

Luke 9:37-50

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[0 : 00] Let's pray. Father, we worship you this morning and we give thanks to you. Thank you for this passage and how it's ministered to my soul.

I pray the same for your people this morning as we've gathered before you. May we listen well, learn well, and live well because we've heard you today.

In Christ's name, amen. The Vatican has several museums on its property. And in one of those museums in Rome, you will find an art piece from the 16th century.

That one piece weds together last week's text and the text that we come to today. The artist's name, Raffaello Sanzio de Urbino, known in the art world as Raphael.

And we'll take that particular one, won't we? He was an Italian artist of the high Renaissance period. Master artist, died young at the age of 37.

[1 : 15] But not before this particular work was almost finished. He worked on it for over three years. The nearly 13 foot high, nine feet wide, oil on wood painting is known as transfiguration.

And it's been called the most beautiful painting in the world. The transfiguration, as recorded by the gospel writers, is the basis for the work.

And part of the work pictures our Lord gloriously as we see him in the gospels in the particular text on last week. He is there shrouded by heaven's clouds.

He's flanked by Moses, the great lawgiver, and Elijah. Also in the depiction, you see three awestruck disciples.

They're on the summit, and they're down practically at his feet there on the summit. If the art in any way reflected the reality of that day, it's understandable why Peter himself would say, Lord, it's really good for us to be here.

[2 : 39] While all was well on the mountain, there was a different story on the ground. And though the piece is called transfiguration, this great masterpiece also pictures the scene that we see in our text today.

As a matter of fact, look at verse 37. It says, on the next day. So there we have it. One painting, two realities.

The great picture, the masterpiece painting, it pictures these particular contrasts that we see even in our text. There was heaven on the mountain.

There was hell on the ground. Three awestruck disciples on the mountain. Nine confounded disciples on the ground.

On the mountain, the father speaks of his only one chosen son. On the ground, the father pleads for his only son.

[3 : 43] An only son celebrated on the mountain. An only son agitated on the ground. And in verses 37 through 43, we see what happened when the celebrated son met the agitated son.

This fateful encounter that we see there. In this, what we see in this particular encounter in verses 37 through 43, but also the Jesus interaction with all of them, we hear four particular statements made by Jesus in the text.

Look at the one that we see in verse 41. Jesus answered, O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you?

Bring your son here. Look at his next statement that we see from him in verse 44. Let these words sink in your ears. The son of man is about to be delivered into the hands of men.

We see another statement by Jesus in verse 48. Whosoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.

[4 : 58] For he who is least among you, all is the one who is great. And then there's the final statement in verse 50. But Jesus said to him, Do not stop him, for the one who is not against you is

for you.

Four statements that Jesus makes. The first statement in that we hear Jesus' words, and in them, Jesus' words indicted faithlessness of those who were in that particular generation.

What we have in verses 37 through 39, we see the dilemma. And what a dilemma it is that we have there.

Here's a father who appealed to Jesus on behalf of his only son, who displayed symptoms of what we would know today as epilepsy. But there also was a spiritual dimension to what was going on, a spiritual dimension to his son's condition.

Look at verse 39. A spirit seizes him. A demon. A demon. We see that in verse 42. And Jesus rebukes an unclean spirit. Huh? And notice, particularly as we see there, the verbs that we witness there in verse 39.

[6 : 20] A spirit seizes him. He cries out. It convulses him. And it shatters him. And it shatters him. Don't you just feel the ache of what's going on in this particular son's life?

How tragic is seen it is that we come to, and that there's a measure of frustration because the disciples, no one has been able to help this father with his son.

In verse 40, the disciples' inability comes into view, doesn't it? It says, I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.

Now, if I recall, these were the same disciples that had been sent out in chapter 9 earlier, and they had been successful. Jesus had sent them out both to preach and to cast out demons, and they came back, and they reported what they had done.

But here, they were unsuccessful. Was it because their faith had failed to measure up to a current revelation of Jesus?

[7 : 32] Or was it for some other reason that I believe, as we'll see in the text later, and the reminder for you and me is this, that successful ministry in the past doesn't necessarily guarantee the success of ministry and ministry effectiveness in the present, huh?

I mean, here are these guys again. They had been on tour, but here they were met with a challenge that really sort of put their backs against the wall. Oh, look, here's the place of our statement in verse 41.

And here, Jesus' words indicted faithlessness. You see it? Oh, faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you?

