

Following Jesus, Luke 9v28-62

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[0 : 00] today. Luke chapter 9 beginning at verse 28 on page 1040.

About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.

Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.

Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. 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. While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them and they were afraid as they entered the cloud.

[1 : 18] A voice came from the cloud saying, this is my son whom I have chosen. Listen to him. When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone.

The disciples kept this to themselves and told no one at that time what they had seen. The next day when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met him.

A man in the crowd called out, Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. A spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams.

It throws him into convulsion so that he foams at the mouth. It scarcely ever leaves him and is destroying him. I begged your disciples to drive it out, but they could not. Oh, unbelieving and perverse generation, Jesus replied.

How long shall I stay with you and put up with you? Bring your son here. Even while the boy was coming, the demon threw him to the ground in a convulsion.

[2 : 18] But Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, healed the boy and gave him back to his father. And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. While everyone was marveling at all that Jesus did, he said to his disciples, Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you.

The son of man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. 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.

An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and made him stand beside him. 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 he who is least among you all, he is the greatest. Master, said John, we saw a man driving out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him because he is not one of us.

Do not stop him, Jesus said, For whoever is not against you is for you. As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem, and he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him.

[3 : 43] But the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples, James and John, saw this, they asked, Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?

But Jesus turned and rebuked them, and they went to another village. As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, I will follow you wherever you go.

Jesus replied, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head. He said to another man, Follow me.

But the man replied, Lord, first let me go and bury my father. Jesus said to him, Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.

Still another said, I will follow you, Lord, but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family.

Jesus replied, No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.

[4 : 46] Thank you, Chris. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. The voice came from the clouds saying, This is my son whom I have chosen.

Listen to him. Father, we want to listen to your words about the Lord Jesus today.

We want to hear clearly. We want to hear clearly. To understand who he is. And what it means for people like us to follow him.

Teach us today. We ask this for his glory alone. Amen. We'll have a look back at verse 23 of chapter 9.

[6 : 03] Alex referred to it earlier this morning. Verse 23. Jesus said to them all, If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

And in response, the musicians start and we sing the hymn. So I will go wherever he is calling me. I lose my life to find my life in him. I give my all to gain the hope that never dies.

I bow my heart, take up my cross and follow him. Very easy to read, isn't it?

And maybe easier to sing those words. But to take up my cross and follow him? Well, that's a call to come and die to self and to live for Christ.

[7 : 20] And when we get to the end of chapter 9, we meet three more people who promise to follow Jesus. One says, I will follow you wherever you go.

Another says, I will follow you, Lord. And as we sit this morning, we promise to follow.

And that's what I want us to consider as we think about this text this morning. What will it mean for us? What will it mean for me to follow Jesus?

First, the glory and greatness of Jesus. As we consider what it means to follow Jesus, we're given this picture of who Jesus is. First, the glory.

Look at verse 28. About eight days after Jesus said this, so after he talked about following him, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray.

[8 : 31] Now this must have been some experience to be up on that mountain. The sights and the sounds, the flash of lights, the cloud that appears and the voice that speaks.

Now you might think we're talking about this passage here in Luke chapter 9. But I'm actually thinking about another event on another mountain about 1500 years beforehand.

It's recorded for us in Exodus 19. You probably are familiar and remember the story. It's when Moses goes up Mount Sinai to receive the law from God.

He goes up the mountain to meet with God. And there's flashing of light, there's smoke and fire and a cloud descends on the mountain signifying the presence of God and out of the cloud God speaks.

Now here in Luke we find ourselves up another mountain. And I don't think it's a coincidence. I think we're meant to make these connections. Because on Mount Sinai God is meeting with Moses.

[9 : 42] The sights and sounds, the visual effects that have happened there are all a display of God's glory. God is present on the mountain. His power, greatness, beauty and authority are all on display.

And here we are up another mountain and God is present. But this time through the person of Jesus. Look at verse 29.

As Jesus was praying the appearance of his face changed and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, these great figures of the Old Testament representing the time of the law and the time of the prophets, appeared in glorious splendour talking with Jesus.

Verse 32. Peter and his companions were very sleepy but when they became fully awake they saw his glory.

The glory of God is now seen in the person of Jesus. God's power, his greatness, his beauty and authority are displayed through Jesus.

[11 : 03] But look what else that happens. Verse 34. As they were talking a cloud appeared and it covered them and they were afraid as they entered into the cloud and from the cloud a voice came saying this is my son whom I have chosen listen to him.

all the way through the Bible story God has been saying listen to me listen to me listen to me but now God says listen to him listen to my son.

You see on this mountain we see the glory of God. God is on display through Jesus. Second we have the greatness.

from the mountaintop experience we descend down from the mountain into the darkness of the valley below and here we meet a desperate situation a father with his tormented son.

Verse 39. The father tells us that a spirit seizes his son and he suddenly screams it throws him into convulsion so that he foams at his mouth. It's almost he's in a fit.

[12 : 14] It scarcely ever leaves him and it's destroying him. And to make matters worse we read that no one can do anything about it not even the disciples.

This satanic evil rules. But then Jesus is there and in the calmness that he brings he says bring the boy here bring your son here.

