



## The Peak of Jesus' Galilean Ministry Luke 9:1-36

### Introduction

Only two miracles are recorded by all four gospel writers: the resurrection and the feeding of the five thousand. The latter was perhaps the high point in Jesus' earthly ministry, demonstrating God's provision and fellowship not only to train the twelve disciples and nourish the thousands who experienced it, but to encourage all who read of it through the ages. Another significant event in Jesus' earthly life was His transfiguration. Peter and John would later reflect on that experience and the impact it had on their own ministries (2 Peter 1:16-18; John 1:14).

### Outline of Luke 9

- I. The Twelve Sent Out - Luke 9:1-10
- II. The Five Thousand Fed - Luke 9:11-17
- III. The Confession by Peter - Luke 9:18-27
- IV. The Transfiguration of Jesus - Luke 9:28-36

### I. The Twelve Sent Out - Luke 9:1-10; Matthew 9:35-10:15; Mark 6:6-13

- A. Third and Final Tour of Galilee - Matthew 9:35-38; Mark 6:6
  1. Training the twelve

Matthew and Mark give the background of sending out the twelve apostles. Jesus was making His third and last tour of the Galilean area, teaching and preaching. Seeing the crowds, He was moved with compassion because they were *like sheep without a shepherd*. He said to His disciples, "*The harvest truly is plentiful but the laborers are few*" (Matthew 9:37). He asked them to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into the harvest. Soon they were the answer to their own prayers. When you pray about a problem are you willing to be part of the solution?

2. Empowering and giving authority to the twelve - Luke 9:1-2

"Power is inherent ability; authority is the right to exercise it" (Wycliffe Bible Dictionary, Everett Harrison). Jesus called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority in five areas: 1) over all demons; 2) curing diseases; 3) preaching the kingdom of God; 4) healing the sick; 5) cleansing the lepers (Matthew 10:8). They were to give freely, as they had received.

### 3. Charge given to the twelve - Luke 9:3-5

As they went out, they were to trust in God and take nothing for their journey, "*neither staffs nor bag nor bread nor money; and do not have two tunics apiece.*"

#### a. Provision - verse 3

They were not to beg as some from other religions did, but were to trust the Lord and experience His provision as they were faithful. Friendly, hospitable people would invite them to stay. There would also be those who were hostile. Once in a home they were to be content there. Later, Jesus would ask them, "*When I sent you without money, bag, knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?*" They would answer, "*Nothing*" (Luke 22:35). Have you ever trusted the Lord totally for necessities as you served Him?

#### b. Limitations - verses 4-5

They were to limit their ministry to those who welcomed them. If a place did not receive them, they were to shake off the dust of that city from their feet as they left.

They were not to go into the way of the Gentiles, nor enter any city of the Samaritans. They were to go only to the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 10:5-6). Today our field is the world and our commission is the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20. This first mission of the twelve was a fledgling training mission, and not meant to be the model for missionary work.

### B. Multiplied Ministry - Luke 9:6

*So they departed, and went throughout the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere.* Matthew 11:1 says, *When Jesus finished commanding his twelve disciples,....He departed from them to teach and to preach in their cities.* That meant seven teams covered the area, six teams of two, and the Lord. Are you willing to venture forth under the Lord's command, trusting Him and proving Him faithful to His word?

### C. Herod's Perplexity - Luke 9:7-9; Matthew 14:1-12; Mark 6:14-29.

Herod Antipas heard of all this activity in his region. He heard various theories and was puzzled.

#### 1. Confusing conjectures - 9:8-9

Who was this person Herod was hearing stories about?

Was it Elijah, who was supposed to precede Messiah? Was it a prophet risen from the dead? Or, worst of all, was it John the Baptist risen from the dead, whom Herod had just had beheaded? Herod was not only confused, but fearful.

## 2. So he sought to see Him - 9:9

Herod wanted to see the person he was hearing about.

Luke does not mention John the Baptist's martyrdom at the hands of Herod, but the account of this incident is given in Matthew 14 and Mark 6. At his birthday party, Herod made an oath to give his step-daughter anything she desired. Her mother, Herodias, who was living in an adulterous relationship with Herod, prompted her to ask for the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Herodias hated John for preaching that her marriage to Herod was unlawful. Although the Scriptures report that Herod was sorry he had made the oath, he commanded that Herodias' daughter receive her request. Herod's guilt may have stirred up fear that John had risen from the dead.

### D. The Apostles' Return - Luke 9:10; Mark 6:30-31

When the apostles returned to Jesus, they *told Him all that they had done*. He said to them, "*Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.*" They had much to tell Him and He was eager to hear. So they sailed across the lake to a quiet area near Bethsaida.

