

Who is Jesus? (Luke 9:1-27)

We are studying the gospel of Luke. Today we will learn the first half of chapter 9. The title of the message is "Who is Jesus?"

1. Who is this man?

1-2

¹ When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, ² and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

Jesus called 12 men and they followed him. Jesus preached the good news, performed miracles, healed the sick, made clean the leprosy, drove out demons, and raised people from the dead. During those days, Jesus' disciples had been watching and learning from him. Now, Jesus wants to send them out for the mission.

When Jesus sent his 12 disciples, he delegated his power and authority. The power means strength, ability and capability. The authority means control, ruling power and official power. He not only entrusted them with power, but also with authority. I will give you one example that may help you to understand what it means.

Two years ago, Tohoku, the Northeast area of Japan was hit by Tsunami. Many volunteers from overseas came there to help. There were some doctors among them. They have ability as doctors. But they cannot give medical treatment without permission in Japan. They needed authority to use their ability.

There were many dangerous areas in Tsunami-hit area. The police and fire department directed people living there to move to another area. The people followed their direction, not because the police and fire department had ability to carry them out of the area, but because of the authority entrusted to the police and fire department by the country.

6

⁶ So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere.

The twelve disciples didn't just preach the good news with words, but with the power and authority, they also drove out demons, and healed the sick. They demonstrated the power and authority of the kingdom of God.

The disciples themselves experienced the reality of the kingdom of God where they were sent, and they realized the kingdom of God through their ministry. The kingdom of God is where God reigns. It's full of God's glory, power and love. It's where Jesus wants us all to be.

3-5

³ He told them: "Take nothing for the journey--no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra tunic. ⁴ Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. ⁵ If people do not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave their town, as a testimony against them."

When Jesus sent his disciples, he not only gave them power and authority, but he also instructed them not to take anything for their journey. When Jesus commanded the disciples to take nothing for their journey, he did not intend to impose needless hardships or even to suggest peculiar denial. Rather, He wanted his disciples to gain experience of the Father's care for them.

7-9

⁷ Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was going on. And he was perplexed, because some were saying that John had been raised from the dead, ⁸ others that Elijah had appeared, and still others that one of the prophets of long ago had come back to life. ⁹ But Herod said, "I beheaded John. Who, then, is this I hear such things about?" And he tried to see him.

Here we see the result of the 12 disciples' ministry.

1) People said about Jesus that he was John the Baptist raised from the dead, or Elijah or one of the prophets who has come back to life. In other words, people saw, through disciples' ministry, Jesus had authority from above.

12 men went out to preach the gospel and to heal. They weren't religious teachers, actually just ordinary men. But when they preached the gospel, people listened and were healed. This is the power and authority of Jesus.

People understood, through the ministry of the twelve disciples, who Jesus is. Their ministry showed them that Jesus is the person with authority.

2) Herod was perplexed. Herod may have started to feel the same danger he felt toward John, now toward Jesus. So he wanted to see Jesus and find out more about him.

Josephus Flavius, 1st-century Romano-Jewish historian says in his book *Antiquities of the Jews* that "Now when [many] others came in crowds about him, for they were very greatly moved [or pleased] by hearing his words, Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion, (for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise,) thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties, by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it would be too late."¹

Herod saw John as a dangerous person, and he killed him. Now, Herod saw Jesus as a dangerous person, and he wanted to kill him just as he killed John. So he tried to see Jesus and know more about him.

“Who is this?” This is a right question. But Herod had a wrong motive.

10

¹⁰ When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida,

Jesus withdrew to Bethsaida, refusing Herod’s intention to meet him. Why did he go to Bethsaida in order to refuse Herod? Why does going to Bethsaida mean to withdraw from Herod?

What kind of place is Bethsaida? Let’s look at it on the map.

Bethsaida is Philip's territory. It is out of Herod’s territory. That is, while Jesus is in Bethsaida, he is outside of Herod’s authority. In other words, he has authority only in his territory, or the area belongs to him.

