

The One Question You Must Answer Correctly (Luke 9:1-11)

1. Jesus' enrollment and equipping of the Twelve to participate in His kingdom (v.1-2)

- This is the final chapter in Jesus' Galilean ministry (4:14-9:50). The themes of chapters 7-8 are summed up and transferred to the twelve disciples.
 - Since the call of the Twelve (6:12-16), large groups of unnamed disciples attend Jesus' teaching (6:17-49), along with women who join Him as well (8:1-3).
- Progressively, He discloses more to His disciples in His teaching, revelation, and interpretation of parables, which were otherwise hidden from the crowd (Lk. 8:9).
- His disciples have witnessed Him casting out demons, healing the sick, raising the dead, restoring sight to the blind, calming the storm: Jesus has demonstrated His authority over nature (8:22-25), demons (8:26-39), sickness (8:40-56), and death (8:40-56).
- Until now, all His disciples, including the Twelve, are passive and simply "onlookers."
- They are unaware that with revelation comes expectation: they will be inducted into greater responsibility, not so they merely "do more" but that they can "receive" more.
- This is a causal relationship between discipleship and Christology: a proper understanding of Jesus is granted to those who entrust themselves to Him.
- Their "internship" time of merely watching and observing as passive onlookers in His ministry is ending, as He "calls the Twelve to Himself" (v.1).
 - The Twelve, we are reminded, are selected and chosen. They did not just "happen" to share in Jesus' ministry: God chose and willed them to do it.

Jesus gave them *power* and *authority* over all demons and to cure diseases:

- The "giving" of this power and authority is from Jesus alone, unique to the mission for which He called them, and intended to be "training wheels" for the disciples until He calls them to be "apostles" (Acts 1:8). The sending of the Twelve is cultivated here and actualized more fully in the book of Acts.
- This is a programmatic terminology of Isaiah 61, as with Jesus (4:18-19). Until now, only Jesus has exhibited "power" (4:14, 36; 5:17; 6:19; 8:46) and "authority" (4:6, 32, 36, 5:24). He alone has proclaimed the kingdom of God (4:43; 6:20; 7:28; 8:1, 10) and "healed" (4:40; 5:17; 6:18-19; 7:7; 8:47). Jesus will now equip them with His credentials.
- The disciples need both power (ability to do something) and authority (a right to do it).

Jesus commissions and sends them out to *proclaim the kingdom of God* and heal (v.3):

- The primary mission of the disciples is to "proclaim" the kingdom, not heal. The gospel of the kingdom is propagated not by campaign or conquering but through the context of relationships defined by mutual trust and sharing.
- The presence of God's kingdom means that His reign has already begun, and they are to tell the nation of these momentous events and call them to repentance and conversion.
- Going out two by two (Mk. 6:7), they are to proclaim (as a herald or spokesperson) the King's message, which they have heard and verified through miracles.
- While there is a continuity of this power through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit following the Pentecost of all believers, there is no shared "authoritative empowering" as it was just for the mission(s), as suggested in 24:49 and Acts 1:8. The Holy Spirit was "with the disciples." The Holy Spirit is "in" the members of His body, the church (Jn. 14:17).
- Jesus commanded them to proclaim the kingdom of God (v.2, 6):
 - His disciples preached the gospel. The gospel announces the arrival of blessings through Jesus in conjunction with the kingdom of God.
- They were to teach and preach what they heard and understood from Christ, though they needed to understand the full scope of His mission and person.
- Evidence of God's kingdom is the rule and reign of Christ in the heart.

2. Jesus' expectations of the Twelve as they participate in His kingdom (v.3-9)

A. That they go out two by two (Mk.6:7) and travel lightly (v.3):

- They are to bring no *staff* (in the Hellenistic world, itinerant philosophers were known for traveling in style and luxury), no *bag* (knapsack or backpack for food and extra clothing, which would serve as a pillow when sleeping), no *bread* (as they would depend on the hospitality of others), nor *extra tunic* (used as an extra shirt or sleeping blanket).
- Why would Jesus give this command?
 - (1) It may be the result of the temporary manner of their ministry, (2) so they wouldn't be confused with traveling philosophers by those they were preaching to and healing, (3) to prevent them from any worries (8:14), or (4) so they can rely on Jesus for all of their needs.
 - Jesus sends them on a calculated deficit. Like the lilies of the field and the birds of the air (Matt. 6:25-34), they must trust Him alone, Who sends them.

B. They will be received (v.4):

- As the disciples are sent two by two, they will be received in the houses of those who agree with the message. To receive them is to share the message's joy and welcome them. Hospitality and the investment of time and resources are an example of receiving.
- They are to stay in the house that receives them and not seek "better" accommodations.
- Rabbinical writing and historical data indicate that the maximum stay for a guest was three days. Beyond that, the guests are to be viewed suspiciously.

C. They will be rejected (v.5):

- When they are rejected in a village (no one takes them in to be received), they are to "shake the dust off their feet." As Jews were leaving Gentile areas, they historically shook the dust off their feet (Acts 13:51) to rid themselves of particles that would render them unclean. It implies defilement and was meant to tell those who rejected them that they were rejecting God and is an echo of Ex. 3:4-5. It is a ceremonial act designed to make people think deeply about their spiritual condition.
- The rejection is a precursor to the final judgment that awaits them (10:11; Acts 13:51), as rejecting Jesus' disciples is to reject Jesus Himself.
- Jesus desacralizes "Eretz Israel" and, with it, the presumption that salvation is by ethnicity, nation, or race.
- Jesus' Galilean ministry philosophy for the Twelve is "infiltration," not "guerilla warfare."

D. They will have enemies (v.7-9):

- Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee (son of Herod the Great who slaughtered the infants in Bethlehem), heard of the teaching and ministry of Jesus and the Twelve and was unsure whether Jesus was John the Baptist raised from the dead, Elijah (Mal. 3:11; 4:5), or "another" prophet (Moses (Deut. 18:15), or perhaps Jeremiah (Matt. 16:14). The reference is ambiguous (Jn. 6:14).
- Luke informs the reader that John the Baptist has already been beheaded (v.7). Herod associates John the Baptist with Jesus and His disciples.
- Herod did nothing to save Jesus from the cross but instead allowed his soldiers to abuse Him on the way to execution (Lk. 36:6-12; 13:31).
- Herod's perplexity has been a constant theme in Luke (8:25, 28, 47, 49; 9:7-9).

Points of Application: