

Luke 9A

A young man entered a monastery hoping to become a monk. The Order which he wished to join had a strict rule of silence. The abbot told him on his first day that he would be on probation for fifteen years. During that time he would be allowed to speak only once every five years and then only for one minute with the abbot himself. The young man accepted and was registered as a novitiate. Eventually the first five years passed and he was summoned to the abbot's study.

"How are you going on, my son?" asked the abbot.

"Oh, all right, thank you, Reverend Father," replied the young man.

"Have you any complaints?" asked the abbot.

"Well, Sir, yes, there is one thing. The porridge is always cold at breakfast. It would be so much nicer if it were hot."

"Right," said the abbot, "I will see to that. Time is now up."

The young man left and did not speak again to anyone for five years. Then he had to go again to the abbot's study.

"How are you going on?" asked the abbot.

"Oh, all right, thank you, Sir, I think," answered the novitiate.

"Have you any complaints?" asked the abbot.

"Well, Sir, there is just one thing, the bed is very hard and I find it difficult to sleep. Could I please have a little more straw in my mattress?"

"Right," said the abbot, "I will see to that. Time is now up." And the young man had to leave.

Another five years passed and the young man went to see the abbot for the last time.

"Reverend Father," he said, "my fifteen years' probation is at an end. Are you going to accept me as a full member of your Order?"

"Dear me, no," replied the abbot. "You have done nothing but complain since you got here!"

- Today we move into Chapter 9
 - This chapter marks a new division in the Gospel of Luke
 - Along the way we've been following several themes in Luke
 - First, Luke substantiated who Jesus was, the Son of God.
 - He detailed over several chapters how Jesus demonstrated his authority and power to the people and to the apostles
 - Secondly, Luke showed how Jesus contended with the Pharisees

- The religious leaders who desired nothing more than to tear down Jesus because He posed a powerful threat to their empire
- Then in Chapter 7 we saw Luke introduce a third theme of how Jesus would begin to prepare to disciples for ministry in the church after His resurrection
- Today in Chapter 9, Luke continues to build and develop the theme
 - Of how Jesus prepared these 12 immature and untrained men for perhaps the most difficult ministry calling the world had ever seen
 - And Chap 9 also begins to introduce a fourth major theme of Luke's gospel – Jesus' long road toward Jerusalem and His preparation to face the cross
 - Luke takes great pains to demonstrate not only that Jesus had come to die
 - But that God's plan for the Messiah included this ending that was completely unexpected for the disciples
 - In fact, it was one the disciples wouldn't understand even as the event approached
 - Jesus' death carried an ominous consequence for the apostles
 - All of them would experience much the same persecution and even death as Jesus
 - Imagine how you prepare someone for that future – and yet still expect them to continue forward in that ministry

[Luke 9:1](#) ¶ And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases.

[Luke 9:2](#) And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing.

[Luke 9:3](#) And He said to them, "Take nothing for *your* journey, neither a staff, nor a bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not *even* have two tunics apiece.

[Luke 9:4](#) "Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that city.

[Luke 9:5](#) "And as for those who do not receive you, as you go out from that city, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them."

[Luke 9:6](#) Departing, they *began* going throughout the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

[Luke 9:7](#) ¶ Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was happening; and he was greatly perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead, [Luke 9:8](#) and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen again.

[Luke 9:9](#) Herod said, “I myself had John beheaded; but who is this man about whom I hear such things?” And he kept trying to see Him.

- At some point following the events of Chapter 8, Jesus calls his disciples together
 - He gives them power and authority to do much as Jesus did – cast out demons and heal diseases
 - With those powers, He then sends them out to do two things:
 - Proclaim the kingdom
 - And perform miracles
- And Jesus gives them a few very specific instructions about how they should conduct themselves along the way
 - They shall take nothing with them
 - They can’t take money, they can’t take food, they can’t take extra clothing
 - They are to depend on the people in the towns for a place to stay, not to stay in a hotel
 - And if they are not received, they are to leave them and testify that they have not received the kingdom they were offered
- Before we examine these instructions in detail, what is Jesus doing here? – Why send the disciples out in this way?
 - Well, one answer is probably fairly obvious
 - Remember we’ve been talking all along about how Jesus is already looking forward to the day He will depart the Earth and ascend into Heaven
 - On that day, He will leave behind 11 men who will need to understand how to pursue the spreading of the gospel in a hostile world

