

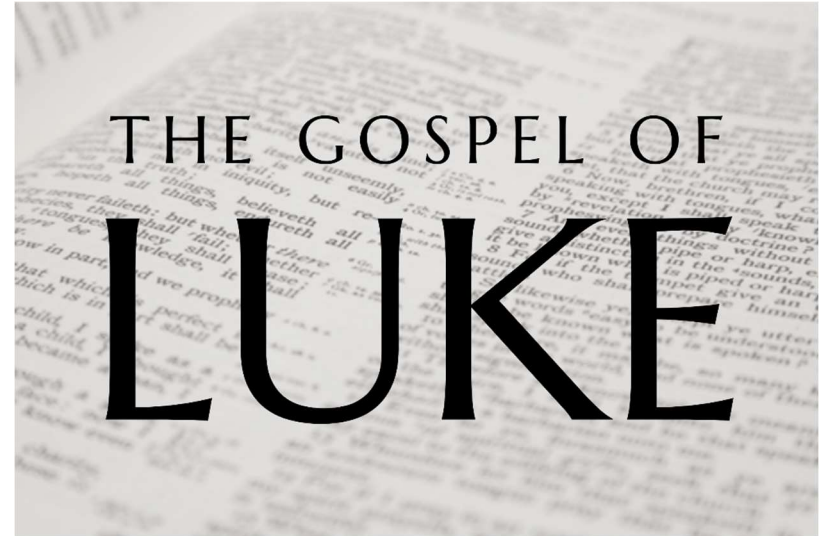
in the lives of others, and that will truly be wonderful to both experience and to see.

Q1. What does Jesus do to the boy?

Q2. What does Mark in his gospel tell us the Apostles ask Jesus?

Q3. What is Jesus' answer?

FAMILY WORSHIP BOOKLET



God tells us that Ezra read from the book of the Law,
day after day, and that the people of God
were filled with joy!

We should be slow, though, to be too critical of them, for where does your faith and mine sit today? We have seen the power of resurrection work in our own lives. And yet, the question must be asked – how ardent is our belief, your's and mine, that Christ is going to save the lost around us? Given the many blessings and privileges he has given us, if Jesus were to look at us, what would he say? Would we fare any better than the disciples? Of course, we would like to think we would, but it is a searching question.

Q1. Why were the Scribes attacking the Apostles?

Q2. How did Jesus respond and why?

Friday - Luke 9:37-42 – It is about faith and prayer.

V42. Jesus sorts the immediate problem. Jesus asks for the boy to be brought to him, and immediately the demon plays up. The whole point of this demonic activity was to test Jesus and show him that he is in a spiritual war. The effect on the young boy is serious. The demonic convulsion takes him to the ground, rolls him about and causes him to foam at the mouth (Mark 9:20). A distressing scene for the child's father. Luke doesn't record the conversation between the father and Jesus, nor the running of the crowd. He just cuts to the point – Jesus rebukes the unclean spirit and heals the boy. Luke adds, with an eye to tenderness, that Jesus gave the boy back to his father.

Mark tells us that when they entered the house, we're not told if it was the home of the child or the place where they were staying, that the apostles ask Jesus privately why they were unable to cast out the demon. Jesus' response, as always, is simple and clear – "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer." (Mark 9:28,29).

We can and are to do much using the gifts, abilities, health and strength that God has blessed us with. But the serious work of the Kingdom cannot be done without prayer. It just can't. Paul writes to the church at Ephesus, and he calls upon the church to be "praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel." (Ephesians 6:18,19). As we grow together in our love for Christ, and our faith in his power matures, he will build us into a praying community. When that happens, and it will take time, we will see increasing manifestations of his power both in our own lives and

Thursday - Luke 9:37-42 – It is about faith and prayer.

As with life, the pinnacle experiences don't negate the necessity for the daily grunt work of faith, learning and humility. And we are entering a section of the gospel where Luke brings together four short incidents which show the Apostles' lack of faith, their struggle to learn, their pride and intolerance.