Bring your son here. Now, if you get the sense that Jesus is a little frustrated when we hear verse 41, you're probably right, huh?

His choice of words, the tone maybe that we can hear in his words, huh? And his words are not flattering. Just think how you would feel if Jesus were here this morning and called you a faithless and twisted generation.

[8 : 50] Jesus' words were not flattering here, and Moses' words were not flattering. In Deuteronomy chapter 32, that I believe we hear an echo of Moses' words, even in our text.

As a matter of fact, turn with me to Deuteronomy chapter 32. I want to look at verses 4 and 5, and then I want you to look at verse 20 with me. It's unflattering words to those who are in his audience, huh?

Deuteronomy chapter 32. Look at verses 4 and 5. You see, it was Moses was there. He was recording both his experience with God on the one hand, but he was recording his experience with God's people on the other.

God's people who, in spite of wonder after wonder that God had performed, they still had their doubts, huh?

Look at verse 4. The rock, speaking about God. His work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness, and without iniquity, just and upright is he.

[10 : 06] They have dealt corruptly with him. They are no longer his children, because they are blemished. They are a crooked and twisted generation. Look at verse 20.

And he said, I will hide my face from them. I will see what their end will be, for they are a perverse generation, children in whom there is no faithfulness.

You hear the echo of Jesus' words, even as he is facing those who are faithless in his own generation.

Huh? Faithless and twisted. Like in Moses' day, they had witnessed the works of God, but they remained faithful, faithless. There were those in Jesus' audience who were deficient in their faith.

And his indictment was sweeping enough that it included those who were closest to him were likewise indicted as being faithfulness and twisted.

[11:13] Bring your son here. Jesus' words in the last part of 41. The man did. Jesus healed him, but not without one final act of cruelty by this demon.

Look at what we see there. In verse 42, the demon throws him to the ground, convulsed him, but Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his father.

Our Lord intervenes with kingdom power in this particular situation for this father and this son. And as we've seen elsewhere, the crowd is absolutely gripped by the majesty of God on display in the person and the work of Jesus. They recognize the work of God and in the process, they give God the credit for what he has done.

Jesus' first words, his first statement, his word that included words to disciples who were in process in that day, it was an indictment because of their faithlessness.

[12:24] There was a failure to listen, a failure to listen with faith. Notice Jesus' second statement. It's in verse 44. Let these words sink into your ears.

How do you like that picture that's there? The son of man is about to be delivered into the hands of men. Now, though the masses, on the one hand, they were astonished at the majesty of God through Jesus, Jesus continued to prepare his disciples for the inevitable.

Again, again, the Lord is working. Oh, but what you see here, what you see God doing in and through Jesus, that was not all that there was to it. There was another phase and they were about to enter into that particular phase.

Huh? His deliverance into the hands of sinful men. What was in view? Let these words sink in your ears. What words? Huh? The son of man is about to be delivered into the hands of men.

Again, he's doing these wonder works now, but there's more to the picture. Huh? Words about the son of man. What about the son of man? We've seen that in Luke earlier, first seed in chapter five, verse 27.

[13:40] This was Jesus' preferred way of referring to himself. It connected him to his mission on earth. He was a man, but he was bringing heaven's message and heaven's blessings, including the forgiveness of sins.

He was bringing it to man. And his identity included, as far as being the son of man, look at 922, that speaks of his sufferings.

The son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and the third day be raised. That was an aspect to his being the son of man, his suffering, but also there was the glory that was to come.

We see that in 926. Whoever is ashamed of me and my words of him shall the son of man be ashamed when he comes into his glory and the glory of the Father and of his holy angels.

Suffering, but eventual glory, even as we see that the son of man, the term that we see in Daniel, chapter 7, verse 13, predicted that one like a son of man would be given dominion over the kingdoms of men.

[14:54] And Jesus identified himself with that person. Suffering, however, and that's the point that Jesus wanted to get across to them. It would precede glory.

The second prediction here in Luke of Jesus' eventual death. But look at verse 45. But they did not understand.

That says it all, doesn't it? It didn't click. It didn't compute. They missed it. The information was present. He was saying it and he had said it again and he would say it again.

But the understanding was missing. There was a sense of spiritual dullness that had captured these men. But understand, and this is why there's a measure of ache here, the very ones to whom had been given to know the secrets of the kingdom.

