

Calling Disciples
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Luke 9:1-6
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Synopsis:

After Luke narrates the birth of Jesus, he introduces us to Jesus' mission. What does Jesus' mission look like? As I said last week, God's design for mission flows through disciples, relationship to relationship with people just like you. What does discipleship look like? Christian discipleship is going together in the power and authority of Jesus to do and say what he did, dependent upon those to whom we go, with similar results—some accept and some reject.

I.

It's not about us.

9:1 "He gave them *power and authority . . .*"

Whose Power and Authority? We think it's about us.

Power and Authority Belong to Jesus

E.g. Dad and the credit card

Our Job is to Introduce to Jesus

E.g. Meeting John Glenn

Luke tells us that Jesus gives the disciples power and authority over demons and to cure diseases. They have the power of Jesus to minister. This is the same power and authority that God gives us in Jesus Christ. When you or I walk into a hospital room, into someone's living room, or show up for Service Saturday, we walk in carrying Jesus' credit card. We have the power to introduce people to Jesus. We go and act "in the name of Jesus." It doesn't depend upon us. I don't have to screw up my courage to get out of here and minister. I don't have to check my emotional bank account—"Oh, I am afraid I can't do what I'm about to do!" When I go out of here, I'm drawing on the credit line of the creator and redeemer of the universe.

What would you do and where would you go if you believed this? Think with me right now of places where only you can go, and think with me that you have the power of the creator and redeemer of the universe at your

disposal. Where are you going to go and what are you going to do? Going in the power and authority of Jesus is Christian discipleship.

II.

We don't do it alone.

9:1 "Then Jesus called the twelve *together* . . ."

Discipleship is Relational Because God is Relational, Historical

E.g. Mormons: two by two

Reign of God is Relational: Salvation as Restored Relationships

E.g. Orphan Girl

In the Bible we never see people going off to minister alone. At the tomb, there's Mary and Salome; then there's Peter and Paul, then Paul and Barnabus, Paul and Silas, etc. The American myth of the rugged individual is just that, a myth. No one goes off alone. The pioneer always travels with the wagon train. We go into ministry two by two.

E.g. Refocus training: Meet regularly with Kirk, with other pastors, prayer team, Stewart Teasley

Here's the take away. If you want to do something in the name of Jesus, get someone to do it with you. Take someone with you to visit in the hospital. Invite a friend to go with you on a mission project. Invite someone into your prayer life as you pray for your sick friend or your particular crisis. It may not be the American way, but it is Jesus' way, and it works.

III.

It's about talking and doing.

9:2 "*Proclaim* the Kingdom of God and *heal* . . ."

Is It Doing or Talking?

Doing

E.g. Social Work = all action, no talk

Talking

E.g. My teaching = all talk, no action

Word Became Flesh = Doing and Talking (Communion as Reality)

You'll notice that Jesus never separates speaking from acting (twice in this passage, vv 2, 6). The disciples are to proclaim the Kingdom of God *and* to heal. The Kingdom of God is both word and deed. Without either, it isn't the Kingdom of God.

To separate word and action is to proclaim something other than the Kingdom of God. So, think twice when you minister—speak and act.

IV.

It's about depending upon others.

9:3 "Take *nothing* for your journey . . ."

Depending Upon Others:

E.g. Alasdair MacIntyre *Dependent Rational Animals*

-Skyler: food, water, relationships

-vulnerability and dependence is not abnormal

Jesus tells the disciples when they head out on the road to "take nothing for your journey." This is probably the most controversial command of Christian ministry. You would think Jesus would say, "Do some fund raising and collect all your assets, bring your own accommodations, bring extra clothing, and bring a nice gift for those with whom you stay." But he tells them to go out in need of other people's help. How are these two-by-two disciples going to make it with no money, no extra cloak, and no traveling staff? They're going to have to depend upon those to whom they are sent. They cannot do this on their own.

This is not the way we do ministry in the U.S.A.

E.g. Ken Bailey comment about Western mission.

Jesus tells his disciples that they are to go out in real need of those with whom and to whom they minister. This is the way of ministry.

E.g. Kenya friends: their churches are growing, ours aren't; their elders and deacons do things ours don't; how can we learn from them? We

Presbyterians lose 40,000 people a year. We know how to kill churches. How do you grow churches? We need the Kenyans!

V.

The results are the same as with Jesus.

9:5 “Wherever they do not *welcome* you . . .”

The World is an Occasion for Free Decisions

E.g. Baseball – only a few get 1 out of 3

The last thing Jesus tells his disciples before they go out is that some people will accept them and others will reject them. This is the best-case scenario. I cannot tell you how many times in ministry I have failed, wondering what I could have done better, and why I was such an ineffective minister. Even now, after three and a half years, Geneva is still in a slow decline. “Must be my fault,” I think to myself.

Do you hear what Jesus is saying? Even he failed to reach many people. Many rejected him; some accepted him. We have a problem because deep down inside—I know this is true for me—we think our success or failure is all about us. If Jeff can only preach the right sermon, get the right PowerPoint going, get the right worship schedule in place, hire the right kind of children’s minister, reach out across the street to Aliso Viejo and also to Leisure World, not forget Mother’s and Father’s Day, turn water to wine, and walk on the ocean, then we’ll be successful.

Ministry doesn’t work that way. As many times as we’re successful we fail. This is Jesus’ warning to the disciples. In other words, “Disciples, it is not about you. Jeff, it’s not about you. You are to be faithful. And even if you are faithful, some will reject and some will accept.”

I find this admonition very freeing. It doesn’t let me off the hook such that I can quite trying, but it does tell me that the ministry is not about my success rate, my methods, or my ability to influence people.

Luke has been teaching us about Jesus. We know what he looks like. Now he teaches us about Christian ministry. Here’s what it looks like in a thumbnail:

The power and authority come from Jesus, not us.

We do it together, not alone.
We preach and act, act and preach,
 not one or the other.
We depend upon those with whom and to whom we go.
People will both accept and reject us.