

The Gospel of Luke

Lesson 17

Luke records in the opening section of chapter 9 that Jesus called together his twelve disciples and gave them power and authority to drive out demons and cure diseases. He then sent them out to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick. Jesus sent them to the lost sheep of Israel and specifically directed them not to go to the Gentiles or to the Samaritans at that time.

Why did Jesus do this? The apostle John provides the answer by writing in his gospel that Jesus, as the Jewish Messiah, was first sent by God to the Jews. Sadly, John notes that when Jesus "...came to his own, his own did not receive Him" (John 1:11). But the good news is that "...to all who receive him, who believe in his name, he gives power to become children of God; who are born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1: 12).

In chapter 9, Luke writes that Jesus further directed his disciples not to take any provisions for their journey, thereby teaching them to be dependent upon Him for their provision. Whenever they entered a town, they were to stay at whatever house received them until they left that town. However, if a town did not receive them, they were to shake the dust off their feet when they left that town as a testimony against it. In either event, wherever they went, the disciples "...preached that people should repent" (Mark 6:12).

Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was going on. And he was perplexed, because some were saying that John the Baptist had been raised from the dead, while others were saying that Elijah had appeared, and still others that one of the prophets of long ago had come back to life. But Herod said, "I beheaded John. Who then, is this I hear such things about?" (Luke 9: 7-9a).

In seeking to answer this question, we noted that how we respond to what we hear is important to making the right choices and decisions in life. This principle was implied at the transfiguration of Jesus when God the Father spoke to Peter, James and John out of the cloud: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him!" (Matthew 17:5). And on another occasion, Jesus said, "Whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life" (John 5: 24).

As we begin this study, spend a moment in prayer, asking God for help "hearing His voice" and making the choices and decisions that are pleasing to Him. Ask for grace that we might say along with the Psalmist, "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:105). And further, may we always rest fully in the grace of God, assured that when we do sin, if we repent and confess our sins "...He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (John 1:9). "For God demonstrates his love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8) and "there is therefore now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

1. Read Luke 9:10-17, Matthew 14:6-21, Mark 6: 30-44, John 6:1-15 and 2 Kings 4:42-44.
 - A. What two events cause Jesus and his disciples to withdraw to a quiet and solitary place to get some rest?
 - B. What happens as they attempt to withdraw by boat to a solitary place?

C. From Matthew 14:14 and Mark 6:34:

- (1) What is Jesus' attitude toward the crowd? Why?

- (2) By way of application, what is our attitude to be when we are hard pressed by the demands of others?

- (3) What good counsel does Philippians 2:4 provide in responding to the needs of others?

- (4) How does Jesus respond to the crowd?

D. What is the approximate size of the crowd? What do you imagine the size of the crowd to be if you include women and children? Is this a local crowd? Why or why not?

2. From these passages, what is the general concern that arises late in the afternoon? (Luke 9:10-17, Matthew 14:6-21, Mark 6: 30-44, and John 6:1-15).

3. In developing a solution to the problem, how does Jesus test the disciples? What do you think Jesus is teaching them in this situation?

4. How do the disciples respond to Jesus' test? What do the disciples say to Jesus? In like manner, how are we to respond to Jesus when we have a problem?

5. What does Jesus do to meet the needs of the people? What is the result? What is the reaction of the crowd? How much is left over?

6. Read 2 Kings 4:42-44. In what ways does this passage of Scripture foreshadow the feeding of the five thousand?

7. Read John 6:32-40. What are the promises of the Father and the Son to those who believe in and receive Jesus as the Bread of Life?

8. Read Deuteronomy 8:2-3 and take a moment to reflect upon the Scriptures referenced earlier in this lesson. What important truths from these passages most encourage you? What principles most challenge you?

Who Do You Say I Am?

9. Read Luke 9:18-36, Matthew 16:13 through 17:13 and Mark 8:27 through 9:13.
 - A. In what region of Israel are Jesus and his disciples now?

 - B. Jesus expands the disciples' understanding of who He is. What is the first question Jesus asks them?

 - C. What reply do the disciples give Jesus?

D. What follow-up question does Jesus ask them?

E. Who responds and what does he say?

F. What does Jesus say in response and what truth does He reveal to the disciples? (Also see 1 Corinthians 2:10-14.)

G. From Luke 9:21, why do you think Jesus strictly warns them not to tell this to anyone?

10. From Luke 9:22, what does Jesus say must happen to the Son of Man?

11. Read Luke 9:23-27.

A. What must someone do in order to follow Jesus?

B. What do you think it means for someone to “deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Jesus”?

C. From Luke 9:24-27, what principles does Jesus state to illustrate His point?

12. From Luke 9:28-36, Matthew 17:1-13 and Mark 9:2-13:

A. Describe the Transfiguration.

B. Read Luke 9:34-35, Matthew 17:5-8 and Mark 9: 7.

(1) How do these verses provide Peter, James, John and us a deeper understanding of who Jesus is?

(2) Read Deuteronomy 4:10-14 and 5:4-5. What similarities and differences do you note between these passages and Matthew 17:5-8?

(3) Why do you think Jesus instructs the three not to tell anyone what they have seen until He has been raised from the dead?

13. Referring to Luke 9:27, what do you think Jesus means when He says to the disciples, "I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they have seen the kingdom of God"?