- They will need to understand the lessons he taught them
- They will need to understand the persecution they will face
- They will need to understand the power that is available to them from God to ensure the success of their mission
- There is a second answer though, and that is this is the opportunity for the Jewish nation to receive their Messiah
 - We may know how the story ends, with Jesus rejected by His people and sent to the cross
 - And we know that this was God's plan from the beginning
 - The prophets foretold that the Messiah would die and be hung on a tree – a cross in other words
 - Jesus was to be a sacrifice for the sake of man
 - But God will also bring about a time of judgment for the Jewish nation in rejecting their Messiah
 - The Jews were supposed to be looking for a Messiah,
 - But God purposed for them to rejected the Messiah, Paul tells us in Rom 11, so that the Gentile world – who wasn't even looking for a Messiah - would have the opportunity to receive Christ
 - This was to fulfill the promise God gave Abraham when He said in Gen 22:18 that all the nations of the world would be blessed
 - So now as the disciples go out to the surrounding towns of Judea, they will be used by God to give the Jewish nation their opportunity,
 - They will hear but largely they will reject the truth,
 - So that God may be just in His judgment against the nation for its rejection of His Son
 - We will studied their rejection in detail in Chap 11, for now we can simply make note of it as one of the purposes in the disciples going out in this way

- For both these reasons, this is the ideal time for Jesus to send them out
 - Send them out any earlier and they probably wouldn't have been ready for such a task
 - Much later and they probably would have faced too much persecution and opposition from the authorities
 - In fact, we heard that Herod is becoming disturbed by the fact that Jesus is attracting such crowds
 - He killed the last man who caused so much disruption, John the Baptist, and now he seems to have a ghost on his hands, or so he thinks
- Let's look more closely at how Jesus goes about conducting this practical training for the disciples
 - Luke says they received
 - power – dunamis – miraculous strength and ability
 - authority – exousia - dominion, jurisdiction to act
 - Luke alone mentions that they received both these things
 - Luke wanted to make especially clear that both are necessary and both come from God
 - Jesus grants them two specific powers
 - The power to cast out demons
 - And the power to heal
 - And they are to perform these miracles in connection with preaching the good news
- Consider power
 - Men do not normally have the ability to bring healing to another person in a supernatural way
 - Men do not naturally have power to contend with the demonic realm
 - Under normal circumstances, these things lie outside our power

- But men can gain supernatural abilities in one of two ways
 - First, God Himself can grant these abilities
 - We see it here, obviously, but we've seen it before in scripture
 - God granted Moses the power to perform miracles
 - God granted Elijah supernatural abilities like raising from the dead and calling fire down from heaven
 - God grants Joshua supernatural abilities during battles
- But there is a second source of supernatural power
 - The enemy is the prince of the power of the air
 - He has true spiritual power
 - Not greater than God's and always subject to God's authority
 - But God gives Satan a lease if you will to do certain things, including granting to men supernatural power
 - When Moses had power, the magicians of Pharaoh had similar powers granted by the enemy
 - (yet Moses staff ate the magicians staff)
 - In Jesus day there were men who would heal or command out spirits, but they were often using the power of the enemy to do these things
 - The scripture calls this kind of power divination or sorcery or witchcraft

[Deut. 18:10](#) "There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses **divination**, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer,

- The nation of Israel was corrupted in part through divination, and the Lord judged them for it
- Saul turned to divination rather than relying on God and the prophet Samuel told him this:

[1Sam. 15:23](#) “For rebellion is as the sin of **divination**,
And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry.
Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,
He has also rejected you from *being* king.”

- In that verse, you can see the essential problem with divination
 - When someone seeks after that source of spiritual power, they have rejected the Lord
 - For you cannot serve two masters, and to serve the one is to reject the other
 - Seeking to tap into the power that Satan offers is to reject dependence on God
 - Our culture is obsessed with this source of power, and often they attribute it falsely to God
 - We need to be careful to show discernment...video games, music, movies – be careful what we approve

[Phil. 1:9](#) And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,

[Phil. 1:10](#) so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;

- That brings us to the second thing Jesus granted the disciples
 - He gave them exousia – the dominion, the authority
 - Paul tells us in Ephesians that this world is the property of the enemy for a time

[Eph. 2:2](#) in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the **power** of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

- Though the world has been redeemed by Christ’s blood, Christ is not yet exercising his authority over this world
 - He is waiting for the appointed time, when He will reign over the world as promised during the Messianic kingdom
- Meanwhile, the world is the dominion of the evil one