Chapter 8, verse 10. They were in the dark. They did not understand. Luke shows that they didn't get it in the next verses.

[16:04] He mentions it, but they didn't get it. We know that they didn't get it by what we see of them in the verses that follow as far as their conduct. It did not compute for them or to them.

Huh? Our Lord spoke of his impending death. It was concealed from them so that they might not perceive it. Whether this was an act of God's sovereignty and not letting them see it or to get totally spiritual dull, but for some reason, whether it was the work of the evil one, they did not grasp what Jesus was saying to them.

Huh? It was a critical hour. Our Lord's impending death. Huh? But they remained shrouded in darkness, unaware of the critical hour that was at hand.

This question for you this morning. What do you do as a disciple when you don't quite get it? Huh? When it doesn't really compute.

When it seems like something is sort of being hidden from you. It's not coming like maybe it should. And there's this mental and perhaps even spiritual strain, but it's not happening for you.

[17:26] Maybe your spiritual life is a little dull and dry. You're not quite getting it. Well, listen. Isn't that, that was the father's word on the mountain regarding to his son.

Listen to him. Pay attention. Therefore, we must pay closer attention to the things that we have heard. Lest at any time we should let them slip or drift away from it.

That was the writer to the Hebrews words to those in his day. Listen up. But also, not only should we listen when you find yourself in a spiritual strain or there's this spiritual haze and you're not quite getting it, it's not quite computing.

Well, why not ask the Lord for understanding in prayer? When you find yourself in darkness, perhaps the prayer that we hear Paul pray, open the eyes and that we sing about, open the eyes of my heart, Lord.

I really want to see you. I want to see you and lift it up, shining in the light of your glow. Open my eyes, Lord. I want to see Jesus.

[18:35] Open my ears, Lord. Help us to listen. If you're not quite getting it, if it's not quite computing, listen, but also pray.

Sometimes it's just simply a matter of timing. There's some things that are not ours to know now, friends, but that should not stop your hunger and mind from wanting to know him more and know him better.

God forbid that we should be content with spiritual dullness, spiritual blah, tasting spiritual brown, so to speak, seeing with spiritual haze.

Disciples in process need to hear these kinds of things. And then, notice what? They were afraid to ask him. You see that there?

At the end of verse 45, they were afraid to ask him about this saying. How many of you have been in the class? If anybody, I mean, sitting in the class, in the dark, in the haze, if you have any questions, raise your hand.

[19:39] You know you want to raise your hand to go up. You know you want to raise your hand, but you just sort of sit there. Huh? Fear not. Don't be afraid of what others are going to say.

They don't know it either. They're struggling too. Huh? It's rather embarrassing to say, I just don't get it. Huh? Could you go over that again?

Lord, I need a little spiritual tutoring. Huh? Help me out, Jesus. I need to know you on this one, Lord. I've been struggling with this. Oh, I've been struggling with this issue.

Open the eyes of my heart. Psalm 119, 18, that I may see wonderful things from your law.

Huh? Don't be afraid to ask him if you feel that you're in darkness innocent and in haze. Huh? Jesus' words, verse 41, they indict faithlessness.

[20:43] In verse 44, they command attentiveness. Huh? He indicts faithlessness, but his words, he commands, listen up!

Huh? Listen up is what he says in essence in the verse that we're looking at in verse 44. Let these words sink into your heart.

Huh? But look at verse 48. Jesus' words redefine greatness in verse 48. Isn't that amazing what he does there?

Now, here's the deal. You've got to understand what's going on. Jesus is just speaking about his passion. Son of Man is going to be delivered. And here comes his disciples and they're on a different channel from him.

Huh? They're talking about position and power. As a matter of fact, they're calculating. Oh, you know, I think I would fit in this particular, I mean, after all, we are talking about kingdom here.

[21:51] But Jesus said, whoever receives this child in my name receives me and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he is least among you, all is the one who is great.

Jesus speaking about his humiliation at the hands of men. They don't get it. Visions of grandeur and prominence and status are on their mind.

And I'm wondering here, had his words been choked about suffering fallen into soil that included the thorns that we see in chapter eight.

Because you remember what the thorns do? They choke the word so that it becomes unfruitful.

Huh? Had his words been choked by their desire for status and for position so that they could not get it and could not see it.

Huh? If you really want to know what's in a person's heart, listen to what they say. Sooner or later, it'll come out. Let's listen long enough.

