

LUKE – CHAPTER 9-10

PRAY

Spend a few moments together in prayer asking that you would be open to God's voice speaking through his Word today.

READ

Take time to read through Luke chapter 9-10

EXAMINE

In this study we will see Jesus turn (literally and figuratively) and focus his attention on his destination; Jerusalem. In the last study we saw Jesus move out of the holy place in order to heal the demon possessed man. This took place on the eastern side of the sea of Galilee, north-east of Jerusalem. Now, in verse 51, Jesus “resolutely set out for Jerusalem.” A more literal translation of this verse is that he “set his face to go to Jerusalem.” A lot transpires just before this moment that is of particular significance. Most importantly, the transfiguration (vs 28-36). Notice in that event that Jesus’ “face” changes (vs 29); soon he will set that face towards Jerusalem. Jesus also meets with Moses and Elijah on top of the mountain. There they discuss his “departure” (vs 31). The word in Greek here is “Exodus.” Moses, the great leader of the Exodus of Israel, discusses with Jesus and Elijah the “exodus” of God’s people that is to come. This will be accomplished at Jerusalem. So, this is where Jesus must go.

Everything from 9:51 onwards progresses towards Jerusalem so as we continue through these studies keep an eye out for references to this city.

1. Imagine you are Peter, James or John. How would you react to this amazing scene – Jesus being transfigured, the appearance of Moses and Elijah, and the voice from heaven speaking directly to you (“This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.” Vs35)?

Allow space for personal reflection and imagination at this scene. Take note that Peter’s suggestion that they should set up “three shelters” suggests his response is to stay where they are. This can be natural for us when we have incredible spiritual experiences. Jesus, though, has a bigger plan and it involves heading to Jerusalem on the path of suffering.

2. There are a number of ‘bookends’ around the transfiguration that highlight the importance of this moment in the gospel. One of these is the cost of following Jesus (vs 21-27 and 57-62). The call to deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and follow Jesus (vs 23) and not look back (vs 62) is, without doubt, difficult. The disciples seem to think, though, that they have the right to argue over who is the greatest amongst them (vs 46), as if this was somehow important. In our Western context discipleship can be pretty comfortable (like we’ve set up shelters on our spiritual mountaintop). What does “deny ourselves and take up our cross daily” look like in our culture and time?

3. The disciples are given authority over demons (vs 1), yet are unable to cast one out of a sick child (vs 40). Even though they are so close to Jesus they still have doubts. Then they try to stop someone who was successfully driving out demons in Jesus' name because "he is not one of us." (vs 49). What can we learn here about the ministry of Jesus' followers, who is 'in' and who is 'out,' and how we should respond where God's kingdom comes in unexpected ways?

The ministry of Jesus is much bigger than us! Hallelujah! The temptation the disciples succumbed to was to think that they were in control of the use of Jesus' name. They are not. Nor are we. If people are being released from our enemy in Jesus' name this is a cause for celebration, even if that is happening outside of the norms of church ministry. Just because we are disciples of Jesus doesn't mean we somehow control the Spirit's movement in the world.

4. Another bookend in this section of the gospel is the sending of the disciples. Firstly, it is the mission of the twelve (9:1-6) and then the mission of the seventy (10:1-12; 17-20). On this second occasion the disciples return amazed that "even the demons submit to us in your name" (10:17). In contrast to their response earlier, they've finally got it! Discuss a time when you originally didn't "get it" but then, through God's patience and teaching, you grew in your understanding and ministry. Celebrate how you are each growing in God as his disciples.

REFLECT

1. Think about what it means to be a disciple. Would you rather set up a tent on your spiritual mountaintop, or follow Jesus on the road to suffering to Jerusalem?
2. Were you honest in your response to the last question?
3. Consider Jesus' call to deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and follow him. What does it mean to do this "daily."

IMAGINE

1. List three things that have really stood out from this study.
2. Without worrying about any restrictions, what would the church look like if those things were always present? You might like to consider this from a global or local perspective (or both).

PERFORM

1. What action can you take today (taking account of real world restrictions) that is a step towards that dream becoming a reality?

PRAY

Spend time in prayer for each other, particularly for the actions you've committed to.

For next week....

1. Long Slow Read (LSR). Read chapter 9 slowly over the course of week. You can do this as many times as you like.
2. Tempo Read – Read and reread Chapter 9 several times. Take note of verses/phrases/characters that stand out – e.g. Jesus, Holy Spirit, poor, women.
3. Repeats – Choose one verse to memorise. Repeat it many times throughout the day and over the course of a week or so. Meditate on the verse and pray it in and out. Repeat the verse many times throughout your day.