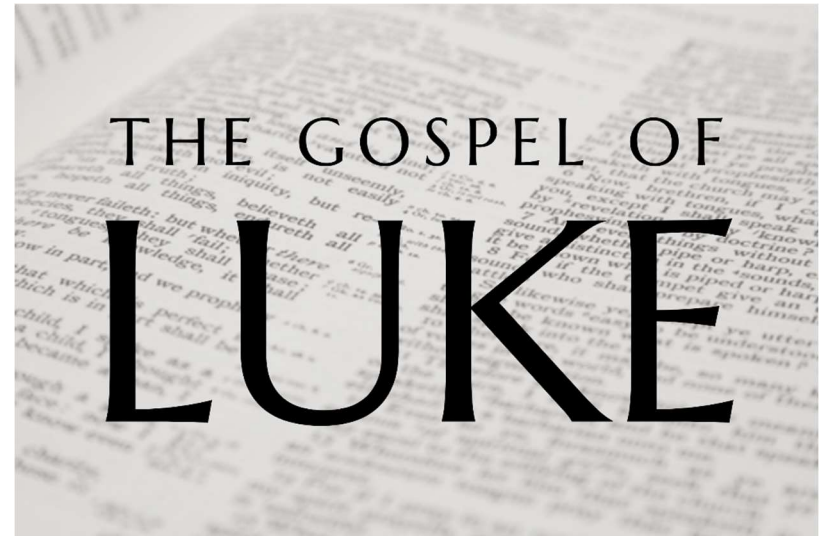


## FAMILY WORSHIP BOOKLET



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!

### **Friday - Luke 9:57-62 – Following Christ – what does it mean?**

As they are travelling, a scribe (Matthew 8:19) offers to follow Jesus wherever he will go. What a wonderful statement of commitment, and surely a challenge to the common, 'I'll see what I can do, when I get the chance, and if nothing else needs my attention' approach of so many today. Yes and No. Note that Jesus neither accepts nor declines the man's offer. Why? Because the offer to follow will only be credible if it is made after serious consideration.

In his response, Jesus, speaks to the cost involved of such a commitment, specifically the need to deprive oneself to follow. Whilst Jesus did not experience squalid poverty, he was well cared for in many ways; but he did frequently choose to forsake the comforts of his home because of the daily demands of his work. We're not told whether the man chose to follow Jesus or not.

V59. Jesus now who asks a man to follow him, literally 'be following me'. While the scribe had been keen to follow, this man is over-cautious and wants to delay making a decision. The man's request means that he is either saying that he must wait until his father dies before he can commit or that his father had just died, and the man is asking what it says, to go home and bury him. Surely this is a wholly credible request to make, given the command to honour one's parents. Jesus is bound to agree to it, but he doesn't. He calls the man to be concerned about matters of eternal significance, about heaven, to go and proclaim the kingdom of God. For Jesus the call to serve in the Kingdom of God supersedes everything, without exception, and for good reason - not everyone has been called to it. Christ knows nothing of the voluntarism that has imbibed the lives of many Christians. He gave his all, in obedience to the Father (Philippians 2:6-8), and if you hear and desire to heed His call to follow Him, you must do the same.

V61. Like the scribe, this third man offers to follow Jesus, but with the caveat that he goes home and sorts out his affairs first. Again, not an unreasonable request. One could argue that, in fact, it is a prudent one. The issue though is that family, whilst well intentioned, frequently derail the best of desires. Jesus states succinctly that our focus should be on the task in hand. We should be looking to what He will do in and through us, for the good of others, in his Bride and his glory.

- Q1. How did Jesus respond to the scribe who wanted to follow him?
- Q2. What did Jesus say when he called the second man to follow him?
- Q3. How does Jesus address putting family first over following him?

Produced by Ottawa RPC to help family worship.  
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#### **Thursday - Luke 9:51-56 – The final year.**

Luke says that Jesus "set his face to go to Jerusalem." It is a phrase that he will use often (Luke 9:51,53; 13:22,33; 17:11; 18:31; 19:11,28). It is important to note that this journey, which sees the end of Jesus' Galilean ministry, and records what happens as they travel to Jerusalem, actually takes place over the period of a year. During this year, the primary focus of Jesus' life will be on teaching the disciples.