V37. All three Synoptics write about the disciples' inability to deal with a case of demon possession. Luke, unusually, is the only one of the gospel writers to tell us that this happened the day after the transfiguration. The most detailed account of what takes place is in Mark's gospel (Mark 9:14-29). And it is in Mark that we find the immediate context is a quarrel. Jesus returns from the Mount, along with Peter, James and John, to find the nine other disciples in an argument with the scribes. The row has started because the disciples had been unable to heal a demon-possessed child, something that had obviously caused both the child and his parents' great distress. Mark writes that Jesus asks the disciples, "What are you arguing about with them?" (Mark 9:16), and before they can answer the father says, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. And behold, a spirit seizes him," (Luke 9:38,39). It was this failure to cast the demons out of this child that had placed the disciples in the firing line of the scribes.

V41. *Jesus' reaction.* Jesus, you might think, is going to protect His disciples. After all, they have forsaken everything to be with Him, their careers, time with their families and surely, He would understand that it would take time for them to grow and develop into the task He had given them. Jesus' response, though, would shock them. In a few words, He reveals the depths of disappointment and points to their problem – lack of faith. Far from protecting them, Jesus exposes them. He expected more from them, and his language strongly conveys that. Had they not seen what he had done? How could they go through experiences like the calming of the Sea of Galilee, the healing of the Gerasene demoniac, the healing of the woman who had been ill of twelve years, the raising of Jairus's daughter from the dead, the feeding of the five thousand, and not believe? Jesus' words convey a sense of real frustration. See how he unites faithlessness with twistedness. What is faithlessness? It is a refusal to believe and, in the case of the disciples it is a refusal to believe in the face of overwhelming evidence. Not accepting evidence can be nothing less than twisted thinking. The truth of Christ is simple and clear; for these men not to humble themselves and accept it, has to mean that their thinking is distorted.

Monday - Luke 9:28-36 – The Transfiguration of Jesus.

Unusual for Luke, he gives us a time frame of 8 days for what happens next. Matthew and Mark both say 6 days (Matthew 17:1, Mark 9:2). Why the difference? Well, Luke is giving an indication of the time frame rather than being specific. Another proof of the authenticity of the gospels.

There are various suggestions as to which mountain Jesus went up. Some say Mount Tabor, others Mount Hermon; the fact is we are not told because God does not want us to know, otherwise, he would have revealed it to us. It's a simple fact that there is much that we do not know, but God has revealed to us all that He wants us to know. Our desire must be to study those things to become mature, and not to be driven about by every wind of speculative teaching.

Again, we read that Jesus went up the mountain to pray. We can't get away from the fact that Jesus lived in communion with the Father, constantly conscious of his need.

V29. As Jesus is praying, something happens. Luke says that "the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white." Theologians have devised the term 'the transfiguration' for this change that comes upon Jesus, as his human nature is glorified. Matthew tells us that his face shone like the sun (Matthew 17:2). The shining of Jesus' face was so glorious that those present, Peter, James and John, could only describe in terms of the brightest thing known to them – the sun. What was true of his face was also true of his entire being and clothes. Mark says of his clothing, that "his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them." (Mark 9:3). Again, the comparison with the whitest, brightest, most radiant thing equivalent on earth is used to try and convey something of what is being seen. This glory is from another place, and these men are struggling to find words to express it adequately. They know that their analogies are falling short of what they are observing, but there is nothing they can do. They are literally, in a sense, lost for words. Peter would later write that they were "eyewitnesses of his majesty." (2 Peter 1:16). John wrote, "we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14). On this one occasion the divine glory of Jesus, the Son of God, is permitted to shine through that human form he had, with such humility, taken upon himself. Something worth taking a moment to consider.

Q1. What was Jesus doing when he was transfigured?

Q2. What happened to Jesus?

Q3. Who witnessed this transfiguration of Jesus?

Tuesday - Luke 9:28-36 – The Transfiguration of Jesus.

