

AF A9 BIBLE STUDY: “Messiah Labors On” Luke 9

Scripture of Lesson: Luke’s Gospel 9: 37-62

1. Healing the demon-possessed boy

- A. No one could help this demon-possessed boy, who was being tormented by a demon daily. Do you know of someone around you like this boy – strongly possessed by either drugs, alcohol, sex, greed, or violence that prevents the person from living in honor of God?
- B. Why could the disciples not drive out the demon? [v. 9:40] Demons recognize Jesus Christ in His person or in a godly Christian. When Jesus commanded the demon to leave the boy, it obeyed [v. 9:42] and the boy was healed. When we lead a godly life with the Spirit of Christ living in us, we can help such people today. God works through godly people.

2. Lord Jesus foretells His death

- A. Lord Jesus told the disciples that He would be delivered to the Jewish leaders and be crucified [v. 9:44], but they did not understand what this meant. They understood the Kingdom of God as an earthly kingdom. So, if the kingdom of God has come and their teacher would be enthroned as its king, how could He be delivered and face death on a cross? This preconceived idea about the kingdom and the nature of Jesus’ ministry prevented them from understanding His saying.
- B. We have various pre-conceived ideas about who God is and what His plans are. These prevent us from correctly understanding the Scripture and accepting God’s plan for us. Let us examine what such ideas we have and pray to God to help remove them.

3. Who is the greatest?

- A. In any human organization there is a leader at the top with the ultimate authority and responsibility. As we grow up, we learn this basic fact of life. The disciples, having heard from their teacher about His impending death, may have felt the need to determine their leader so that their infantile group could continue with its mission.
- B. Jesus, however, set up a little child and taught them who would be their leader. *“Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For he who is least among you all will be great.”* [v. 9:48] While the disciples’ debate focused on who was the greatest among them, Jesus was redirecting their attention to a ‘childlike acceptance of Jesus Christ’ into their hearts and lives. Then, such a one has accepted God into his/her life. And such a one takes on the true humility as a child of God so that God could use him/her for His good pleasure. And promotion comes from above.

For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he puts down one, and sets up another. [Psalm 75: 6-7]

4. Lord Jesus forbids sectarianism

- A. The disciples forbade a person who was driving out demons in Jesus’ name from this good work because he was not willing to follow them. Lord Jesus, however, said, *“He who is not against me is on our side.”* [v 9:50] Many people criticize the multitude of protestant Christian denominations. However, they are all brethren of multiple traditions who are all on Jesus’ side.
- B. Let us not be critical of brethren of other denominations but learn to work together for the common cause of the kingdom of God.

5. Samaritans and Jesus

- A. James and John were angry that the people of a certain Samaritan village refused to accept the Messiah. They wanted fire to come down and strike these people just as Elijah had done to two groups of fifty soldiers

who came to fetch him to the Israeli king Ahaziah [1 Kings 1: 10-12]. Lord Jesus reminded them that His mission was not to destroy people but to save them:

But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." [v. 9: 55-56]

- B. What is the difference between Elijah's mission and the Messiah's mission? The spiritual situation of the northern kingdom, Israel, during Elijah's missional period was so bad that God was angry with the leadership. No king served God faithfully and all of them led the people away from God. And there was no natural succession of the throne. God did not bless them but still kept sending His prophets to woo them away from the prevalent idolatry and syncretism. What Elijah did, although it seems cruel from our present era standard, was justified from God's viewpoint. Lord Jesus' ministry was different in that He came to show God's mercy and grace to the people. When does God show mercy or justice? We must respect God's authority and prerogative to set the times for showing His mercy or justice. Our fear of God may bring us to the place of godly wisdom of praying for His mercy even when His justice is rightly justified.
- C. So, let us have the heart of Jesus Christ, who showed compassion to the sinners and gave Himself as their ransom so that they might be saved from God's wrath.

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. [Matt 9: 35-36]

6. Cost of discipleship

- A. Lord's teachings to those who desired to work in His ministry:
 - "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God." [v. 9: 60]*
 - "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." [v. 9:62]*
- B. Those who desire to be in the ministry of Jesus Christ must bear in mind that God's work takes the highest priority, even above family obligations and the past life or career.

Topics for discussion:

1. *What is the dominant theme in these accounts of the Lord's ministry?*
2. *Discuss what we can learn from His examples.*