[23 : 11] Now, the abundance of the heart, the mouth was speaking. They had argued. You see that there in verse 46? An argument arose.

Another way of looking at it, they had debated. And this is the word that we really get dialogue from. They had dialogue about positions and status.

I mean, it was a conversation that had circled among them. Huh? So Jesus, knowing what was in their hearts, he begins to challenge them.

He redefined really what greatness actually looks like. First of all, he does it visually. He takes the child, puts it in their midst.

Now, earlier we'd seen a child in need of liberation. In this particular text, we see a child that's being used as an illustration. Earlier, we saw a son that were child that's buffeted by Satan's agent.

[24 : 13] Here we see a child in the presence of God, the presence of Jesus himself. Now, you need to understand something about children in that day. One of the things that I love about our church is our value about the significance of family that includes children.

And when we dedicate a child or baptize a child, well, we really emphasize how precious and how valuable that child is. And I love the fact that we have many childbearing couples who love and care for, but guess what?

In that particular day, children were way, way down on the social scale. And they definitely would not be viewed as a status symbol in that day because they had no rights and no power.

They were insignificant. They were disposable and particularly so if it was a female child. Jesus knows their hearts and he uses this object lesson and words to expose the condition of their hearts.

And they were meant to correct their thinking about what it really means to be great. Do you have your definition of greatness? Is it connected with dollars and cents?

[25 : 36] Is it connected with position and status? Is it connected with educational achievements? The greatest basically what Jesus is saying is the lowest.

The one without status. Rather than striving to be top dog, Jesus helps them to see that it's okay to be the underdog. Like one with no standing at all.

Great is not something to strive to achieve. It was not defined to be defined by ambition. And isn't that really liberating? Because there are those that would push you and push you and push you.

But greatness is not to be defined necessarily by achievements. He who was among them, who was himself, Jesus himself, was willing to die.

He saw himself amongst them as little and least. They were status-seeking. The teaching of Jesus countered the tendency and the direction of their hearts.

[26 : 50] There's one more thing in the text. Could be easy to miss. It's also reveal the inclination of the hearts of these disciples, these disciples who were in process.

The clock was ticking, his departure was drawing near. We've heard his words that indicted faithlessness, that commanded attentiveness, that redefined greatness, but here we see his words challenge their exclusiveness.

Again, another indication of what was amongst them, what was in their hearts. Look at verses 49 and 50. John answered, Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name.

Huh? This is great. we tried to stop him because he does not follow with us, but Jesus said to him, do not stop him for the one who is not against you is for you.

Isn't it amazing how Luke sort of bookends this particular text? We've got the demon and an exorcism up front.

[27 : 55] We've got an exorcism on the back end here. Again, it just seems a very nice way to structure of what we have. So here's the idea. Jesus' words challenge their exclusiveness.

Don't stop him. The one who is not against you is for you. This demonstrates again that these were disciples in process. They hadn't arrived. John brought a complaint to Jesus about someone who was actually doing what he and his colleagues had failed to do earlier.

Cast out a demon. He was somebody who was doing it. Again, the countless bookended by these exorcisms. One of Jesus who was exercising power and here one who was exercising power in Jesus name.

Casting out demons. Here's the idea. This man, he was not on the A-team so to speak. Yet his work of casting out demons using the authority of Christ spoke of his faith in Jesus.

A faith that was effective, a faith that was recognizable by the powers of darkness. In reality, this man was an agent of the kingdom. Perhaps John felt he was a measure of competition.

[29 : 20] John was quick to write off this one who was doing works in Jesus' name, but he was not wearing the same jersey on that particular day.

We do want the Lord to work through us, but we must recognize that God and his sovereignty can work through whom he will in mighty and powerful ways, even in ways that exceed the reach of your faith in my faith.

One failure to recognize this sign of our lack of faith in him. Again, it helps us to see perhaps our pride and room to grow for you and me.

Listening to Jesus, we hear several things in his reply. John, your response is wrong. Your plan is ill advised. You don't want to stop that person.

Your motivation is wrong. Your perspective is wrong. Getting in the way of such a person is not the thing to do. Don't stop him.

[30 : 26] He's not your competition, John. In reality, he's your colleague. What's the state of you and me? Don't be quick to judge those who are doing the work of Christ, but don't fit your profile, whatever that profile might be.

