may have been derived from Scripture, however, as God said through the prophet Malachi that He would send Elijah "before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord" (Mal. 4:5). We've previously learned that Elijah did come in a sense, not

literally reincarnated, but in the person of John the Baptist, who came "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (1:17).

What is most interesting, however, is that after Peter confessed that he believed Jesus was "the Christ of God," Jesus warned His disciples not to reveal it to anyone. Perhaps such a proclamation and the subsequent reaction of the believing multitudes may have prevented His crucifixion, as Jesus mentioned His imminent sufferings in conjunction with His instructions to His disciples that they not reveal His true identity. Those instructions were, of course, temporary. After He was resurrected, the apostles openly proclaimed that Jesus was the Messiah (Acts 2:31, 36; 3:18, 20).

To take up one's cross daily is an expression for denying one's own desires, subordinating them to Christ's will, regardless of the subsequent consequences. This is required of all who want to "come after" Jesus (9:23). The same concept is expressed by the phrase, "to lose one's life for Christ's sake," which Jesus said results in one's life being saved, which again indicates the necessity of submission for salvation. Those who pursue a different course, that which the world is following, in the end forfeit themselves (9:25). Their pursuits reveal that they are ashamed of Jesus and His words. He will respond by being ashamed of them when He returns to judge the world in righteousness (9:26). These are "salvation scriptures," not "deeper-commitment scriptures" for the already-saved. How different is the salvation offer of Christ compared to the no-cost salvation offered in so many modern Christian circles!

Jesus' high standards for true discipleship are highlighted more in the final part of today's reading. Those who literally followed Him in His day had to be willing to wander homeless, just as He did. They had to risk offending relatives who were more earthly- than kingdom-minded, knowing that the proclamation of the gospel is the supreme priority. And they must never look back, longing for the life they left behind.

Being wholly committed, however, doesn't necessarily mean one is wholly perfect. James and John were wholly committed to follow Jesus, but they also argued with the other disciples as to whom among them was the greatest (9:46), not to mention their desire to be exalted to Jesus' right and left hand in His kingdom, or their hope to gain His permission to call down fire from heaven to fry some Samaritans (9:54). Difficult to believe that these guys would be church leaders in just a few weeks!

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