

On The Road with Jesus Luke 9:23-50

Proposition: we are incomplete (like the disciples) in so many areas but God will use us can complete us AS we travel WITH Jesus.

One of the things I appreciate about Scripture is that as the Holy Spirit inspired Dr Luke and other writers to write down what they had seen and heard, they made no effort to touch up the facts. Scripture paints what happened warts and all. Now Jesus always looks good and does what is right because He is always good but the apostles, they struggle like you and I and their failures, their lack of understanding, their wrong attitudes aren't hidden from us. Because as we look at passages of the Word as we will this morning we see that the apostles often failed in faith, in understanding, in humility, in tolerance and yet as they traveled with Jesus – the Lord used them and developed them into mighty men of God. That is an encouragement to us because we know we too fail the Lord at times and yet these men, these strugglers become history makers as they continue to walk with Jesus daily. God isn't looking for perfect people, He is looking for teachable people who want to spend real quality time with Him.

We pick up our reading this morning where we left off last week where the apostles are called to

1. FOLLOW THE WAY OF THE CROSS (LUKE 9:23-27)

23And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him(A) deny himself and(B) take up his cross(C) daily and follow me. 24For(D) whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. 25(E) For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?

Jesus said some things that on the face of it seems so counter culture, crazy even. The first shall be last. The self controlled shall inherit the earth. If you want to save your life you first need to loose t for His sake.

On the face of it, its crazy, its hard to understand. We are trained to be Me focused and goal orientated and it is all about me. And we grow up thinking that life is all about us. I want. I need. I deserve. I We hve learnt that if you want to get ahead in life you have to force your self through the crowd. You need to grab what you can and push others aside and step over others.

And yet the Lord says if you want to loose your life then just live for YOURSELF and you will be dissapointed, frustrated because life is unfair. You will be miserable. And its true that people who are focused on their needs or wants or focused on their hurts and problems become very unhappy empty, people. Focus on self and you become a loser.

But He said if you pick up your cross daily that is if you make the daily choose to serve others, to give your life away as an act of worship to him, then you will find life. In fact I would say that if you do that you will find your-self liberated from all the emotion that distorts a persons life and able to receive and walk in blessings and contentment.

When Jesus said take up your cross daily and live for me He wasn't saying, harden up I am going to give you a tough life. He was saying walk this path with me and you will be free and fulfilled.

I suspect many would read those words and go “really, really, oh I find that a bit hard to believe, that we should take Jesus so literally.”

26 For (A) whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed (B) when he comes in (C) his glory and the glory of the Father and of (D) the holy angels.

Our culture, our rational mind might say, no way, this can't be but if we don't take these words seriously instead of hearing 'well done good and faithful servant' when we stand before our maker we will hear Jesus say, I am ashamed of this one – they didn't take my message seriously.

27 But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not (A) taste death (B) until they see the kingdom of God."

Now at Pentecost 11 of these apostles would see the kingdom of God established but I suggest to you that Peter, James and John were about to see it just 8 days after Jesus uttered these words.

28 (A) Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him (B) Peter and John and James and (C) went up on the mountain to pray. 29 And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was (D) altered, and (E) his clothing became dazzling white. 30 And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, 31 who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, [a] which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

8 days after hearing Jesus say some of you will see the kingdom Jesus' inner circle, Peter, James and John go up the mountain with Him, probably Mount Hermon. And they fall asleep.

**Now Jesus meets with Moses the one who represents the Law, and He meets with Elijah the one who represents the OT prophets.
And they talk with him about his coming departure (death) a heavy topic.**

When Moses came down from the Mount in the OT after 40 days of not eating or drinking, I think because he was so in awe of what he could see and so physically satisfied in God's presence that he forgot to eat or drink that he just forgot to eat and drink, just a little foretaste of heaven for Moses, His face glowed, it radiated the glory of God just as Jesus was to glow here on this mount.

What fascinates me is that Moses brought a really heavy message to the people. Here are the 10 commandments. No one is good, not even one of you. This is what a good person looks like and you don't qualify but you need to try to live this way.

Jesus is on Mount Hermon and is talking about His exodus also a heavy topic.

And yet when Peter and the boys wake up and see what is going down Peter all flustered and at a loss for words says “Master, it's good for us to be here”

Both these apostles and the children of Israel in the OT were pleased to see and were

able to receive the heavy word when the glory of God was reflected through Moses and through Jesus.

