

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

"JESUS' POWER AND PURPOSE"

For individual study or group discussion

Last week three of the disciples witnessed the glory of Christ at his transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36). As they descend from their mountaintop experience in Luke 9:37-45, they enter back into the pain and suffering of a broken world where the disciples struggle to heal a boy who is possessed by an unclean spirit. The father of the possessed boy turns to Jesus for help, and the crowd is astonished by Jesus' power to heal. As we dig deeper into today's passage, we learn that Christ's power has purpose beyond just miraculous healings. In the upside-down Kingdom of God, Jesus' followers must hold together his matchless power and authority along with his purposeful suffering and rejection, a purpose that will soon lead him to a different mountaintop, where death on a cross awaits him.

- Read the parallel accounts in Matthew 17:14-23 and Mark 9:14-29. Describe the scene at the base of the mountain.
- Exodus 32 describes Moses' mountaintop experience on Mt. Sinai. What are some of the parallels between these two passages?

If you recall from our earlier studies in chapter 9, the passage begins with Jesus sending the disciples out into the surrounding villages, proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God, granting them "power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases" (v. 1).

- Read Luke 9:1-36. What has happened since the disciples' commission? Why are they unable to cast out the unclean spirit who is tormenting the young boy and attend to the father's desperate request (vv. 37-42)? (cf. Mk. 9:28-29)
- Jesus' sharp rebuke for the unbelieving disciples (v. 41) resembles God's harsh rebuke to the faithless children of Israel in Deuteronomy 32:20. Read *The Song of Moses* (Deuteronomy 32:1-43). Who is it that vindicates and delivers the children of Israel? In Luke 9:42, who is it that vindicates the distraught father's faith and delivers the demon-possessed boy?
- What other time during our studies in Luke did you see Jesus calling out the disciples because of their lack of faith? (See Luke 8:22-25.)

In verses 43b-45, we witness Jesus foretelling his death a second time. The first time came on the heels of Peter's confession, you are "The Christ of God" (v. 20). Still, the disciples find Jesus' sobering announcement incomprehensible. Consider how in both occurrences Jesus refers to himself as "The Son of Man," identifying himself with the Old Testament prophecy in Daniel 7. Again, Jesus is pointing his disciples to his purposeful suffering and rejection as he begins his journey to Jerusalem (v. 31). Recall how Jesus disclosed earlier in verse 22, "the Son of Man *must* suffer many things." This emphatic revelation indicates his obligation and definite plan to accomplish salvation for his people through the cross.

- The display of his power coupled with his somber revelation, Jesus once again unites his Messianic identity with his purposeful suffering and rejection (v. 44). Read Ephesians 1:7-10 and 2 Timothy 1:8-10. How do these Scripture passages speak of God's plan and purpose of salvation through his Son?
- Jesus discloses to his disciples his approaching death, and he makes his announcement while those around him marvel at his majesty (v. 43). But his followers could not see how his suffering would provide salvation, and they were afraid to ask him about it (v. 45). How can you overcome any reluctance you may have to trust God and his call to a life of faithful obedience, especially when you struggle with pain, doubt, confusion, or even cynicism?
- Have there been times in your life when, like the father in the story, desperation has driven you to Jesus? Reflect this week on the fact that everything is under God's providential control, and therefore has a purpose. Meditate on Philippians 2:5-11, Hebrews 12:1-4, and Isaiah 53.

DATE: June 19, 2022

SPEAKER: Wil/Brian

SERIES: Gospel of Luke

PASSAGE: Luke 9:37-45

Think Out, Think Through

Luke 9:28-45 illustrates for us that mountaintop experiences are wonderful, but most of life is lived in the valley. Theologian N.T. Wright shares the following illustration in his commentary on Luke 9:

"The Oscar-winning movie Chariots of Fire tells the story of two athletes at the 1920 Paris Olympics. Harold Abrahams, after a gigantic struggle as much against himself as against the other runners, achieved the gold medal in the 100 yards. Eric Liddell, the devout Christian who had refused to run on a Sunday, switched events and won the gold in the 440 yards. It is a moving double story, all the more so for being true. After the Games were over, the movie shows all the athletes returning on the boat train to London, and spilling out excitedly into Waterloo station. All except Harold Abrahams. His girlfriend waits anxiously as the crowd thins out. Only when they have all gone does Harold emerge slowly from the train. He has achieved what he set out to do. He has the long-coveted prize in his hand. He has been up the mountain, and is realizing that whatever he does now he will never stand there again. He has to come down from the giddy heights and face reality."¹

- Should Christians be surprised that most of life is lived in the valley? Read Luke 9:23-26 and explain why or why not.
- If you are familiar with the movie *Chariots of Fire*, why do you think Abrahams' and Liddell's emotions were so different after winning gold medals?

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