

Luke 9:1 ¶ Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.

Luke 9:2 And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

This chapter begins with Jesus sending His twelve apostles out to preach the good news of the coming of the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. It is important to note that He equipped and empowered them to succeed. He gave them power and authority over the demons and to cure diseases. What is the difference in power and authority? After looking at the Greek, I think that *power* references supernatural abilities and *authority* references the right to use those abilities.

The Lord never calls us to ministry without equipping and empowering us to be successful.

Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Luke 9:3 And he said unto them, Take nothing for *your* journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.

I think the main point of this assignment is to teach the disciples that very truth (stated above)—God is sufficient for their every need. Jesus instructs the disciples not to take anything with them. They aren't even to pack an extra set of clothes.

To follow God's leading often means going against what man considers wise or logical.

Luke 9:4 And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart.

Luke 9:5 And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.

Luke 9:6 And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where.

When they arrived in a city, they were to stay in one home for the entire time they were there. I'm not sure why that would be significant; maybe it was to make it easier for those seeking help to find them. If they were not welcomed in the city, they were to give a public testimony against the people by shaking the dust off their feet.

So the disciples set out on their mission and traveled throughout the towns declaring the gospel and performing miracles of healing.

Luke 9:7 Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead;

Luke 9:8 And of some, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again.

Luke 9:9 And Herod said, John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see him.

Luke throws in an interesting tidbit of information here regarding Herod's response to Jesus. News of a miracle worker would be expected to spread throughout the land. Herod had heard from some that John had risen from the dead; and I am sure that would have bothered him since he would have expected John to seek vengeance against him for his murder. Others told him that Elijah had returned; that would not be good news either since Malachi had foretold Elijah's return as a sign of impending judgment. Still others thought that Jesus was the reincarnation of one of the old prophets.

It seems that Herod didn't believe it could be John, but he wanted to see for himself. (Apparently, he didn't get that opportunity until Pilate sent Jesus to Herod before eventually pronouncing judgment on Him.)

Luke 9:10 ¶ And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida.

Luke 9:11 And the people, when they knew *it*, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.

When the apostles, the chosen twelve, returned, they told Jesus all about their experiences. (It would seem to me that He probably had given them a specified timeframe for their mission trip.) Jesus took them to a private desert location near the city of Bethsaida (either for their debriefing or after it for some special time of fellowship).

As usual, once the people found out where He was, they followed Him. As always, the Lord welcomed them and declared His message and healed all those in need.

Luke 9:12 And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place.

Luke 9:13 But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people.

Luke 9:14 For they were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company.

Luke 9:15 And they did so, and made them all sit down.

Luke 9:16 Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude.

Luke 9:17 And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.

The disciples noticed that it was getting late in the day and suggested that Jesus send the people on their way to get something to eat and arrange lodging for the night. I am sure they were surprised when the Lord told them to feed the people. Even after having the personal experience of God's supernatural empowerment, they immediately responded from a natural mindset. They explained that all they had were five loaves and two fishes; they would have to go and buy food to feed such a crowd of people.

Then we are told that there were about 5,000 men in the crowd. The Greek seems to specify males, so we can assume that there were women and children as well; Matthew, in fact, verifies that assumption. The Lord instructs the disciples to organize the people to sit in groups of 50, and they did.

Jesus then takes the five loaves and two fishes and looking toward His Father in heaven, He gave thanks for them and began breaking them into serving portions for the disciples to give to the people. Everyone ate—not sparingly; they were filled. The disciples then gathered twelve small baskets of leftovers—one for each disciple.

Personal observations:

- Jesus is concerned about our physical needs as well as our spiritual needs.
- I am just like the disciples—very quick to forget previous experience in light of new times of testing or opportunity to apply what I learned.
- Just like the disciples, I am often ready to give excuses why I can't obey.
- Jesus wants us to realize that in Him "we can."

Luke 9:18 ¶ And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am?

Luke 9:19 They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again.

Luke 9:20 He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God.

Luke now moves to a moment in time when Jesus was with His disciples, but off to Himself praying. At some point He stops and asks His disciples who they hear the people saying that He is. They answered that some thought He was John the Baptist, others Elijah come back to life, and still others another one of the old prophets brought back to life. Their answer affirms what Herod was hearing as recorded above.