2. **REFLECT HIS GLORY (28-36)**

Friends I am so aware that there will be times when we have to give a hard word to our kids or to a friend or to a workmate. Now if that word comes across harshly and critically and angrily. Son this behaviour has got to die. This sin has got to stop. This attitude has to be changed. If our faces and our attitudes reflect condemnation people don't want to listen to us. But ... if we face a situation when we have to bring a hard word, a corrective word, a prophetic word to some one warning them of the dangers of their behaviour, if we face that situation after we have spent time with God and captured his kindness and compassion for that person, that truth can still be spoken but if we spend time with Him first when we do speak, when we do bring the heavy word it will be received if we are reflecting something of His glory and character. I often tell people if they continue in a sexual relationship outside of marriage or if they continue to get drunk or stoned or entertain a false religion they are potentially throwing away eternity with God. The thing is, I have found that, if I have those conversations after spending time with God the person I am speaking to can see that my motivation for bringing the hard word is not judgmentalism but genuine concern for their eternity – they will usually receive the message gratefully.

Its so important with parenting and so important when dealing with our Christian brothers and sisters or workmates. If they can see on our faces the grace and love of God they will receive our message and it will help them. If our faces don't reflect His glory, there is a scowl there or a frown instead they often turn their backs on our message.

Peter, though the message was heavy wanted to be around Jesus, Moses and Elijah. But like many of us when we are flustered or don't know what to say we sometimes talk anyway.

33And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three(A) tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah"—(B) not knowing what he said.

Peter, stumbling out words without really thinking about what he was saying implied that the law, the prophets and Jesus were all equal and should be equally honoured. God the Father saw things a little differently.

34As he was saying these things,(A) a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. 35And(B) a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son,(C) my Chosen One;[a](D) listen to him!"

Hey Peter, these three aren't equals. This is my son! The Law was fulfilled in him all the prophecies of old pointed to Him.

I believe that at this point Jesus could have gone straight to heaven if he wanted to. For 33 years he had succeeded in living a sinless life. He didn't have to die a physical death because he was sinless. He could have morphed on into heaven just as I believe Adam and Eve would have done had they not sinned. He could have gone back to heaven and said to us, its possible not to sin, I have proved it therefore you

guys deserve the hell that is rightfully your place, but Jesus we know chose to come down this mountain and ascend up another to die for our sins. He chose to go down into hell so that if we believe in Him we could one day ascend into heaven.

Jesus was God's only son and now a man's only son is in trouble

37(A) On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. 38And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for(B) he is my only child. 39And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and shatters him, and will hardly leave him. 40And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but(C) they could not." 41Jesus answered, "O(D) faithless and twisted generation,(E) how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." 42While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him. But Jesus(E) rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and(G) gave him back to his father. 43And all were astonished at(H) the majesty of God.

3. GROW IN FAITH (37-43)

In Luke 9:1 Jesus gives to the disciples the authority and power to cast out all demons. So why do they fail here?

We know from Paul's writing to the church in Rome that the gifts and calling of God are given without repentance. That means that when you were baptized in the Holy Spirit you were given certain spiritual gifts and a calling, a purpose from God and God will never take those back from you.

In Matthew's account of the same incident he includes a key sentence that Jesus said: "These only come out through prayer and fasting." Now Jesus hadn't just been praying and fasting so what was He saying?

If all gifts and callings are given without God ever taking them back then why can't you and I always minister in power.

Last year your hospitality ministry saw many added to the kingdom but this year that gifting doesn't appear to be having any real effect.

Last year you may have led worship powerfully but this year you can still play the music but it's lacking power. Last year you could have taught the word with a real anointing but this year you are still giving information but no one is really changing.

Last year when you served people they turned to the Lord but this year when you serve people you are still doing the same things but no one is really changing.

Why doesn't the gifts and anointing always work if they are given and never taken back.

If we take the analogy of an outboard motor. An outboard motor is an outboard motor when you buy one that is what it will always be but if there is no fuel in that motor it won't run.

Your gifts and calling have been given to you when you received the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon you but... the effectiveness of those gifts and calling will depend on the prayer and fasting you put in.

Are you saying Russell that Jesus was a prayer but these guys though gifted and called lacked power because their prayer life was pretty useless.

Yes I am.

Well why would that be?

There are hints in scripture that the other apostles were jealous of Peter, James and John. They might have been thinking why does he always pick those three to go up to the mountain. He's always using them what about us. They are on the inner circle where the action is why should we bother praying? My guess is that was what had been happening. And you know what that happens in church's too. All of us have been given spiritual gifts and callings but we think, Oh God won't use us He will use Him or her, why bother praying when the reality is his gifts and calling have been given to You and you just need to put the fuel in the tank. Connect to the power source to see those things happening effectively in your ministry.

That's why Jesus rebukes directly and I believe lovingly the apostles, if they would just stop winging and get praying they already have the authority and power to defeat every demon. Prayer and fasting is like putting fuel into your spiritual engine.

