

In His Prayer (Luke 9:28-62)

We're studying the Gospel of Luke. Today we'll look at the second half of cp.9.

Jesus asked Peter the most important question: Who do you say I am? Jesus asks us the same question to each of us. We can't escape from this question nor can we ask others to answer it for us. We all have to decide who Jesus is for us. Our answer will determine how we live in the present life and in the afterlife.

Jesus told his disciples that he would be crucified. And he told them to deny themselves, take up their cross daily and follow him.

What does it actually mean to his disciples?

1. Listen to the Lord's voice

28-31

²⁸ About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. ²⁹ As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. ³⁰ Two men, Moses and Elijah, ³¹ appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.

One minute Jesus seems normal enough, ruddy face, beard, dusty clothing from the trail. The next minute his face is shining like the sun and his clothing as bright as lightning! He is changed, transfigured in divine glory before their eyes.

Moses and Elijah appear in a similar display of heavenly glory, and speak with Jesus.

They spoke about his exodus, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. Jesus' salvation fulfills something the Father has planned long before, something that Jesus has been preparing for, and now will carry out. Moses and Elijah were meant to encourage Jesus and discuss His upcoming crucifixion and resurrection.

32-33

³² Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. ³³ 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.)

Disciples saw Jesus' glory. But actually they were very sleepy, so they didn't witness the whole story in detail. While they were dozing off, something tremendous was happening. Although they were half asleep, they realized something extraordinary was happening, and they woke up suddenly. Then, they saw Jesus in his glory, and Moses and Elijah with him.

A little digression, but how did they know that these two were Moses and Elijah? Of course, they had never seen their photos, nor did they have facebook. Maybe, Jesus told them that they were Moses and Elijah.

Peter, in his panic, said something. He suggested that he would build a tent for Jesus. He didn't say these words with his clear mind and consideration, but it shows some truth about Peter.

- 1) He put Jesus in parallel with Moses and Elijah.
- 2) He was to stop Jesus on the glorious mountain, preventing him from going to the cross.

Peter proposed building three tents for the three great men: Jesus, Moses and Elijah. While Jesus was making a resolution to suffer in Jerusalem, Peter was making a resolution to chill with Jesus, Moses and Elijah on the mountain. He liked to be in glory and honor without any sacrifice and pain.

34-36

³⁴ While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. ³⁵ A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him." ³⁶ 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.

When we come to know the goodness of Jesus, we want to follow him. We want to do something for him. That is a natural response. Then, whose voice we listen and follow will show whom we are really following.

A voice came from the cloud, in heavenly glory, "Listen to him." God himself intervened from heaven to tell his disciples just one thing: "Listen to him!"

Some people only want to hear what they want to hear. They only heard what they liked, and blocked out what they didn't like to hear. This is known as selective hearing.

King David wanted to build a temple for the Lord. But the Lord stopped him. And he obeyed the voice. It was not that he became irresponsible and did nothing. But he did his best to prepare for building the temple.

We move to another scene.

57-58

⁵⁷ As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." ⁵⁸ Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

A man said to him, "I will follow you." Jesus replied, "The Son of Man has no place to even lay his head." Jesus was telling him, "Follow me by faith because you love me, and not because you want some guaranteed benefits from me."

Let's think about some questions: Would you still follow Jesus,
 What if you are stopped from what you are trying to do?
 What if you recognize that things wouldn't go the way you have expected?
 What if you realize that you will have to pay the cost if you follow Jesus?

Disciples will listen to the Lord voice and follow him.

2. Do what is entrusted

37-40

³⁷ The next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met him. ³⁸ A man in the crowd called out, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. ³⁹ A spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams; it throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It scarcely ever leaves him and is destroying him. ⁴⁰ I begged your disciples to drive it out, but they could not."

When Jesus came down from the mountain, a large crowd met him. A man asked Jesus, "I beg you to look at my son." The boy was attacked by an evil spirit, and clearly the evil spirit was doing some destructive work on him. The man asked Jesus' disciples to drive it out, but they couldn't.

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⁴¹ "O unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you and put up with you? Bring your son here."

Jesus said to the father, "Bring the boy here to me." (Matt 17:17)

Then, what were the disciples busy doing at that time?

Mark 9:14

¹⁴ When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them.

They were arguing with the teachers of the law. No matter how much they argue, there will be no solution. Even though they understand the theory, it doesn't mean they will be able to save the boy.

Until then, while they were with Jesus, the disciples had been watching and learning from him. Jesus did not only preached the good news, but also performed miracles, healed the sick, made clean the leprosy, drove out demons, and raised people from the dead.

They should have known that Jesus can release the child from the evil spirit. And they should be the ones who would bring the child to Jesus. But they didn't run to ask Jesus for help nor even greet him, when he came down from the mountain. It was the crowd who ran to greet him.

We move to another scene.

59-60

⁵⁹ He said to another man, "Follow me." But the man replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." ⁶⁰ Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

Let's imagine what is happening here.

The man has just lost his father. And in his sorrow and anxiety, he is

thinking what to do about his burial. And Jesus asked him to follow him.

Do you think that's the case? Does Jesus do things like that? It's a little difficult to think like that.

Then, what about this scenario? The man's father is suffering from incurable disease. He is dying. And the man is worrying about his father and what to do with his burial when he dies. Then, why does he not ask Jesus for the healing of his father? Does Jesus tell the man to leave his dying father and to follow him? It's a little difficult to think like that.

I imagine what is happening here is like this.

His father is still alive. He is not suffering incurable disease, nor is he dying. But he says, "When my father dies, I will do his burial first. Then I will follow you." In other words, he is saying, "I believe in you, Jesus. But I'm not ready to get too serious about it right now. When I get older I will. Perhaps it will be after my father pass away." In short, he is politely declining.