## II. The Five Thousand Fed - Luke 9:11-17

### A. Pursuing Crowds - Luke 9:11

As Jesus sought a deserted area for the disciples, they noticed the crowds in the distance who had followed Him, walking around the top of the lake. It was as if a busy doctor had finally shut the door of his office and gone on a much needed holiday, only to find all his patients waiting for him at his mountain retreat.

Though weary and worn, Jesus felt compassion for the crowd. He welcomed them, taught them more about the kingdom of God, and healed all who were in need. Will you welcome the next person who infringes upon your privacy and rest?

### B. Provision - Luke 9:12-17

#### 1. Disciples' plan - 9:12

The day became evening and dinner time drew near. The crowds had come spontaneously without provisions. "*Send the multitude away,*" said the disciples, trying to

make it sound like they were being considerate, "*that they may go into the surrounding towns and country and lodge and get provisions.*"

#### 2. Jesus' plan - 9:13

Jesus looked at the disciples and made it clear that the crowd did not need to go away, "*You give them something to eat.*" Then He addressed Philip, "*Where shall we buy bread that these may eat?*" Philip assessed the crowd and said there was no way (John 6:5-7). Little did Philip know that Jesus had a plan that would include him and the disciples.

#### 3. Andrew's faith - John 6:8-9

Then Andrew did something that made the miracle possible. He noticed a little boy who had a lunch of five barley loaves and two fish. He mentioned it to Jesus and then was embarrassed, saying, "*But what are they among so many?*" Like Philip, do you look at your circumstances and say, "It's impossible?" Or are you like Andrew, taking to Jesus what you have for Him to bless and use?

### C. The Miracle - Luke 9:14-17

There is a precedent for this miracle in 2 Kings 4: 42-44. However, Elisha fed only one hundred men and he had twenty barley loaves and a knapsack of newly ripened grain. There were leftovers from that miracle also, but we are not told how much.

#### 1. Order - 9:14-15

We would like to know how Andrew separated the lunch from the little boy, but he did and gave it to Jesus. Jesus commanded the disciples to divide the crowd into groups of fifty and have them sit down on the grass.

#### 2. Blessing - 9:16

Jesus then took the small amount of food and *looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke them* into pieces. Is it your habit to thank God for the food you have before eating it? It might go farther if you did.

#### 3. Distribution - 9:16

Jesus gave a little to each disciple with directions to distribute it to a section of the crowd. To the amazement of Peter, John, and the others, each group was fed as the disciples returned to Jesus for more. This continued until everyone was fed and satisfied. There were five thousand men, and also women and children, for a total between five and ten thousand fed that day (Matthew 14:21).

## 4. Cleanup

The disciples gathered twelve baskets of leftovers, which supplied more than enough for them to eat also. This would be unlikely if the miracle was merely everyone sharing their lunches, as some say.

Would you like to experience miracles in your life? Will you bring what you have to Jesus today and ask Him to bless and use it? Jesus is all you need. Will you go to Him for your needs and receive from His hand?

**III. The Confession by Peter - Luke 9:18-27**

A. Setting: Caesarea Philippi - Matthew 16:13;  
Mark 8:27

Both Matthew and Mark place Peter's confession near Caesarea Philippi, which is north of the Sea of Galilee at the source of the Jordan River. It is the place where the melted snow from Mount Hermon flows down. "Several reasons probably led Jesus to select this area. It was now evidently summertime, and the area about the Sea of Galilee is unbearably hot at that time of year. It was also outside the realm of Herod Antipas and it promised both relief from the crowds and an unbroken opportunity to teach the twelve. Time was now of the essence" (The Life and Times of Jesus, Herschel Hobbes).

Luke mentions that Jesus was praying alone with His disciples around Him. Was He praying that they would have enough understanding to be able to answer life's greatest question which He was about to ask them?

B. The Inescapable Question: Who is Jesus? -  
Luke 9:18-19

After prayer, Jesus directed the disciples' thinking toward His identity. "*Who do the crowds say that I am?*" They answered, "*John the Baptist, but some say Elijah; and others say that one of the old prophets has risen again.*"

People still miss who Jesus is by saying He was a good man, an example, a teacher, a prophet, a martyr, or the leader of a new religion. They do not understand that if He was not who He claimed to be, the Messiah, Son of God and Savior, then He could be none of those things. He would be either a madman or a liar.

C. Personal Confession - Luke 9:20

But who do you say that I am? This is the most important question anyone will ever answer. Each individual's eternal future in heaven or hell hangs on the answer. Peter spoke and said, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*" (Matthew 16:16). Do you agree with him?

Jesus blessed Peter, saying that he could only know this by revelation from God the Father. His natural reasoning could never provide that perfect answer. Today we have the full revelation of Jesus Christ in the Bible. There is no excuse for not knowing who He is. Do you know Him as the Son of the living God? If not, or if you are not sure, please speak with your discussion leader and ask for a Disciplers Confidence Letter. This will help you understand the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ and your relationship to Him.