The Lord then makes the question personal—But who do you say that I am? Peter, ever quick on the trigger, responds—The Christ of God; in other words, the Messiah sent from God. Matthew tells us even more regarding how Jesus responded to Peter's declaration.

Matthew 16:17–19 "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my

church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ."

First, Jesus affirmed the truth of Peter's statement. He also explained that God had revealed that truth to Peter. I think many people have misinterpreted the next part of what Jesus said. Peter's name means rock; so some have taken Jesus' statement to mean that Peter was the rock upon whom He would build His church. "This rock" I think refers to the truth that He was the Messiah. The rock that forms the foundation of the church is Jesus, the One in whom we place our faith as our Messiah, our Savior. Peter specifically affirmed Jesus as the rock or cornerstone upon which the church was built in his first epistle.

1 Peter 2:5–6 "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded."

Peter's words go hand-in-hand with Jesus' declaration that the church is "my [His] church."

"the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" – Against what? I believe He is talking about the church. Satan is ever about trying to destroy God's people—both Jew and "church"—so as to thwart God's plan, but Christ will be victorious. The apostle John declared that the believers would also be victors; we will overcome the world, the dominion of Satan, by our faith in the Son of God.

1 John 5:4 "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

2 Corinthians 4:3–4 "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

"I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom...loosed in heaven" – I believe that in context Peter is representative of the church Jesus is going to build. Keys control one's access to something; they represent authority for gaining that access. Peter and every true believer have entered into the kingdom of God—a place that not only represents our dwelling place for eternity, but a place in which we will enjoy fellowship with the Lord in His presence. He and we are authorized to show others how to gain access to God's kingdom in the same way—by grace through faith. Binding and loosing also represent authority to declare how those in the kingdom should live. This is not arbitrary authority as established by man; this authority has been delegated by the Lord according to His teaching, His word—the truth we possess in the whole of the word of God.

Many in the church today are trying to treat the word of God like our government treats our constitution. They want to interpret it according to the

culture of today rather than according to the explicit meaning of the written word as originally stated. God is very clear in stating that His word stands as written forever.

Psalms 119:89 "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven."

Psalms 119:160 "Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever."

Isaiah 40:8 "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever."

1 Peter 1:25 "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

Luke 9:21 And he straitly charged them, and commanded *them* to tell no man that thing;

Luke 9:22 Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

Jesus then commanded His disciples not to publicize that He was the Messiah. He knew that the Father had an appointed time to reveal that truth to the masses, and this was not it.

Verse 22 records one of many instances in which Jesus taught His disciples what to expect. He explicitly told them that He would suffer many things and be rejected by the spiritual leaders of the people. He told them that He would be killed and that He would arise from the grave the third day. Again, Matthew enlightens us a bit more.

Matthew 16:22–23 "Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

Peter often responds from the heart without really thinking. He had just pronounced Jesus the Messiah, and I think His response—"Lord, this shall not be unto thee"—was colored by his expectation of what that meant. He was expecting Jesus to establish His kingdom—not die. This time Jesus identified Peter's response to be in tune with Satan. Jesus took great offence at Peter's words because the very reason He came to earth as a man was to die as the sacrifice for our sin—my sin. Peter was thinking about what he thought was best; he didn't want to accept that God's plan was best.

If we are truthful, don't we often mirror Peter's mindset when responding to how God is working in our own lives. I have to constantly remind myself of the truth declared by God through Isaiah.

Isaiah 55:8–9 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Luke 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

Jesus now directs His words to all of the disciples. “Come after” in the Greek means to accompany as a follower, yielding the lead to Jesus. This of necessity demands that one deny self; there can only be one leader. The Greek for “take up his cross” implies putting away sin through self-denial and “follow” means to “move behind in the same path or direction” according to Webster. In other words, we are to yield in obedience to the revealed will of God in denial of the desires of our flesh.

Luke 9:24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

Luke 9:25 For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?

The previous verse provides the context for understanding this verse. To save your life only to lose it is to maintain control without yielding lordship to Jesus. To lose your life to Jesus in order to save it is to deny self and yield lordship to Jesus.