In any case, we have no power over someone who is dead. We cannot do anything about someone who is already dead. No matter what a great funeral we hold for our father, it doesn't mean anything practically for a dead man. It is much better to honor our parents while they are alive.

There is something we must do now, not later. Now is the time to do this thing. That is to share the gospel with the people who are living.

Disciples must be faithful with what is entrusted by the Lord. We must embrace "now". We must do what we can do "now".

3. Look at the right direction

46-48

⁴⁶ An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. ⁴⁷ Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. 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. For he who is least among you all--he is the greatest."

An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be

the greatest. They might have said so and so was the greatest, but each of them might have thought, he was the greatest. There was pride.

Jesus said to them, "Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me. He who is least among you all--he is the greatest." Then John said,

49-50

⁴⁹ "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." ⁵⁰ "Do not stop him," Jesus said, "for whoever is not against you is for you."

What is John trying to say here? Or, what is Luke trying to communicate here?

Remember what was recorded before this scene. A boy was seized by an evil spirit, thrown to the ground in a convulsion. The father asked Jesus' disciples to drive it out from his son, but they couldn't.

Then, Jesus came down from the mountain with the other three disciples. And Jesus grieved over their unbelief, and drove out the evil spirit.

Which group did John belong to? He belonged to the group who went to the mountain with Jesus. He didn't belong to the group who couldn't drive out the evil spirit.

After this, Jesus talked about welcoming someone in his *name*, and said that he who is least among them all is the greatest.

Hearing this, John said to Jesus, "We saw a man driving out demons in your *name* and we tried to stop him, because he is not one of us."

He wanted to say that other disciples don't know about the ministry in Jesus' name. But he knows it very well. That is, he was implying that he is better than others.

But, Jesus pointed out his error and said, "Do not stop him". The point is not whether he is "one of us" or not. The point is whether he is under the authority of "Jesus' name". The fact he is not join us cannot be the measure whether the person is against Jesus' name or not.

What is important for Jesus' disciples is not to become great, or have higher position over others, or receive praise from others with the entrusted authority of his name. But to serve others.

Even humility or generosity can be means to get praise or acknowledgement from others. What Jesus looks at is the motive in our heart. The point is to serve others in love.

And it continues to the next scene.

51-54

⁵¹ As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. ⁵² And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; ⁵³ but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. 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?"

When James and John saw that Samaritans didn't welcome Jesus, they said, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" That shows why Jesus gave them nickname Boanerges, Sons of Thunder. He knew them very well.

They knew that the power and authority entrusted by Jesus was so powerful that they can do that. But what is important for Jesus' disciples is not to judge nor destroy others with the entrusted authority of His name, but to show the reality of the kingdom of God and lead them to Jesus.

We move to another scene.

61

⁶¹ Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family."

For most of us, our call to follow Jesus does NOT mean we have to physically leave our loved ones. But we may need to leave them behind spiritually in order to follow Jesus. We can't say: "When all my family get saved and decide to follow Jesus, then I'll be the most faithful disciple. I just don't want to get ahead of them spiritually." It doesn't work that way.

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⁶² Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

When we plough in the field, we don't look back, but we should look ahead. If we don't look at the right direction when we do whatever, it doesn't just mean our work doesn't make progress, but it's also dangerous. In this world, there are many things that prevent us from following Jesus. One of the destructions is to look back our past. We may regret about it or proud about it, but the past is past. We can learn from the past, but we can't serve for current generation effectively while we look back. We should look at the right direction. We must fix our eyes on what we must look at.

Jesus' disciples will fix their eyes on Jesus, and serve their generation looking ahead the coming kingdom, and they will not regret over their decision.

4. In His Prayer

We studied what Jesus' disciple should be. Jesus' disciples will: 1) Listen to the Lord's voice, 2) Do what is entrusted, and 3) Look at the right direction. If we fail to do these things, can we still be his disciples?

Jesus chose the 12 disciples with prayer. Even after that, Jesus often prayed. Once when Jesus was praying in private, his disciples were with him. And Jesus asked them, "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ, Son of God." Then Jesus told his disciples that he would be crucified

Sometimes Jesus went to a mountain to pray. He took Peter, John and James with him. When they went down from the mountain, Jesus told the disciples that he would soon be crucified.

But disciples didn't understand what he meant. And they didn't even ask him about it. What they cared more was who was the greatest among them.

When Jesus prayed, I think his disciples were always in his mind. He was always thinking about his disciples. What were his disciples like?

They could not drive out demons even though the power and authority were given to them. Right after he confessed that Jesus was the Christ, Peter rebuked Jesus, when he told his disciples about his death on the cross. John stopped a man from driving out demons in Jesus' name, because he was not

one of them. James and John suggested calling fire down from heaven to destroy Samaritans, because they didn't welcome Jesus. Each of them thought he was the greatest among them. Although they saw the glory of Jesus, they didn't tell anyone. When they didn't understand the meaning of Jesus' death on the cross, they didn't even ask about it.

We never know how much Jesus worried about them, how much he prayed and interceded for them. Jesus' disciples are in his prayer. Rom. 8:34 says "Who then can condemn? Christ Jesus, who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us." We are supported and protected by his prayer.

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⁵¹ As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.

Jesus was setting out for Jerusalem. He started to walk toward the cross. We can see the model of a faithful disciple in Jesus. He was listening to God the Father. He was doing what was entrusted to him by the Father. He was looking to the direction he was supposed to. His each step shows us how much he loves his disciples. Each time he prayed, he interceded for his disciples. The reason why Jesus chose to die on the cross was becoming clearer and clearer.

"Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." "Now remain in my love." "Remain in me, and I will remain in you" (John 15:13, 9 and 4)