The party, including several women (Luke 8:2,3) is at the border of Samaria, and the intention, as per the usual practice of Jews, is to travel through the province towards Jerusalem. The animosity between the Jews and Samaritans was real, but not sufficient to disrupt the potential for commerce; and a party of Jesus' size would have been a welcome sight for any village, given the revenue they would generate. Nonetheless, it was both a matter of common sense and courteousness to forewarn a village of the impending arrival of such a group of people, so that food and accommodation could be prepared. Hence the reason Jesus sent messengers ahead to inform the village that they would be coming. However, on this occasion, there wasn't the usual financially motivated, moderately affable, welcome. Why not? Because of Jesus. This is the first sign of opposition to rear its ugly head.

James and John, the Sons of Thunder (Mark 3:17), are incandescent with rage. They want to call down from heaven on the village. It seems brutal, but does it arise from what they had just witnessed on the Mount of Transfiguration, namely the glory of Christ, and were jealous to protect him as they saw best? Maybe seeing Elijah had reminded them of how he had called down fire on the fifty men of King Ahaziah (2 Kings 1:10). Jesus, though, doesn't give time for the thought to settle; he turns instantly and rebukes them. Their zeal may be commendable, but their proposal is not. The point is made – Jesus is not happy with what they are suggesting, and he leads the party to another village. Sometimes we are not jealous enough for Jesus' name and glory, choosing rather to stay silent when we should speak. When we do speak, we need to take care that we not only do so out of love for Jesus' name and honour, but that we manifest that zeal in a Jesus-like manner. We cannot excuse our poor behaviour, based on what we are doing, if it is for a cause.

Q1. What period are we now entering into in the life of Jesus?

Q2. Who shows opposition to Jesus?

Q3. How do James and John react?

Q4. How does Jesus respond to this reaction?

#### **Monday - Luke 9:43-45 – Listen to what Jesus says.**

Jesus doesn't dwell on the marvelling of the crowds at his healing of the demon-possessed boy. And here is an interesting aside which I didn't comment on last Friday when maybe I should have. In observing the miraculous act of Jesus, the people saw something that was awe-inspiring, and the only conclusion they could reach was that they'd just witnessed a display of God's majestic power. It's not that they had suddenly understood the Deity of Jesus, as Peter had announced it under the revelation of the Holy Spirit in Luke 9:20. It's that they are viewing Jesus as an instrument in the hand of God.

Jesus isn't impacted by the crowd's reaction, and he is not going to allow it to deflect the attention of the disciples. He immediately directs them again to the fact that he is going to die. Jesus looks them in the eye and says, "Let these words sink into your ears." In other words, 'I want you to hear this.' They know by the look in his eyes, and the intonation of his voice, that he means it.

All of God's Word has purpose and meaning, as we learnt last week in the memory verse, 2 Timothy 3:16,17, but it is important when we come to these moments when Jesus says – 'you need to get this', that we stop and take note of what he is saying.

In verse 22, Jesus had spoken of how he would be killed; now, he adds another element. He tells the disciples that he is going "to be delivered into the hands of men." He's letting them know that he will be handed over by someone to be killed. Of course, we know that this deliverer will be Judas Iscariot, one of those standing and listening to Jesus, but he is not going to be identified at this point. Matthew says that the disciples were "greatly distressed" at hearing this (Matthew 17:23). Luke focuses on the fact that despite Jesus' clarity, the disciples fail to understand what he is talking about. Not because they want to, but because the meaning of the words is concealed from them. So, why does Jesus tell them to make sure they hear what he has to say if he knows that they aren't going to understand it? Because he is not merely speaking to them of the present, but also for the future. Jesus knows that when he is put to death, they will remember conversations like this, and they will realize that he was fully aware of what was going to happen.

What a privilege we have this side of the Cross to be able to understand these things and live in the light of them.

Q1. Jesus was not taken with the adulation of the crowds. Why?

Q2. What did Jesus tell the disciples to do?

Q3. What did he tell them would happen to him? Why did he tell them?