It is true that many are “successful” in this world from man’s perspective—some by honest practices and others by dishonest practices, some by hard work, some by talent and hard work, some by inheritance, some by appealing to the culture of their day, and some by the fickle fate of chance. Jesus is saying, however, that success in this world does not guarantee success in the next. Our body will die, but our spirit is eternal. The riches we gain here will be left behind when we die. Only the treasures that one stores up for eternity will benefit one for eternity. Most important of all—those who reject Jesus will lose it all; they will be cast away from the presence of God.

Zechariah 12:1 “The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.”

Matthew 6:19–20 “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:”

Galatians 6:8 “For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

John 5:24 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

Revelation 20:10, 14–15 "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Matthew 25:41 & 46 "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels..... And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

Luke 9:26 For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.

As I looked at the word ashamed in the Greek and in Webster, the more I began to look at this as a measuring stick for one's faith. The true believer would never be ashamed or feel disgraced by being associated with Jesus. It also stands out particularly to me that he/she will never be ashamed of "His words." More and more today (in America at least) the church is seeking to present a corrupt version of the word of God to be acceptable to the culture. Jesus is basically saying that to accept Me is to accept My word to be the truth I declare it to be.

Jesus never minces words; He is never concerned with being politically correct; He is never concerned with tickling the ears of His listeners. He says that if you are ashamed of Me or My words, I will be ashamed of you when I return to earth in glory as King of kings, the Almighty Son of God, the Captain of the hosts of angels.

Luke 9:27 But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

Without the following record, this verse would be quite difficult to understand. Luke records these words with direct transition to the following event to leave us in no doubt to what Jesus means.

Luke 9:28 ¶ And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.

Luke 9:29 And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening.

Luke 9:30 And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias:

Luke 9:31 Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

“About eight days after” - Matthew and Mark say “after six days.” JFB explains that Luke was including the day Jesus made the declaration of verse 27 and the day of the Transfiguration. Usually, I don’t bother with seemingly insignificant differences in the scripture. Because of my interest in prophecy these time designations stand out to me. Is “after six days” a type that corresponds to the days of creation and the Sabbath in light of 6000 years of the reign of sin to pass before Jesus comes to reign in righteousness for 1000 years on planet earth? Does Luke’s eight days provide a type of the eternal rule of the Glorious Kingdom for eternity when all who believe will be glorified forever? I don’t know, but I love to look for these types of possible connections.

Jesus took Peter, John and James up into a mountain to pray; these three guys seemed to form the inner circle of the twelve disciples. While He was praying, Jesus’ appearance changed; His clothing became white and radiant. Matthew tells us that His face shone like the sun and His clothes were as white as the light (Matthew 17). Mark declares that His clothes shined as white as the snow—a white that was whiter than anyone could make (Mark 9).

Suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared and engaged in conversation with Jesus. They too appeared in a glorified state. Their conversation concerned His upcoming death in the city of Jerusalem.

Again, because of my interest in prophecy, I think it is interesting that it is Moses and Elijah that are singled out. This could also prefigure their appearance as the two witnesses referenced in Revelation 11.

Luke 9:32 But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

Luke 9:33 And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said.

Luke 9:34 While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

Luke 9:35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

Luke 9:36 And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept *it* close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

Evidently, Moses and Elijah didn’t come on the scene right away. Peter, James and John actually fell asleep and awoke to see the three men clothed in glory and in conversation with one another. When Moses and Elijah departed, Peter once again puts his mouth in gear without thinking. His great idea—Jesus, Master, it is good we were here. Now we can make three tabernacles—one each for You, Moses and Elijah.

The Holy Spirit is very gracious; He has Luke record that Peter didn't realize what he had said. He had basically identified Moses and Elijah as Jesus' equals instead of His servants.

God the Father descends in a cloud that frightens them as it surrounds them; it was probably very similar to the cloud in which He appeared to the Israelites at Mt. Sinai.

Exodus 19:9 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever."

I am also reminded of the verses in Ezekiel that describe when the cloud of God's glory signifying His presence departed the temple.

Ezekiel 10:4 & 18 "Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD'S glory.... Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims."

He declares that Jesus is His beloved Son and they should listen to Him (and obey Him is implied). Notice there was no mention of Moses or Elijah. I am sure that Moses and Elijah will hold great positions of leadership in the Kingdom, but they will definitely be subordinate to Jesus, God's beloved Son.