D. Inescapable Consequence - Luke 9:21-23;  
Matthew 16:21-26

From that moment, Jesus began to teach them about what lay ahead: the cross and His resurrection. He gave four prophecies concerning Himself.

## 1. His suffering - 9:21-22

"*The Son of man must suffer many things.*" The Jews did not expect a suffering Messiah. They did not then and still do not apply Isaiah 53 to Messiah, but rather to themselves as a suffering nation. Yet the passage clearly refers to a person, *He is despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief* (Isaiah 53:3).

## 2. His rejection - 9:22

He would be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes who were the religious establishment.

## 3. His death - 9:22

He would ultimately be killed as a result of being rejected.

## 4. His Resurrection - 9:22

The third day He would be raised up. The disciples did not understand what they had been told, so He would tell them several more times before the time came. It was important because it had application to them.

E. The Cost of Discipleship - Luke 9:23-26

## 1. The cross - 9:23-25

Jesus told the disciples plainly of the cost they would pay to follow Him. Up to this point, following Jesus had been exciting and wonderful. However, there was a cross for Him and a cross for them. Jesus gives four requirements for following Him.

## a. Deny self - verse 23

Self-control means denying an urge to satisfy a desire in order to fulfill a higher goal or priority. We either indulge ourselves or deny ourselves. A child cannot both play all he or she wants, and also be accomplished as a scholar, musician, or athlete. It takes the self-denial of exchanging one for the other. It is no different in being a follower of Jesus Christ.

## b. Take up your cross daily - verse 23

The cross meant death to Jesus and it will mean death to self to each one who follows Him. See Galatians 2:20. Death goes beyond self-denial. It is the forsaking of self and entering into His rejection and death in order to share in His resurrection (1 Peter 4:12-13).

## c. "Follow Me" - verse 23

To follow Jesus means to do as He did, to follow His example, to follow in His steps (1 Peter 2:21).

## d. Lose your life in order to save It - 9:24

"Aside from the command to 'follow Me', this saying is repeated more times in the gospels than any other saying of Christ" (The MacArthur Bible Commentary, John MacArthur).

## 2. The promise of life - 9:24-25

Only by losing one's life can it be saved. What a contradiction, you may say, what a paradox! Lose something in order to save it? "Yes", says the apostle Paul. Losing it is not the end. *If we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His Resurrection,....Knowing this that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin* (Romans 6:5-6).

We either lose our lives to sin or we lose them to Christ. It is a choice. But since either way you will lose your life, why not lose it in order to gain it forever? Born into a condition of sin, all become slaves to sin through the choices of our fallen wills. But through Christ's death on the cross, you can be freed from sin (1 Peter 1:18; 2:24). Will you gladly lose your life in order to win it?

## 3. Promise of glory - 9:26-27

Jesus promised that those who follow Him would share in His glory. Some standing there with Him would even see His kingdom before they died.

**IV. The Transfiguration of Jesus - Luke 9:28-36; Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8**

The traditional site of the transfiguration of Jesus is Mount Tabor south of the Sea of Galilee. However, another possible site is Mount Hermon, north of Caesarea Philippi, where Jesus and the disciples were at that time. Herschel Hobbs, (The Life and Times of Jesus), and many other commentators prefer Mount Hermon. It is tradition versus probability.

## A. Prayer - Luke 9:28

*Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray.* Again, Jesus was praying, and something spectacular and unprecedented happened. Do you think He may have wanted to teach these three future leaders that great things happen through prayer?

## B. Glory - Luke 9:29-30

## 1. A sight to behold - 9:29

*As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening.* Luke says His face became *altered*, the Greek "heteron", meaning "other than it was". Matthew and Mark say He was transfigured, the Greek "metamorphose" which means "a complete change". His clothing became more brilliant and dazzling than anything they had ever seen. They had scarce taken this in when they saw two men with Him, Moses and Elijah!

## 2. Sounds to be heard - 9:30-32

## a. Moses and Elijah - 9:30-31

Luke adds, *Who appeared in glory.* This was a lifting of the veil that separates earth and heaven, a preview of glory. Peter, James, and John could even hear the conversation. Moses and Elijah, representing the law and the prophets, and whose departures from this earth were extraordinary, were speaking to Jesus of His departure. The word used is "exodus", His exodus. That was not a comfortable topic for the disciples, so they succumbed to sleep.

## b. Peter - 9:32-33

Peter is always worth hearing even when he is wrong because he is so much like us. Not only was he the apostles' spokesman, he is ours too. When they awakened, Peter reacted to the incredible scene by speaking more than thinking. He wanted to put up three tents and stay right there as though heaven had

begun. Both Mark and Luke comment that he said this because he did not know what to say. There is an old proverb, "When you have nothing to say, say nothing." Apparently Peter was not familiar with that saying.

### c. God - 9:34-35

Peter had more to say, out of fear, but he was interrupted by a cloud enveloping them and sparing him further foolishness. God Himself spoke from the cloud, "*This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased; hear Him!*" The same voice that spoke to inaugurate Jesus' ministry at His baptism spoke again to affirm Him as His ministry drew to a close.

Jesus is not an equal with Moses and Elijah, as Peter suggested, but rather their Lord. The cloud was the Shekinah glory that followed the Israelites in the wilderness, filled the Tabernacle on occasion, and the Temple in Isaiah's day (Exodus 40:34-38; Isaiah 6:1-2). The awestruck disciples fell on their faces and the scene faded as Jesus touched them and told them not to be afraid (Matthew 17:7).

### 3. Consequences - 9: 36

What was the purpose of this display? There were two results. First, the three who were to be leaders of the early church were indelibly impressed with the unforgettable vision of Jesus in His glory. They were the ones standing with the others who would see the kingdom of God before they died (Luke 9:27). This vision of the One to whom they belonged would carry them through future trials, even death. Secondly, it permanently motivated their preaching, teaching, and

writing. Peter and John would write of it, *The Word became Flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth* (John 1:14). *We did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased"* (2 Peter 1:16-17).

### Applications

1. Who do you know who needs spiritual feeding? If you know Jesus and you have God's Word, you are able to feed others. The miracle of feeding the five thousand was followed by Jesus' teaching that He is the Living Bread from heaven (John 6:51). Will you take spiritual food, the words of Jesus, and give them to someone today? Will you give actual physical food also if that is needed?
2. Have you seen Jesus in His glory in the Bible and by faith? Will you study the Bible in order to know Him better? The whole purpose of Bible study is, as John wrote, to know and believe Him. *But these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through His name* (John 20:21).
3. Will you let the knowledge of who Jesus is be the motivation for everything you do?
4. If you have never done so, will you confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior today? Who will you share this with?



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## QUESTIONS

Questions are based on the New King James Version of the Bible.

### **DAY ONE: Read lesson notes and references.**

1. What impressed you about the sending out of the apostles?
  
2. What was new or important to you in the feeding of the five thousand?
  
3. What amazed you most in the transfiguration of Jesus?

### **DAY TWO: Read Luke 9:37-45 and Matthew 17:14-20.**

4. a. What situation met Jesus as He came down from the mountain?  
  
b. ♥(Thought Question) How was this similar to what frequently happens after a great spiritual experience?
  
5. Do you think Jesus was more disturbed by the condition of the child or of the disciples? Give reason for your answer.
  
6. a. What promises concerning faith are found in Matthew 17:20 and Mark 9:23?  
  
b. Do you think the father had this kind of faith? Why or why not?  
  
c. Do you think the disciples had this kind of faith? Why or why not?
  
7. a. What did Jesus tell His disciples again in Luke 9:44?  
  
b. Did they understand?

### **DAY THREE: Read Luke 9:46-62 and Mark 9:33-50.**

8. a. What argument began among the disciples?  
  
b. Jesus used it to teach them something. What was it?

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9. What upset John? How did Jesus tell him to deal with it?
10. a. What other incident upset James and John in Luke 9:54-56?
- b. How did Jesus deal with this situation?
- c. How do you think believers might use this teaching today?
11. What did Jesus say about anyone who causes a child to stumble? See Matthew 18:6-7 and Mark 9:40-42.
12. In Luke 9:57-62, what do you think Jesus was really saying:  
To a reckless and unrealistic follower?
- To a reluctant follower making an excuse?
- To an insincere procrastinating follower?

**DAY FOUR: Read Luke 10:1-24.**

13. In Luke 9: 51-53 what direction did Jesus take?  
(Note: John 7-10 takes place in Jerusalem between Luke 9 and 10.)
14. a. How did Jesus prepare the people of Judea for His ministry?
- b. In what ways was the sending of the seventy similar to the sending of the twelve in Luke 9:1-6?
15. a. What was their attitude when they returned?
- b. What was their report? How did Jesus respond?
- c. ? (Thought Question) What might be a similar experience today?
- d. ♥ (Heart Question) How can you have such an experience?

**DAY FIVE: Read Luke 10:25-37.**

16. a. What was the lawyer's first question?

b. How did Jesus answer him?

c. What was his second question?

d. Do you think he was sincere or not? Give reasons for your answer.

17. How did the story of the Good Samaritan answer the question?

18. a. From the following Scripture passages, what must a person do to have eternal life?  
John 5:24

Acts 16:31

Hebrews 11:6

1 John 5:11-12

b. Are these verses true for you? If so, in what ways?

**DAY SIX: Read Luke 10:38-42.**

19. a. Who did Jesus go to visit?

b. How did the personalities of the two women differ?

c. Are you more like Mary or Martha? In what ways?