One of the things I appreciate about this boy's deliverance is the reality that people will at times let you down, they won't do what you expect or want them to do, what you feel they should do but Jesus, He will never let you down. He will turn up and do what needs to be done and he did with this boy.

4. **GROW IN UNDERSTANDING** (44-45)

Immediately after delivering this boy of a demon Jesus tells the apostles He is going to be handed over to His enemies and killed but the apostles didn't understand where he was coming from.

When you or I have an habitual sin Satan gets a hook into us and he uses that doorway, that toe hold as a way of getting his demons in to mess with us. Jesus had just delivered a boy of an evil spirit and then he points to the cross. Why, because Satan has no legal foothold in your life and can be commanded effectively to go when you no longer have sin in your life. Last week we sang the old hymn "What can wash away my sin?.....nothing but the blood of Jesus."

If a person is repentant for their sin and asks Jesus to wash it away those little trespassers have to go. You and I can tell them, this person, this one has been covered by the blood of Christ, you have no legal ground here, push off and they must go. But at that time the apostles didn't really understand what He meant. And yet wonderfully as they continue to walk with Jesus that understanding was to come.

5. **GROW IN HUMILITY** (46-48)

46(A) An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest. 47But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side 48and said to them, (B) "Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and(C) whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great."

It's not uncommon for people when they have failed, as these guys had, they couldn't cast out the demon even though they had the power and the authority, it's common after failure to try to justify yourself and to make yourself look good at the expense of others. A truly great person is never insecure and never needs the approval of

others but when there has been failure and insecurity exists it suddenly becomes important to know who is the greatest. Jesus points to a small trusting child and says whichever one of you is the most humble is the greatest.

These apostles lacked faith, lacked understanding, lacked humility and they lacked tolerance and grace in their lives.

6. GROW IN TOLERANCE/ GRACE (49-55)

49(A) John answered, "Master, we saw someone(B) casting out demons in your name, and(C) we tried to stop him, because he does not follow with us." 50But Jesus said to him, "Do not stop him,(D) for the one who is not against you is for you."

51When the days drew near for(E) him to be taken up,(F) he set his face(G) to go to Jerusalem. 52And(H) he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of(I) the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. 53But(J) the people did not receive him, because(K) his face was set toward Jerusalem. 54And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to tell(L) fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"[a] 55But he turned and rebuked them.[b]

Another Christian is casting out demons, doing what the boys a moment ago couldn't do and they get ticked, jealous, and tell him to stop it because he is not one of their group. Don't go to that church, don't listen to that ministry. They are not one of us. Some times we say things like that because we are jealous that they are doing things that we should be.

They pass through a Samaritan village and as you know ethnic divide and the debate has always existed between these two people groups. Where should we worship. Well if you guys are on the way to Jerusalem you know we disagree with you lot so we are not going to give you hospitality they say.

James and John were known as the sons of thunder. They were pretty hard men and they were pretty quick to judge people. John tells this unknown believer, hey you stop delivering people in Jesus name you are not one of our group. Now John says to Jesus we just met with Elijah a few days ago, he roasted some people, Jesus do you want us to call down fire from heaven and roast this lot too. John was the sort of man that would go to a church and say the worship is no good, the preaching is boring, this church isn't being run properly, the people don't pray enough or read the word enough. Don't you think its time Lord that we gave them a good roasting?

The bible just says that Jesus just turned and corrected them for what they had said.

Luke 9 could be read as a list of failures by Jesus's apostles they failed to understand His glory and to reflect it to the world.

They failed to show faith when a boy was possessed by a demon.

They failed to show understanding when Jesus linked his death to the deliverance they had just seen.

They failed to show humility of character and

They failed to show tolerance and grace.

Failed, failed, failed, failed except they continued walking with Jesus for another year until he ascended into heaven and in all these areas they were to change.

They lacked faith, understanding, humility and grace and yet continued to walk with Jesus and became world changers, history makers 11 men who God would use to change the world forever. The son of thunder John, judgmental, harsh critical John later became known as the apostle of love. He loved everybody and showed grace to all. Hard as nails, finger pointing, roast the lot of them John becomes the apostle of faith. How. The pastor didn't pray for them. They didn't have revelation or a particular life changing experience.

Jesus took them where they were at and as they spent time with Him, walking with Him daily they reflected his glory, they gained faith and understanding and humility and grace. They became like Jesus.

Real people, walking with a real God becoming really different.

That's the road we are invited to walk daily with Him. That's the growth that is ahead of us if we let Him change us daily.

Daily pick up your cross and follow Him. It is so worth it!