Evidently, when God finished speaking, the cloud disappeared and they were alone with Jesus as when they had first gone up the mountain. According to Matthew, the sound of God's voice had evidently frightened the disciples to the point that they fell prostrate on the ground; and they did not get up until Jesus touched them and told them to.

Matthew 17:6-7 "And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid."

Matthew adds a bit more information that Luke for some reason chose to omit. Jesus instructed the disciples not to share their experience with anyone until after His resurrection from the dead.

Matthew 17:9 "And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead."

Matthew also adds one other bit of information regarding this episode.

Matthew 17:10-13 "And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist."

The disciples had been taught that Elijah would come before the Messiah returned to prepare the people to accept Him (as prophesied by Malachi); in fact, every Passover the people would set an extra place at the table for Elijah as an indication of their expectation of his coming. Considering that they had just seen Elijah, they questioned the truth of that teaching. Jesus tells them that indeed Elijah had come but had not been recognized and had been killed—just as they would kill Him. This time the disciples got it; they understood that He was speaking of John the Baptist.

It's also interesting to me that Jesus took these same disciples into the Garden of Gethsemane with Him for support while He prayed. You would think that they might have remembered this event and realized how important it was to stay awake because it would prove to be a significant experience. Instead, they had to wait for the revelation of Holy Spirit to learn how Jesus suffered in anticipation of the cross. Maybe Peter would have proven stronger in light of His temptation had he witnessed the strength and determination of His Savior to overcome His desire to avoid what He faced. Jesus was determined to do the will of the Father. I couldn't help but think of these verses in Isaiah.

Isaiah 50:5–8 “The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me.”

Personal note: If my life is any example, the flesh is one of the greatest enemies to one's prayer life. Like Peter, James and John I often have to fight sleep and heavy eyes when I want to pray; it doesn't matter the time.

Luke 9:37 ¶ And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him.

Luke 9:38 And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child.

Luke 9:39 And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him.

Luke 9:40 And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not.

Luke 9:41 And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither.

Luke 9:42 And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare *him*. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

On the day following the transfiguration of Jesus, they came down from the hill and were met by many people. One man in the crowd cried out for Jesus' attention on behalf of his only son who was demon possessed. The demon attacked the boy frequently causing him to foam at the mouth like a mad man and to injure himself. The man had already asked Jesus' disciples (I assume the

nine who did not accompany him up the hill) to cast out the demon, but they had been unable to do so.

I have to admit that Jesus' answer to the man sounds harsh. The use of the word "generation" seems to have broad application. I think that there was direct address to the disciples who had already experienced the ability to cast out demons in the name of Jesus yet failed in this instant. To me, that is a reflection of how fragile our faith seems to be at times; and honestly, I greatly identify. I know that God is totally sovereign and able to do anything, yet I still struggle with responding with victorious faith in times of testing and trouble. I think there was also frustration being vented at the people as a whole as led by the spiritual leaders of their day who refused to accept Him as the prophesied Messiah. And just maybe the man's question had a hint of unbelief (because of the failure of the disciples. No matter how unfair, Jesus is often judged according to the actions of His followers) though I tend to think it just the desperate plea of a father on behalf of his beloved son.

Despite how we interpret Jesus' answer, He didn't refuse the man; He told the man to bring his son to Him. As he was coming to Jesus the boy suffered yet another violent demonic attack. Jesus immediately rebuked the demonic spirit and healed the child and restored him to his father.

Matthew again adds a bit of extra information. The disciples didn't understand why they had not been able to cast the demon out of the boy.

Matthew 17:19–21 "Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

As is so often the case in the life of the struggling believer, Jesus pinpoints a lack of faith. He goes on to say that faith even the size of a grain of mustard seed would be sufficient to remove a mountain, basically any obstacle to you getting victory in His name. Oh how often, I have wished for that mustard seed faith. I know God can, but I am often afraid to believe that He will because I can never be sure what I want will align with His will as to what is needed to refine me (or my loved ones) as gold and best glorify Him.

