

Wednesday Evening Bible Study
July 31, 2019 (finished 08/07/19)
The Gospel of Luke
Growth Principles - Continued
Topics – Luke 9:51 - 62
Text – Luke 9:51 - 62

Introduction

Previously in Luke's gospel we studied the Mount of Transfiguration and then the healing of the demon-possessed boy. We also learned from the other gospel accounts that Jesus discussed this miracle with the disciples who were confused as to why they were powerless to help the boy themselves. Jesus told them that "this kind" of difficult problem could not be helped except through prayer and fasting.

I have entitled this last section of Luke nine, *Growth Principles*, because it contains many hard teachings that would not be understood by an immature believer. In fact, some of what Jesus says in this portion was not fully comprehended, and they would have to relearn some of the principles at a later time.

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:9)

"Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." (1 Corinthians 1:25)

God will often call His children to do things that the world would think is ridiculous. God knows better.

In verses 43 – 50, we saw:

Jesus Prophecies Regarding His Death (vs. 43 – 45)

The Disciples Pride Is Rebuked (vs. 46 – 48)

The Disciples Prejudice is Removed (vs. 49 – 50)

As we conclude chapter nine, we will see some more of these growth principles. As Jesus is travelling toward Jerusalem

I. There is a Conflict with the Samaritans (vs. 51 – 56)

Here, it is not only the disciples that will need to learn a lesson; but the Samaritans will have to learn a difficult truth as well.

V. 51 - Jesus had "steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem."

"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." (Isaiah 50:7)

Jesus was on a mission. He was determined to get to Jerusalem. The Samaritans wanted Him to stop in order to spend some time with them, as He had when He saved the woman at the well (See [John 4:39 - 43](#)).

Vs. 52 – 53 – The Samaritans were bitter enemies of the Jews. Since Jesus was determined to go to Jerusalem, presumably to worship at the Temple, the Samaritans took this as a rejection of their worship on Mt. Gerizim. Previously, Jesus stated that the place of worship was not important:

"The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:19-24)

What the Samaritans did not understand was that Jesus was heading to Jerusalem to die:

"But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"
(Luke 12:50)

From this point in Jesus' ministry the geographical focus will no longer be in Galilee, but will be in Judaea, except for one short visit recorded in Luke 17.

The Samaritans needed to learn the lesson that Jesus will not always do what they want Him to do. They did not yet understand His mission and purpose. They were offended because they didn't know the complete picture. Only Jesus knows the complete picture. We need to trust Him.

Then the disciples, James and John, overreact to the offence of the Samaritans, and they offer to have them executed, Elijah style.

[See 2 Kings 1:1 – 17](#) for the back story behind calling down fire from Heaven.

Jesus told them that they were of the wrong spirit. That's the way the devil would want them to react; that is the way the world reacts. Jesus does not want us to retaliate to enemies, but to love them:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:43-48)

II. There are Considerations Regarding Discipleship (vs. 57 – 62; see also Matthew 8:19 – 22)

Jesus will now deal with three people who all claim to desire to be His disciple. However, they all have stipulations that will hinder their ability to focus on the work. Jesus wants His servants to singularly focus on the work that He has for them. Matthew's gospel considers two out of the three that are dealt with in Luke:

"And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead." (Matthew 8:19-22)

- A. There are Consideration Regarding Possessions (vs. 57 – 58)
- B. There are Considerations Regarding People (vs. 59 – 60)
- C. There are Considerations Regarding Priorities (vs. 61 – 62)

See also Luke 14:25 – 33

Elisha considered the consequences and the price of service, and he made a decision that would keep him from going back to his old life:

"So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee? And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him." (1 Kings 19:19-21)

Illustrate – from "How to Achieve Great Things by Burning Your Boats and Cutting-Off Your Retreat Routes," by Mark Melton

The Story of Alexander the Great

On October 1, 331 BC, with an army of 35,000 men, Alexander the Great defeated Darius the king of Persia in one of the most decisive battles in history! Alexander's army was greatly outnumbered by the Persian enemy. Historians agree that Darius' army was made up of between 200,000 to 1,000,000 men. Yet in a series of dramatic and superior tactics, Alexander managed to defeat the Persians and route them.

Alexander was a military genius, and arguably the best military general that ever lived. However, something dramatic and decisive happened before this battle, which many historians believe may be responsible for this great victory.

Upon arriving the shores of Persia, Alexander and his army discovered that they were visibly outnumbered. Clearly at a disadvantage, his men lost heart and pleaded with their young leader (Alexander) to delay the attack. He was urged to go back and get more men and reinforcements. Alexander responded by ordering the

men to burn their boats. As their only means of retreat went up in flames, legend has it that Alexander turned to his men and said, "We go home in Persian ships, or we die."

This act of burning their boats sent a clear message among his army that to survive, they must win this war. They placed themselves in a "no retreat, no surrender situation." Buoyed by this realization, Alexander's and his men charged with a singular resolve, to win at all costs. It was with this same resolve that, at the battle of Issus, Alexander's men forced Darius to flee, leaving the field and victory to Alexander and his army.

The Story of Hernán Cortés

In the 1519, a Spanish conquistador, Hernán Cortés, set out with 600 Spaniards to conquer Mexico, which was rich in priceless treasures of gold, silver and precious Aztec jewels among others.

This daredevil, daring undertaking was made further insurmountable by the fact that for more than 600 years, superior conquerors with greater military hardware and human resources who attempted to colonize the same region had failed woefully.

Aware of this, Hernán Cortés decided to do it differently. After landing with his military force of 600 men on the lands Mayans, Cortés prepared his troops by long oratory and careful speeches. However, before embarking inland to face his enemies, he commanded his armies to burn all their boats! By this singular act, he and his men destroyed their only exit strategy! By these decisive three words - BORN THE BOATS - there was only one resolve within his camp: victory! For defeat meant a certain death. Owing to this singular act, Cortés became the first man to conquer Mexico in 600 years!

This is the attitude necessary for success! For a person to succeed at great things, that one must cut off all escape routes and any means of retreat. Often, many great projects are abandoned at the verge of success by retreating just prior to a breakthrough. Adversity is a tempting premise for retreat. However, having no means of retreat, but forging on despite great difficulties is the surest way to great accomplishments.

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