Verse 42. And even while the boy was coming the demon threw him into the ground in a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the evil spirit healed the boy and gave him back to his father.

Once more we see the power and authority of God being present as Jesus rebukes evil. Once again we see the beauty and the greatness of God on display as Jesus heals and restores this boy.

And look at how all the crowds respond verse 43. And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. God is on display through Jesus and God is present through Jesus.

[13 : 31] Jesus. Now wouldn't you like some of that glory and greatness? Wouldn't you love to experience that glory up in the mountain?

Picture yourself there. Wouldn't it be great to be there? Or down in the greatness of the valley with all these amazing things going on.

I'll have some of that. I want that. And it seems that's what the disciples are after too. Look at verse 46. An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest.

We can imagine them talking. Jesus. Go on. Tell us. Who do you think is the best disciple? Who do you think is the best preacher? Who does the best miracles?

Who do you think is the best Sunday school teacher? Who's the best leader at the rock? Who's the best at coming early and setting up?

[14 : 35] Imagine to have the glory of being the greatest Christian in your church. What a title. I was thinking maybe we should have a Christian of the month award.

As everybody comes in somebody's picture is up on the wall. Christian of the month. What a title. to have the glory of being the greatest Christian.

Well to try and earn a few more brownie points look at verse 49. Master said John we saw a man driving out demons in your name but we tried to stop him because he's not one of us.

He's not one of our crowd. Doesn't go to our church. How many marks is that going to get me Jesus? Jesus. Do not stop him Jesus said.

For whoever is not against you is for you. You see we're missing the point about greatness and glory. Look at what Jesus says as they begin to argue about glory and greatness.

[15 : 36] Verse 47 Jesus knowing their thoughts took a little child and made him stand beside them. So here's a real living live illustration. He takes this little kid who's maybe running around and plonks him in the middle of the disciples.

Verse 46 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.

Now children today get pride of place. Children come first. Everything is fitted around children. In the first century children came last.

Children were considered nothings and nobodies. They didn't have rights. You didn't get glory and greatness for welcoming a little child.

Who would do that? But that's Jesus' point. Look at the rest of verse 48. For he who is least among you the one who's the nobody the one who's the nothing they are the greatest.

[16 : 48] See Jesus is making it so clear. Look he says if you want to follow me if you want to be my disciple you must become the least.

If you want glory and greatness you must learn to die to yourself glory and live for the glory and greatness of who Jesus is.

Get rid of self and live for Christ. Second there's the departure and death of Jesus.

As we consider what it means to follow Jesus we mustn't just understand who he is but what Jesus does. first the departure listen to the conversation that's taking place on the mountain verse 30 amidst all the spectacular fireworks of the lightning the flash of lights something else is happening verse 30 two men Moses and Elijah appeared in glorious splendor talking with Jesus what are they talking about?

They spoke about his departure which he was about to bring to fulfilment at Jerusalem. Now I don't know what translation you have there but the word for departure is literally the word exodus.

[18 : 20] It simply means to exit to depart to leave. So as they're talking together they're talking about Jesus' exodus.

Now doesn't that bring things to memory remember the exodus the greatest act of redemption and rescue of God's people they were slaves in Egypt for 400 years under the cruel reign of the pharaohs but God came in delivered them rescued them a demonstration of God's power as he opened up the sea before the people they went through on dry land and as they looked behind the seas came tumbling in on their enemies their enemies defeated the exodus the departure out of slavery and into freedom.

Now in Luke chapter 9 we've got Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus about a new exodus a new departure and again this is no coincidence Luke wants us to make these connections but this exodus is going to happen in Jerusalem look at the end of verse 31 they spoke about his exodus which he was about to bring to fulfilment at Jerusalem in Jerusalem Jesus is going to bring people out of their slavery and into freedom a new exodus awaits we're going to get rid of the Romans God's going to come in power and release us from the Romans and their cruel regime and set us free not quite it's not the kind of freedom that Jesus had in mind second the death we get to understand what the departure means as we read on look at verse 43 the second part of verse 43 while everyone was marvelling at all that

Jesus did he said to his disciples listen carefully to what I'm about to tell you literally he says put my words in your ear listen carefully the son of man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men now that's another prediction of Jesus' death the one with all glory and greatness will be betrayed to those who are going to reject him and kill him you see Jesus has come to rescue us from slavery but that rescue is from a greater slavery slavery to sin and death Jesus has come to bring us a freedom but that freedom is from a more terrible master the rule of Satan and Jesus is going to set us free by his death his death on the cross the bible is very clear about this look at the screen Jesus says I tell you the truth everyone who sins is a slave to sin so if the son that's Jesus sets you free you will be free indeed or here's another one so that by his death by Jesus' death he would destroy him who holds the power of death that is the devil and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death revelation to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood or by his death and has made us to be a kingdom and priest to serve his God and father to him be glory and power forever and ever amen it's for freedom that Christ sets us free you see what Luke is doing here he takes us from one mountain the mountain of transfiguration and he brings us to another mountain the mountain of crucifixion because through the departure and death of Jesus we get to see the glory and greatness of