You and I must be aware of being self-appointed traffic cops, so to speak. God is the one who authorizes people to function and minister in his name on his behalf.

This may have been a B-team kind of guy, but he had the ball and he scored, if you will. He functioned in a way that demonstrated that even that those who were appointed and anointed didn't.

just because someone is unauthorized by you or me doesn't mean he's not authorized by God himself. John wanted to put this guy on the black list.

Here's some good questions to ask as you would look out on others perhaps. Is Jesus in all that he stands for, is he central in what's going on with that person or that ministry or that denomination?

[31 : 45] over there. Does the minister of ministry bear the mark of his name or his authority?

Do people realize the presence and the power of God? God is at work. Is God glorified? Is God blessed in the process?

What a picture we have before us. And it is good for those who like them were disciples in process. They were disciples. They had not arrived. They were still in process. Disciples could not cast out demons. But guess what? They would again.

The disciples did not understand Jesus' trajectory for his life that led to his suffering. Jesus would continue to labor with them and they would.

[32 : 47] The disciples didn't really know the value of not seeking status. But they would. Like them friends, they were disciples in process.

Discipleship is in fact a process. And guess what? You and I are in that process today. And my prayer is that we can see flaws and perhaps in looking at these men, they mirror your flaws and my flaws as we continue our journey to understand him, to embrace him, to live for him, to labor for him.

The disciples could not see the value in engaging others. that was a hard one. But eventually they would.

Jesus' words to his disciples deserve our listening, friends. They'll deserve our prayers. Jesus' words deserve our wholehearted trust, our faith-filled following, obedience to him.

Ah, are you a disciple in process? you may be new to the faith, but there's something here for you. You may be a veteran in the faith, but there's something for you.

[34 : 13] And all of this, all of this, it flows from the voice of the father on the mountain. Said in verse 935, this is my son.

This is my chosen one. Listen to him. You should never stop listening to him. speaks in his word and he speaks to you and me even here today.

Jesus' words offer correction for his disciples. Both then and today. May we hear his words. May we embrace his words.

May we listen to him. May we love him. And may we live for him. Huh? We remain disciples in process with room to grow.

But there are some things that are definitely clear to you and me now. What was hidden from their eyes as it relates to his suffering are crystal clear to you and me as Christians today.

[35 : 19] And that's what this table represents. this table understand it. It doesn't represent the might of Jesus' miracle or miracles but it represents his humbling himself unto death becoming man who would give himself for man for you and me who himself would take upon himself the sins your sins and mine and for that he would die and for and he would he would demonstrate that even when he came to the Passover on that faithful day just before he died the night before he passed away.

And Paul says it very clearly in first Corinthians chapter 11 verse 23 and again notice the humility of Christ suffering the humility of his incarnation just so that he could suffer for you and for me and die for us.

Listen to what he writes Paul in first Corinthians 11 23 I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you that the Lord Jesus on the night in which he was betrayed he took bread bread common everyday bread and one place it said that he's the bread of life he's the source of life but what did he do with that bread he took it and when he had given thanks he broke it again picturing his suffering and eventual death that would happen in his body this is my body which is for you do this he says in remembrance of me that's which in our text he was they were looking forward to the suffering of the son of man you and I look back at the suffering of the son of man these elements that represent his suffering look in verse 25 in the same way also we took the cup after supper saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me the meal that we come to now is for disciples it's for followers of

Christ it is for those who have embraced what he has done as being done for them and on their behalf and by faith they have embraced him as the life the life source the forgiveness for their sins and our partaking of this demonstrates our union demonstrated in our communion with him on today so I invite you I invite you as disciples in process come to the table and to be nourished be nourished as we reflect on what he has done for us be strengthened as we continue our discipleship trek in this world seeking to honor him in all we do if you not trusted Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of your sins we ask that you refrain from partaking of this meal let me pray and then

Dave and I are going to come and serve you at the Lord's table today father thank you for enabling us to see clearly what they barely saw from their point of view in the text on this morning blessed be your name for you have died Lord Jesus shed your blood for us and may we be strengthened this morning as disciples in process sometimes not seeing clearly sometimes seeing through a haze sometimes not getting it sometimes our aspirations are not in accord with your aspirations from us sometimes the cares of this world and all of that choke the word that it doesn't become fruitful in our own lives but we come that you would help us and strengthen us even through this meal today we pray in Christ's name amen welcome people of

[40 : 01] God to the table to to to to to to!