

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

A Message of Hope and Fulfillment For Those Longing For God

The Heart Is Desperately Wicked & Deceitful

Luke 9: 43-56

In a few short verses we go from the amazing glory of the transfiguration and the dramatic healing of a demonized boy to the fickle and deceitful behavior of, not only the crowds, but even the disciples. How fast we can fall from the sublime heights! We must not miss the lessons recorded in the aftermath of the transfiguration.

I. While Everyone Was Marveling

The crowd was awed at the amazing miracle of the deliverance and healing of the young man who had the demon and the epileptic seizures. The mood was excited and dramatic and Jesus was at the pinnacle of popularity. He was not impressed. He warned His disciples that this crowd, and others like them, would ultimately betray Him. How quickly the tide can turn.

II. Who Is The Greatest?

It is amazing that the disciples, particularly those who had been with Jesus on the mountain of transfiguration, could so quickly degenerate from these holy moments to debating over which one of them was the greatest. This scene is so childish as to be almost unbelievable. No wonder Jesus chose a child to illustrate true Kingdom greatness.

III. Jealousy In Kingdom Mission

The disciples had had a taste of fame and had been in the limelight of miraculous ministry. It was not something they were willing to share. John discovered someone casting out demons in Jesus' name and quickly asked the Master to put an end to it. This is rather odd, since the disciples themselves had failed so miserably at the same task not long before!

IV. Blessings Lost Because Of Prejudice

As Jesus sets His face toward Jerusalem, He chooses to go through Samaria, possibly to avoid the crowds that would inevitably congregate around Him throughout the regions of Israel. It was a glorious opportunity for the Samaritans; a chance to have the Savior all to themselves, visiting in their homes, heralding the Kingdom. But it was not to be . . . He was headed to Jerusalem, He was the Jewish Messiah, and they wanted no part of Him. What a blessing they missed!

Each of these events tell a story about human nature. They remind us of how prone we are to be fickle, double-minded, and petty. They point out how quickly we can change with the tide of public opinion or fall, through pride, to childish levels of immaturity.

James tells us that the Word of God is like a mirror, reflecting our image. When you look into these stories of real human nature, what do you see? Do you find yourself in these examples? God calls us to be loyal followers of Jesus Christ, to be gracious and loving, to quickly choose the role of the servant, to rejoice whenever and however the Gospel message of the Kingdom is proclaimed. Do you see yourself in any of these episodes?

But while everyone was marveling at all that He was doing, He said to His disciples, "Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men." But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement. An argument started among them as to which of them might be the greatest. But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart, took a child and stood him by His side, and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great." John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to prevent

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Did you find yourself being reflected in any of these events? Which one and what was (is) the occasion?
2. Which one of these events stands out to you as most often reflecting the way people are?
3. Why do you think Luke included these events? In what way do they add to the story of the life of Jesus and the Gospel message?
4. In what ways are children most like the great ones in the Kingdom? What is it about a child that reflects what God values most in His people?
5. If you found yourself reflected back in one of these negative behaviors, how do you think God wants you to respond in order to effect change toward godly behavior?

NOTES

him because he does not follow along with us." But Jesus said to him, "Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you." When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem; and He sent messengers on ahead of Him, and they went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make arrangements for Him. But they did not receive Him, because He was traveling toward Jerusalem. When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what kind of spirit you are of; for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." And they went on to another village.

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