[22 : 55] Jesus in all its magnificence you think this mountain is great you think that what he did with that boy is great now he says I want you to look at the cross and see how glorious and great that is at the cross as Jesus dies we see the beauty the power and the authority of God on display Jesus in all his splendor is dripping in blood Jesus in all his power is now cursed on the cross Jesus in all his beauty is dying for me he takes my sin and through his death sets me free from my slavery to sin and Satan at the cross we see the greatness and glory of God on display we say well what's that got to do with following Jesus well the departure and death of Jesus becomes the path and the pattern for us the departure and death of Jesus becomes the path and pattern for us so third the call and the cost of following

Jesus first look at the call verse 51 as the time approached for Jesus to be taken up to heaven Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem now Jerusalem we've already learned is the place of execution isn't it when Jesus gets to Jerusalem Jesus is going to die he's going to be mocked and beaten he's going to be nailed to a cross and so from this point onwards in Luke's gospel everything is focused on Jesus going to the cross everything is pointed towards there that's the direction he's traveling he's committed determined undistracted I am going to the cross end of verse 51 Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem nothing and no one is going to stop him now if we're going to follow

Jesus we need to follow him on his journey we need to walk his path we need to follow him to the cross that's the call but as we've said as well this call is not easily followed in verse 52 we read that Jesus is heading for Jerusalem and as he makes his way to Jerusalem he goes through a region the region of Samaria now that was a problem because well Jews and Samaritans hated each other they didn't get on they have a long history of religious and political conflict you avoided places like that you didn't go there so when the disciples learn that Jesus is heading for Jerusalem through Samaria they've got a great idea verse 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 go on send that bolt of lightning bang destroy them fire get rid of them you see they think that following

Jesus is all about glory and greatness it's all about power and authority an opportunity to put people in their place especially those we don't like verse 55 but Jesus turned and rebuked them that's not what it's about that's not what following Jesus means remember verse 23 if anyone would come after me they must deny himself take up his cross daily and follow me if anybody needs to die well we need to die we need to die to self we must walk the path towards Jerusalem committed determined undistracted we must follow Jesus to the cross because it's only at the cross that we learn to die to self glory and greatness and live for the glory and greatness of Jesus so what will it mean for you what will it mean for me to die to self what will it mean to die to myself well in verses 57 to 62 we're introduced to these three characters we don't know their name but they're following Jesus on the road towards Jerusalem and they make promises

I'm going to follow you and each little interaction shows us what we must die to so I want us to think about this what it means to die to self first it means dying to my rights look at verse 57 as they were walking along the road a man said to him I will follow you wherever you go wherever you send me whatever you want me to do I'm going to go Jesus Jesus replied foxes of holes and birds of the air of nests but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head look around at nature he says look at the animals look at the birds they've all got somewhere to sleep and somewhere to stay they've all got the right to comfort and security but the son of man look at Jesus he's got nowhere to put his head he hasn't got a home he can call home he's given up his rights to comfort and security to follow [29 : 27] Jesus to the cross means putting to death my rights it's putting an end to me and to I second it's about putting my priorities to death verse 59 he said to another man follow me but the man replied Lord first let me go and bury my father Jesus said to him let the dead bury their own dead but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God wow sounds harsh doesn't it well I don't think Jesus is saying you can't go to your father's funeral the man it seems is wanting to stay at home until his parents have died and then he will follow that says Jesus your priority should be for those who are spiritually dead that's your priority look at the end of verse 60 let the dead bury their own dead but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God people who do not know about me that's the priority to follow

Jesus to the cross means putting to death my priorities it's executing me and I to death and third I think it means putting my dreams to death verse 61 still another said I will follow you Lord maybe he was listening to the other characters and he kind of comes through look these guys mightn't but I'm going to but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family Jesus replied no one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the service in the kingdom of God this person it seems has lots of plans he wants to stay home with his family more than likely at that time because work was connected and tied up with your family he wants to stay home with the family business wait till all that's kind of dealt with and he's climbed the ranks and Jesus response is clear no one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the service in the kingdom of God you may have dreams about work and career where you want to work what you want to do how you want to live your life but the work of the kingdom must dictate absolutely everything every choice every decision the kingdom must dictate everything to follow

Jesus to the cross means putting to death my dreams and asking what is it that God puts at the priority what is it that is center for him it's putting an end to me and to I you see as we travel this journey with Jesus it's only at the cross that we learn to die to self glory and greatness and live for the glory and greatness of Jesus and in response the musicians start and we sing the hymn so I will go wherever he's calling me I lose my life to find my life in him I give my all to gain the hope that never dies I bow my heart take up my cross and follow him easy to read sometimes easier to sing but if we're going to do that we need to have a view of the cross and see the beauty of Jesus the glory and greatness of Christ who dies on the cross for you and for me who gives his all so that we

might gain everything who takes our punishment and our judgment and sets us free so that we can live for him we're going to sing this song and I want us to sing it in a sense praying that the Lord would help us to follow him and that wherever he calls us whatever he asks me to let go of whatever I need to bow my heart to I will do it and I will follow him so musicians help us as we sing thank you