Now, let’s think about spiritual authority. Those who belong to Christ live in this world, but they don’t belong to this world. We are not under the authorities of the rulers of this dark world (Eph 6:12). As long as we remain in the authority of the kingdom of God, the rulers of this dark world cannot touch us, although

¹ *Antiquities of the Jews*, 18-5-2

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/history/flavius-josephus/antiquities-jews/book-18/chapter-5.html>

they may threaten us, tempt us or confuse us. We don't have to listen to them and obey them because we are outside of their authority.

11

¹¹ but the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing.

People may have thought Jesus would not come back to Galilee. People loved Jesus and followed him. John describes in his Gospel that Jesus went to a mountainside and sat down there with his disciples (John 6:3). He welcomed the crowd too. He taught and healed them in this remote place and spoke to the crowd about the kingdom of God. He invited them to enter the kingdom of God.

2. What do you have?

12-13

¹² Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, "Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here." ¹³ He replied, "You give them something to eat."

"You feed them." Jesus said.

"No, we can't," they protested.

"What DO you have?" Jesus asked.

"Five loaves and two fish only."

"Give them to me," Jesus said.

Jesus blessed them and gave them to the disciples.

People all ate and were full.

What is Jesus teaching to his disciples here? What can we learn from here?

It is not what we don't have that we should look at, but it is what we have, which the Lord has given us, that we should look at.

There are so many needs around us. We may think we are so small and helpless when we think of how great these needs are. We may feel there is

nothing we can do. When we think how great the needs are, we feel what we have is too small and useless. "I cannot do anything, I am useless. I just want to give up everything," we may think so, I often think so, but that is not true.

We should not focus on what we don't have, but we should focus on what we have, or what the Lord has given us, and use it as the Lord wants us to use it. The result will be in His hands.

When Jesus sent his 12 disciples, he said to them, "Take nothing for the journey." And what was the result? They preached the gospel and healed people. They used what the Lord had given them. And then they experienced the work of the Lord which is beyond human ability and potentiality.

We can learn the same lesson from the incident of five loaves of bread and two fish. We should not focus on what we don't have, but we should focus on what we have, or what the Lord has given us, and use it as the Lord wants us to use it.

16-17

¹⁶ Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to set before the people. ¹⁷ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

Jesus gave the bread and fish to the disciples so that they could distribute them to the people.

If there had not been five loaves and two fish, would Jesus have not been able to feed 5,000 people? Or probably about 20,000 if you count women and children. I think he was able. When the devil tempted Jesus in the desert, he said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." (Matt. 4:3). If it was not at all possible, this cannot be temptation.

Couldn't Jesus tell the people to come and take bread and fish by themselves? I think he could. They may have caused a panic by crowding about food. Did Jesus make his disciples to distribute food in order to avoid a panic? Maybe. But I think he had a greater purpose. Jesus was teaching them how to use what they have received from God, and let them experience the power of God as they work with Jesus.

Jesus wants his disciples to feed the crowd of people with the good

news of the kingdom of God. He wants them to drive out demons, to heal the sick, and to proclaim the kingdom of God. This is the heart of Jesus.

Jesus considered his disciples as partners to enlarge the kingdom of God, and gave them training and opportunities to experience the power of God as they work for His kingdom.

3. Who do you say Jesus is?

18-19

¹⁸ Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say I am?" ¹⁹ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life."

Who do the crowds say Jesus is? John the Baptist, Elijah or one of the prophets of long ago who has come back to life. Here, no one thinks Jesus is a bad person. They think Jesus is a God-chosen person, the one who does God's will, a reformer, a great preacher, a messenger of God, a great prophet. But, they didn't think he was the promised Messiah they see in the Old Testament.

20-22

²⁰ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "The Christ of God." ²¹ Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. ²² And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."

Jesus expresses that he is the Christ in two different ways. And they exactly match with how the Messiah is described in the Old Testament.