Jesus also tells the disciples that the evil spirit possessing this child was evidently one of the more powerful of Satan's demonic forces. To cast a demon of such power out requires prayer and fasting. I think that statement goes hand-in-hand with the lack of faith. One who is sincerely praying and fasting as he seeks to know God's will and grow in faith and obedience would give evidence to one possessing great faith. I am reminded of the prophet Daniel as he prayed and fasted and sought God for deliverance of his people when he knew that the 70 years prophesied by Jeremiah were reaching an end; even while he was praying Gabriel appeared to him with an answer.

Luke 9:43 ¶ And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples,

Luke 9:44 Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.

Luke 9:45 But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.

I understand Luke to be saying that the miracles of Jesus were pretty much dominating the front pages of the news so to speak. Everyone was amazed at “the mighty power of God.” The Holy Spirit is reminding us that the works of Jesus were dependent on God’s empowerment. Jesus lived on earth as a man dependent upon the provision of His Father through the Holy Spirit.

Jesus endeavored to keep the focus of His disciples on what He was teaching them and not to get distracted by all the media buzz. Scripture records several times that the Lord instructs them about what is going to happen to Him (as in v22 above) so they won’t be surprised and lose faith when He dies. He tells them specifically that He is going to be betrayed (from the Greek) into the hands of men, an obvious reference to people in authority.

The Spirit also makes it clear through Luke that the disciples didn’t get it. In fact, it was as if there was a veil of separation between their ears and their brain; they just didn’t understand what He meant. And for some reason, they were afraid to ask Him to explain further.

Can’t you relate? Have you ever been in a situation where you thought it would be embarrassing to admit that you didn’t understand when you thought the expectation was that surely you did? Our pride, perceptions and expectations are so often hindrances to our spiritual growth.

Luke 9:46 Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.

Luke 9:47 And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him,

Luke 9:48 And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

The flow from the previous thought to this one is so “human” to me. They knew Jesus was destined to take the throne. They didn’t understand everything He was saying now, so they just focused on the future. In light of their special relationship they naturally expected to be in powerful positions in the kingdom. Every government has different levels of authority, so they began to think about and discuss who among them would have the greatest authority.

Again, Matthew provides a bit more information.

Matthew 18:1 "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

The disciples decided to ask Jesus who would be the greatest in the Kingdom. Though the question seemed general enough, Luke informs us that Jesus knew that it was prompted by thoughts and discussion concerning themselves. So, He took a child and set him beside Him. Then He basically said: To accept this little child, the least in authority, in My name is to receive Me and to receive Me is to receive the One that sent Me, God the Father. The one who is deemed least among you will be made great.

When I looked at the definition of the word *receive*, it stood out to me that it was to accept something that is offered to you like accepting a gift. In my mind, Jesus is saying that willingness to accept whatever I have to offer you as your Lord, no matter how small, is to make yourself acceptable to the Father. Only one who is content to serve in the least significant way according to God's will for him/her can be truly qualified to handle service with great authority.

Since I referenced Matthew, I thought I ought to address the difference in His record of the account.

Matthew 18:2-5 "And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me."

I think the difference in the record is reflective of the intent of the author toward his specific audience. Matthew is presenting Jesus as the King to a Jewish audience and Luke as the Son of Man to a gentile man. Matthew puts an emphasis on the need for conversion, a complete change in your life based on what Jesus was teaching vs. what the Jewish religious leaders were teaching. The religious leaders exemplified pride in obeying the law (including the traditions of men), while Jesus exemplified a servant spirit toward others in submission to God the Father according to heart of God's law. Matthew is emphasizing to his works-oriented audience that to even enter the kingdom of heaven you would have to humble yourself like a helpless little child before God. Only those willing to submit themselves with such humility to God as shown by their acceptance of His Son would be accepted. The one with the most humility before God will emerge as the greatest in the kingdom.

Luke 9:49 And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us.

Luke 9:50 And Jesus said unto him, Forbid *him* not: for he that is not against us is for us.

This time John speaks out. This one known as "the beloved disciple" was, along with his brother, also known as a "son of thunder," a name given them by Jesus (Mark 3:17). Was he wanting to demonstrate his leadership ability? His

response seems strange to me considering what Jesus had just said, but completely in character as a bold son of thunder. The connecting link seems to be the phrase “in my name.”