## Tuesday – Luke 9:46 - Who is the greater one?

We now come to the third of the four issues which Luke brings out in this section. It is as though he is compiling a little catalogue of the disciples' thinking. It doesn't make for good reading on their part. Again, we get the barest information from Luke. Matthew (Matthew 18:1) and Mark (Mark 9:33,34) are more forthcoming. The discussion as to which of the disciples is the 'greater one' has been taking place among them as they have been walking along the road. Evidently, they have no idea that Jesus is aware of what is going on. It is only when they get to Jesus' home in Capernaum that he broaches the matter with the question, "What were you discussing on the way?" (Mark 9:33). A question that, not surprisingly, does not get a response. None of them want to say what they have been talking about. Jesus knows, of course, what they have been discussing, and not just the subject, but the thinking behind it.

We are the same, aren't we? We don't always want to share what is going on in our heads, and sometimes it may neither prudent nor necessary to do so. One thing is important though, we must always act in a manner consistent with what we know to be true, because failure to do so only leads to problems down the road.

Aware of what they are thinking, about who is the greatest among them, Jesus is not going to let the matter rest. Mark (Mark 9:35) says that He sits down and asks a child to come and stand among them. The fact that the child doesn't hesitate speaks to Jesus' gentleness. Note Jesus isn't ordering the disciples to receive the child. He is speaking to the issue of 'who is the greatest' in terms of being about the receiving of His Word. Jesus is saying, 'are you willing to receive this child, (whose value to the Kingdom would in the eyes of many be minimal), based solely on my revelation to you?' So being greater is not about ability, role, or influence, but about humility, service, and submission. But there is more; the one who humbly receives Jesus' Word and does it, is declaring their willingness to receive and submit to the Father. This is critical to our lives. At the end of the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 7:21-23, Jesus makes it clear that on the Day of Judgement, the issue that will separate those who are going to heaven from those who are going to hell, will be what they did with the Father's will through faith in Jesus. We are saved by faith to live in obedience to what God has commanded, not what we think is important for our lives.

Q1. What were the disciples discussing?

Q2. What does Jesus say about what makes a person great?

## Wednesday - Luke 9:46-50 – Who is for us?

The scene of Jesus speaking with the disciples, with the child standing in the middle of them all, is still open before us. In responding to Jesus' teaching that the 'greater one' is the one who humbles themselves, and with a servant's heart receives and acts upon his word, John raises an incident that had taken place on their 'twos' preaching tour. Having heard what Jesus has just said, John is having doubts about whether or not he had done the right thing in trying to stop a man who was casting out demons in Jesus' name. It may seem like a strange response, but the linking thought in John's mind is Jesus' use of 'in my name', because the man had been casting out the demons 'in Jesus' name'. So, if Jesus is saying that the doing of things in his name is what is important, then the question arises – were they wrong then to tell the man to stop? Note, the "we tried to stop him," probably indicates that they had failed to do so. This is certainly something different. Jesus had not empowered this man to do what he was doing as he had with the Twelve (Luke 9:1), and yet the man, because of his faith in Jesus and his grasp of the power in Jesus' name, was able to cast out demons. Just for the sake of clarity, John is not raising this because he is personally jealous of what the man is doing. If that had been the case, Jesus would have addressed that immediately. If anything, John is jealous in a good sense – for the name of Jesus. He wants to make sure that anyone who was either not directly appointed by Jesus or closely associated with him, was not taking Jesus' name and misusing it. He is concerned about people roaming the countryside, giving the impression that they are working on Jesus' behalf, in case some of them might be charlatans.

Jesus understands where John's question is coming from, and he tells John that they should not have tried to stop the man. Jesus' reasoning is straightforward; if someone is not against you, they must be for you, whatever approach they take. Jesus teaches on the reverse position in Matthew 12:30, "Whoever is not with me is against me."

So, what do we take from this? We take the point that what matters is the heart. Others may do things that we may not fully understand, but if they are truly and passionately in Christ, we must stand back and let them serve Christ. Trying to restrict or restrain true lovers of Christ who are seeking to serve him in a way that is consistent with his revealed way, is not our place.

Q1. What was John's concern?

Q2. How did Jesus respond?