- Though the disciples might have supernatural powers to contend with the enemy, just having the power is not enough
- They also need the jurisdiction in which to exercise that power
 - Consider the example of a state trooper who chases a stolen car to the state line
 - As the car crosses the state line, the trooper has to stop his pursuit
 - He still has the things that give him power to subdue the thief – his car, gun, his handcuffs, his physical strength
 - But he lacks the authority to use them
- Likewise, the apostles were given power to operate in the supernatural realm, but if that's all they had, they could have been thwarted by the enemy
 - The enemy could have stood his ground against them since he would have still had his authority
 - He could not have been subdued by their power – and they would not have succeeded in casting out demons or stopping disease brought about by the enemy
 - But God granted them authority for a limited time and purpose so that the enemy and his agents had no choice but to obey the commands of the disciples
- By the way, this is one of the reasons that the enemy can create such convincing demonstrations of supernatural power
 - He can fool people into thinking that the power they see is of God because it is true power and because it has authority in this world
 - False teachers, agents of the enemy can come in God's name and fool people because their audience is more interested in the signs and wonders than in the words of truth in the Bible
- And that's one of the most important things about understanding this passage
 - Christians don't generally have these kinds of powers or authority granted to us by God

- They come only when He desires to grant them and for limited purpose
- They are not something every believe should expect and certainly not on demand
- And God wants it that way because the gospel is to be heard and believed on the basis of faith – not on the basis of what can be seen or proven to the satisfaction of a skeptic
 - Paul reminds us in Romans 10:17 that faith comes by hearing
 - He says to believe is to hope in something unseen
- God is not pleased to reveal Himself to those who demand proof before believing
 - Rather, He chooses to save those who, through a belief in something that seems foolish to the world, would place their trust in His word

[1Cor. 1:21](#) For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to* know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

[1Cor. 1:22](#) For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom;

[1Cor. 1:23](#) but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness,

[1Cor. 1:24](#) but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

- When Christians believe or are taught that they should want or expect to see such supernatural powers, it's not only unbiblical, it's dangerous
 - It's built upon an assumption that if Christ granted these abilities to the disciples then He must have granted them to us too
 - Which is simply a nonsensical argument
 - That's like saying the Apostle Thomas was allowed to place his hands in Jesus side, therefore I should have the same opportunity
 - Or the Apostle Peter was crucified upside down, so I should expect the same ending
 - One Christian's experience rarely mirrors another's, so how much less will our experience mirror the disciples?

- Our experiences differ because God's purpose for our lives and ministries are different
- He does not act the same way through each and every believer
- The early church was built upon these kind of special powers because they had no history, no frame of reference, little understanding of what the church was
 - So, having powers like those Jesus granted the disciples was important to propel the message and establish the church
 - And although God may chose to act similarly today from time to time, He is not obligated to do so
 - Now that the world has His word (the New Testament), we know of the acts of the apostles, we have the miracle of Pentecost, and the testimony of 2,000 years of the church history and the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of millions of believers
 - So it's unnecessary for God to grant Christians widespread ability to manifest truth in such a way – it would negate the truth and sufficiency of His word
 - And our own experience demonstrates that to be true
- Even though we can't presume to receive the powers of the disciples, we can still learn a great deal from listening to Jesus' instructions concerning their first evangelism effort
 - Jesus says, take nothing for your journey
 - He says don't take a staff (though Mark's account said perhaps take a staff)
 - A staff would have been an implement to aid walking, especially in long distances – but a burden on a short walk
 - So don't assume you will need to do a lot of walking – make no assumptions about the journey
 - Don't pack a bag (suitcase) and don't take food
 - Again, these things implied we've made some assumption about the trip or how long they would be gone

- They would also be something to depend upon and to sustain oneself – to allow a certain degree of independence
- Don't take two tunics
 - Men often wore an additional tunic as protection against having one torn, soiled, etc.
 - This is like telling someone to leave on a trip without an extra set of underwear
- Finally, Jesus tells the disciples they should expect to be housed in the homes that they preach to
 - Essentially, they will be doing cold calls all day with the expectation that before the day is done, someone will provide a place for them to stay
 - Or going to the town watering well and expecting someone to invite them home for dinner and a place to stay
 - And if they don't receive such a welcome, they were to demonstrate that judgment was upon these towns by dusting off their feet
 - Remember that one of the ways a person showed another hospitality was to offer to wash their feet
 - Walking in that day in that terrain with sandals left the feet caked with dirt and very uncomfortable
 - If they had not had their feet washed, then it meant they had never been received in a home
 - So they would show condemnation of that town by dusting off their dirty feet in a show of how poorly they had been treated— a terrible insult against a host
- What's Jesus doing? Jesus is training the disciples in several disciplines at once. First there is the very process of spreading the good news
 - These men need practice in preaching and delivering the good news
 - They will be armed with power and authority so that their message gains attention and can be proven