John tells Jesus that they had seen one casting out devils in His name, but they had forbidden him to do that since he was not a follower of Jesus. Jesus told them not to forbid him because those that aren't against us are for us.

The answer Jesus gave has come back to me many times in light of the actions of some in the visible church today. I think the key is that the man was acting in the name of Jesus and not in his own name. Though he wasn't identified as a disciple of Jesus, he acted in the name of Jesus; and evidently those actions were in accordance with the will of Jesus and the Father for him to be successful. Jesus is saying that to act in His name in accordance with the will of the Father is to be working toward accomplishing the same goal. Discernment comes in identifying those working to the glory of God and according to His will vs. those working to personal glory according to his own will while masquerading as serving God. One of the keys to that discernment is revealed in how the person serves according to Jesus' example—with humility? Without regard to status of who is being served? Freely without profit to self?

Luke 9:51 ¶ And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,
Luke 9:52 And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

Luke introduces this next section in his book with a statement that the time was nearing when Jesus would be “received up”; the Greek clarifies that this was a reference to His ascension, His return to the Father in heaven. He has determined to go to Jerusalem and meet His fate as purposed by God before creation. He was a man on a mission and would not be deterred.

*1 Peter 1:18–20 “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: **Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you....”***

*Titus 1:1–2 “Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; In hope of eternal life, **which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began....”***

I couldn't help but be reminded of the words of Isaiah in reference to the Messiah.

*Isaiah 50:7 “For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: **therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.”***

Luke notes that Jesus sent messengers ahead of Him to a village of the Samaritans to prepare for His coming, to make reservations so to speak.

Luke 9:53 And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

Luke 9:54 And when his disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

Luke 9:55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

Luke 9:56 For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them*. And they went to another village.

I had thought maybe this would have been the village at which he stayed for a couple of days in light of his meeting with the woman at the well. If so, this was a poor reception. He wasn't welcomed because it was known that He was determined to go to Jerusalem; I guess they were offended.

Again, James and John the sons of thunder speak out—Should we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them like Elijah did with the prophets of Baal? Jesus immediately rebuked them. After such close fellowship with Him for quite some time, they still didn't understand that His mission was one of salvation—not destruction. They certainly were not responding with the Spirit of Jesus. The implication—they were responding with the spirit of the flesh according to spirit of the god of this world.

So they went to another village.

Luke 9:57 ¶ And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain *man* said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

Luke 9:58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

Luke tells us at this point of encounters with three different men that Jesus met on His journey. Though He doesn't tell us how the men responded, I tend to think that they realized they weren't really ready to submit to Jesus as Lord and live accordingly.

The first man expressed his desire to follow Jesus wherever He went. Jesus' answer—Even the animals have a home, but I have no home of my own. To follow Jesus doesn't guarantee one enjoys the best this world has to offer; in fact, sometimes it is just the opposite.

Luke 9:59 And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

Luke 9:60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

Jesus invited the second man to become His disciple. The man indicated He was willing—but after he buried his father. Jesus tells him that he should let the dead bury the dead and go and preach the kingdom of God. This was not an

unfeeling statement by Jesus; it was an instructive statement. Those that did not trust in Jesus were spiritually dead; those that responded to the message of the kingdom that He was preaching were made spiritually alive. Which is more important—to bury someone whose eternity is sealed or to preach the message of salvation to those in need of it?

Luke 9:61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

Luke 9:62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Though not specified, I tend to think that the Lord issued the same invitation to discipleship to the third man. This man too appeared willing, but again on his own terms; he wanted to go say his goodbyes to his family. Jesus basically tells him that true submission and commitment was evidenced by unquestioning obedience.

Jesus again uses a word picture from everyday life that they would all understand. A man can't plow a straight row if he is looking back; he has to focus on what is ahead of him. Once one becomes part of the kingdom of God his/her main focus is to be on serving God and not the things of this world.

The point the Spirit is making through Luke is that submission to Jesus as Lord is not easy. The flesh and the things of this world will create many obstacles to such submission. Jesus is not teaching disrespect of one's family; He is declaring that to follow Him requires a greater allegiance than one's allegiance to family. It's an extension of His teaching in the previous chapter (v19-21) and in verse 23 above.