1) The Son of Man. Jesus frequently used this term to designate Himself. Daniel 7:13 mentions about "Son of Man." Here both humanity and deity intimated by this title. He is the one who gives everlasting kingdom to his saints.

2) The suffering servant. A humble, suffering, and dying servant. (Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12, Gen. 3:15; Psalm 22; Ezekiel 9-14; Zechariah 9)

23

²³ Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

Whom does it say they are to follow? Jesus. What did Jesus say he would experience? He said he must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed. If the disciples follow Jesus, they would also experience something similar.

"If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. ..." (John 15:20) It's reasonable thought.

Without denying ourselves, and taking up our cross, that is, without being prepared to experience that kind of suffering and hardships, we can't follow Jesus.

Trusting in Jesus and following him. That is an initial response and an ongoing response.

Herod tried to see Jesus. He tried to see him in order to kill him and protect his position, authority and privilege. The crowds came to Jesus. They wanted to make him king. But their motive was to receive free bread and healing. How about the disciples? Jesus speaks to his disciples, "If you want to follow me, you must deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me."

And Jesus also says this,

"I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. ..." (Matt. 10:16)

"All men will hate you because of me, ..." (Matt. 10:22)

At first sight, being a Jesus' disciple looks like a loss. Isn't it better to learn worldly wisdom and be successful in this world? Isn't it wiser to protect our position and authority in this world like Herod?

24-25

²⁴ For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. ²⁵ What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?

We are confronted with two choices. One is to choose the way of men, avoiding the shame of the Cross, and thus preserving our 'self' while losing our life, or the

other choice is the way of Christ, which is weakness and shame in the eyes of the world, but glory and honor in the eyes of God.

26

²⁶ If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

Here he talks about his second coming. The kingdom of God is as certain as Jesus' second coming. Jesus will definitely come again in his glory as King of kings. Kingdom of God is not something uncertain, which we are not sure whether it really exist or not. The kingdom of God is not an uncertain hope. It is not something we tried to establish, but failed. The kingdom of God is as certain as Jesus' second coming.

Then, will the kingdom of God not come until Jesus' second coming? Or will we enter the kingdom of God after we die? Until then, is all his disciples can do just wait and persevere?

27

²⁷ I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God."

Jesus said there were some who were standing there with him who would not taste death before they would see the kingdom of God. If we literally understand this, among those who heard these words from Jesus at that time, there were some who saw kingdom of God while they were here on this earth.

Who were standing there with Jesus? V.18, they were the disciples. I think they were not just 12 apostles.

Acts 1:6-7

⁶ So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.

Even after Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection, his disciples were still

waiting for the kingdom to come. And there must be those who saw the kingdom.

I believe that kingdom of God is revealed through the community of disciples, that is church, after the Holy Spirit was sent to his believers.

4. Who is Jesus?

Jesus fed more than 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish. This incident clearly shows who Jesus is. He is:

1) The shepherd who prepares meal in the presence of our enemies

Ps. 23:5

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

He knows that chief priests, Pharisees and Herod look for the opportunity to kill him. In that moment, he fed people. He is The Shepherd.

2) the Lord Almighty who prepares a feast for all peoples

Is. 25:6-9

⁶ On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine- the best of meats and the finest of wines. ⁷ On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; ⁸ he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The Lord has spoken. ⁹ In that day they will say, "Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the Lord, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation."

This is a beautiful picture of how wonderful the kingdom of God is. Through Christ, it has come, it will come, and it is here. Jesus is this God. He is our God. We are his people.

Jesus is The shepherd who prepares meal in the presence of our enemies, The Lord Almighty who prepares a feast for all peoples, and he is The bread of life. He is our life, hope and victory.

Jesus died on the cross and resurrected, and sent the Holy Spirit. He establishes the kingdom of God. The church reveals the kingdom of God and the kingdom grows among us, and more and more people will be added to the kingdom through his church.