- Remember, there's been no resurrection yet, no Pentecost, No New Testament, so no proof of the truth of their message
- Rather, their authority over the demonic realm will have to be the proof for the time being, so that the people might have something to point to know they are telling the truth
- To ignore all that and demand the same powers that the apostles had is simply unbelief
- And these men were probably pretty lousy at the evangelism at first, even with their powers
 - They probably stumbled over their words
 - They probably got embarrassed easily
 - They probably got shouted down at times
 - But then there were times that great, miraculous things happened
- If the disciples needed practice, then it's safe to say we all need practice
 - We all need to practice our spiritual disciplines, or they won't improve
 - And we probably won't have the powers the disciples had, we have the Word and the Holy Spirit
- So first was practicing evangelism.
- Secondly, Jesus wanted them to experience the rejection that would often come in the face of the gospel message
 - Did you notice the implied expectation that they would see rejection?
 - Jesus knows that they will be rejected like He will be
 - They needed to know that 99 rejections doesn't matter. They still go to #100 expecting success – it's all in God's hands anyway
 - We are simply spreading seed without necessarily waiting to see if plants sprout in all cases

[1Cor. 3:6](#) I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.

[1Cor. 3:7](#) So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.

- Finally, Jesus is teaching them to rely on God for not only their power and authority, not only on God for their success, but also on God to sustain them through the hard task
 - Jesus' instructions told them to presume nothing about your journey
 - Don't take anything that suggests you have a plan, that you know where things are headed
 - Because as soon as you do that, you begin working your plan and not God's
 - Rely on Him, let Him lead, don't start working your own plan
 - Have no Plan B – no backup
 - Simply trust in God to provide
 - Why was this important for the disciples?
 - First, consider that in Matt's account we hear

[Matt. 10:10](#) for the worker is worthy of his support.

- So this was a two way street
- On the one hand they were to be dependent on those they ministered to so that those who received something of value from these men could experience the blessing of offering something of value in return
 - There is truly a blessing in being able to reward those through whom God ministers to us (example of Alistair Begg)
 - We should not see support to ministry as a matter of obligation, but rather an opportunity for our own blessing
 - If the disciples were to remain so self-sufficient and independent
 - Pack their won lunch
 - Have their own means to house themselves

- Such that others were not required to support them with housing or food or clothing, then they've denied those people the opportunity to know the blessing of being used by God to support His work
- Secondly, and probably more importantly, self-sufficiency robs the disciples of the joy and strength that comes from watching God direct us
- Watching where and how He will make provision and allow that to be a guide in itself
 - When our tummies are full, our closets are full, our garage is full, our bank accounts are full, then why would we think to look to God for provision or direction?
 - We're so self-satisfied that if God ever did direct us, we wouldn't be listening
 - So often God has to strip those things away to get our attention and draw us to a point where we are ready to hear him
 - If we're hungry and in need of food, then we'll be watching and waiting to see how He will provide
 - And maybe we'll be open to the invitation of a stranger who invites in and we get an opportunity to minister the very person God intended
 - When we're in need, when we have nothing to fall back upon – that's we're more likely to listen to him direct us to new opportunities where our gifts are needed the most
- The greatest impediment to our spiritual growth in this culture is our wealth and self-sufficiency
 - Like the church in Laodicea, we're blind to our own spiritual need because our physical needs are being met so well
 - Jesus wanted these men to be successful, and their success could come only if they were 100% dependent on God for power, authority, for success and even for their physical support

[Luke 9:10](#) ¶ When the apostles returned, they gave an account to Him of all that they had done. Taking them with Him, He withdrew by Himself to a city called Bethsaida.

[Luke 9:11](#) But the crowds were aware of this and followed Him; and welcoming them, He *began* speaking to them about the kingdom of God and curing those who had need of healing.

- So Jesus has given his disciples the opportunity to experience service to the Lord for the sake of the kingdom
 - They came back with wondrous stories, they would have been excited,
 - More than that, they came back with followers
 - Their ministry had produced fruit, and in Mark we hear:

, [Mark 6:31](#) And He *said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while.” (For there were many *people* coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.)

- But that’s what we should all expect
 - Our ministry if we are obedient to our calling in whatever form it takes, will bear fruit in the form of new faithful
 - And we will lead people to Jesus
 - And He will receive them
- As we will see next week, Jesus then feeds this entire crowd with a few loaves and fishes
 - He can take care of as many as you can bring back to the party