V30. "And behold," writes Luke; as if the transfiguration of Jesus was not staggering enough, two men also appear in glorified form and begin to talk with Jesus. The conversation is about Jesus' 'departure', which is going to happen in Jerusalem. To be clear, they are speaking with Jesus about his death on the cross, his resurrection, and his ascension to glory. The men talking with Jesus have a huge personal interest, as do all the saints in glory, in what is going to happen. Their dwelling in heaven is predicated on what will be accomplished through the 'departure' of Jesus. Who are these two men? They are Moses and Elijah. We are not told how Peter, James and John realize that it is Moses and Elijah. Did Jesus address them by name as he spoke with them, or will it be the case that the saints in heaven are known by a simple revelation of God? It's an exciting thought, and if I can say it reverently, especially for those of us who struggle at times with names, faces, etc., that we will instantly know who people are in heaven. Elijah, of course, ascended bodily into heaven (2 Kings 1:11), while Moses died and was buried by God in a place no one knows the whereabouts of (Deuteronomy 34:5,6), which means that his soul alone entered heaven. So, like the angels who were sent to the earth on occasions as messengers of God, Moses was provided with a form, which was both recognizable and functioned as a body. But why were Moses and Elijah sent from heaven for this significant conversation with Jesus? The generally held view is that you have in Moses the one through whom God gave his Law, and Elijah is regarded as the representative of the Old Testament prophets.

V33. The three sleeping Apostles awaken to the scene described, just as Elijah and Moses are about to leave. God only gives them enough sight of what has transpired that they will be able to recount it in a general, if striking, way. Peter offers to make three temporary dwellings, one for Jesus and one for Moses and one for Elijah, to prolong their stay. It is an offer that is coming from a mouth that is speaking before thinking. He is excited, to a degree overwhelmed, by what he is witnessing, Mark says that there is also a strong element of fear – "they were terrified," (Mark 9:6), and he just opens his mouth and speaks. He is not the first person to have done that in life and certainly not the last. Having control of our tongue begins with having control of our hearts, and yet none of us succeed wholly in this regard (James 3:1-12).

Q1. Who appears and speaks with Jesus?

Q2. What does Peter offer to do?

Wednesday - Luke 9:28-36 – The Transfiguration of Jesus.

V34. Jesus doesn't respond to Peter's suggestion. He sees it for what it is, sometimes the less said, the better. He also doesn't have time to do so, because, as Peter is speaking, cloud envelopes the mountain, covering them all. This is a supernatural event, and it engenders even more fear in the three Apostles. They can see nothing, but then they hear a voice. It is a voice of power and authority. It is the same voice that was heard at the Baptism of Jesus; it is the voice of God, the Father. The words are few. The words are simple. "This is my Son, my Chosen one" and then the command – "Listen to him!" This is an astonishing moment in the history of the world. Yes, God when addressing Jesus at His baptism had used the term 'dear Son', but now God in heaven, by declaring, 'this is my Son', is affirming Peter's previous confession that Jesus is the Christ. God is making it clear to all creation, in heaven and on earth, that Jesus, His only Begotten Son, is the Messiah, the one who has been Chosen to redeem His people from eternal punishment. That is why God does not hold back in His command to Peter, James, John and all of us, to listen to Jesus. For Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and no one shall come to the Father except through Jesus.

Matthew says that when Peter, James and John, heard this, "they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them, saying 'Rise and have no fear'" (Matthew 17:6,7). Luke simply says that "when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone." It was over. These three men would not speak of what they had seen on this day until after Jesus had risen from the dead (Mark 9:9).

What a day it will be when we stand in the presence of the risen, glorified Lord, and meet the saints of old. The difference for us, though, will be that, on that day, we will have no fear, and the experience will never end.

Q1. How does Jesus respond to Peter's offer to build a shelter, for Jesus, Elijah and Moses?

Q2. Who speaks? What does God say?

Q3. Why is this so important?