



# **STORIES OF LIFE!**

**The Gospel of Luke**

## **A Story of Commitment!**

**Luke 9:43-62**

**Message #33 of 50 – S812**

**Sermon given on October 7, 2018**



**Sunday Morning Service**

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# **A Story of Commitment!**

***Luke 9:43-62***

## **Opening Comments**

- Turn to **Luke 9**
- We continue a study through the Gospel of Luke – **The Stories of Life**
- **Pray**

## **Teaching**

- **A Story of Commitment!**
- Let's review the context before we get into the text for today
- Jesus took Peter, James, and John up on a mountain to pray
- While there, Jesus was changed - His true essence showed forth – His glory was seen
- It was an overwhelming experience for the three – build three tabernacles – Let's stay here forever
- God speaks up – “This is My beloved Son – Hear Him”
- They come down the mountain – the multitudes are there
- A father desperate to free his son from a demon comes
- Jesus casts the demon out
- **Luke 9:43a**
- ‘majesty’ = mighty power
- As a salesman, this would be when I would go for the close
- While they are all charged up about how great He is, great time to tell them to follow Him – to repent – to obey God – something like that
- That's not what Jesus does
- **Luke 9:43b-45**
- You're thinking I am some great person – like one the great men of the world
- ‘you need to let this sink in’ things aren't going to go the way you think they will
- But they're not getting it
- When things happen just like Jesus says, they behave as if they had no idea what was going on

- Even those closest to Jesus didn't always understand what He was saying or doing
  - It shouldn't come as a surprise to us when we don't understand something that God is doing, even though He probably warned us it could happen
  - And then to accentuate just how clueless they were – Luke tells us what happened next
  - **Luke 9:46**
  - This is a sad commentary on human nature
  - Jesus just told them that he was going to be betrayed into the hands of men – and the disciples are arguing about which of them would have the best jobs in Jesus' kingdom
  - **Luke 9:47-48**
  - A desire to be great is a fairly common human trait – to be better or at least perceived as better than we actually are
  - That is partly because God made us that way – we are made in His image – He is great
  - Sin clouds that and usually makes it into something ungodly
  - Jesus uses a practical illustration to help them see differently
  - Takes a little child and sets him by them
  - In that time and culture, children were of little value or significance
  - Some even taught that it was a waste of time for a man to spend time with children – not right, just what was
  - Jesus presents them with two cultural opposites – a little child of relatively little importance – and Himself – of the highest importance
  - Our way of measuring greatness is opposite of the way God does
  - Jesus, pointing to the small child, says 'he who is least among you all will be great'
  - Jesus said it a different way **Mark 10:44-45**
- And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.**
- Are there certain areas of service that are below you, or that you won't do – like Children's Ministry
  - The faith of a child is the model for faith that pleases God

- I can't think of more noble service to God than helping children to discover and grow in faith
- Get involved – if not in the Children's Ministry – somewhere
- Something about this conversation made John uncomfortable so he changes the subject
- **Luke 9:49-50**
- We don't know anything about this person except that he believes that the name of Jesus is powerful
- And he is successfully calling on the name of Christ cast demons out of people
- But John objects that he is not part of their group
- Jesus tells John and the others to leave the man alone
- Just because some group does church different than we do, doesn't mean they are wrong – leave them alone
- Just because someone doesn't agree with every little bit of doctrine that you believe, doesn't mean they are against Christ
- For example: we believe the Bible teaches that elders and pastors are to be men – not because they are better – it is just what it says
- And because we attempt to take the Bible literally wherever possible, we do what we believe it says
- Some groups believe that women can be elders and pastors
- That doesn't mean they are God-hating heretics
- If you don't agree – don't go to a church with women pastors
- But don't despise them as godless apostates just because they see certain things differently than you do
- On some things there is no place for compromise like the person of Jesus Christ
- The JW and Mormons and other groups have views about Jesus that are contrary to clear Bible teaching – they are heretics – avoid them
- Starting in verse 51, we have a transition in the story of Christ
- **Luke 9:51-54**
- Starting here and for the next ten chapters, Jesus is on the road to Jerusalem
- Galilee is in the north of Israel and Jerusalem is to the south

- In between Galilee and Jerusalem is an area called Samaria – most direct route
- Most Jews avoided traveling through Samaria – go around
- There was a centuries old animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans
- The Jews considered Samaritans half-breeds (Jewish/other), impure
- The Samaritans viewed the Jews as bigots and religious hypocrites
- It was not uncommon for a Jew to ask God to destroy the Samaritans like He did Sodom and Gomorrah
- James and John had been with Jesus when Elijah showed up with Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration
- Their answer to rejection was to suggest that they call down fire on the village and destroy it – Wow! Just a bit extreme
- Jesus responds
- **Luke 9:55-56**
- They still don't understand what Jesus is there to do
- They still want the conquering king who deals fiercely with His enemies
- As an aside, I recently heard a Christian song describing God's love as fierce – I don't think that is a good way to describe God's love
- God's love is powerful, even overwhelming, but I don't think it is fierce
- Jesus says something here that is so important for us not to miss
- 'the Son of man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them'
- The obvious implication is to eternal life through salvation from our sins **1 Timothy 1:15**

**This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...**

- But there is another aspect I think it is important to talk about
- Some people think that coming to Christ is throwing your life away
- They believe that being a Christian is all about the things you can't do
- Jesus didn't come to 'destroy men's lives' – He came to give us an abundant life in Him
- I lost nothing but my sin when I came to Christ – and I gained the whole world through Him

- Chapter nine ends with three quick vignettes of people making excuses about why they can't commit to Jesus
- Three barriers to commitment to follow Jesus
- Making a true commitment to follow Jesus is not an easy thing
- It is likely to cost you something – I said earlier that I didn't lose anything, and I meant that, but it did cost me something **Philippians 3:7-8**

**But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ...**

- Jesus addresses three barriers people might face when confronted with choosing to follow Jesus
- For some, these barriers will keep them out of the Kingdom of God, and for others, maybe someone here, they will keep them from doing anything for God in His kingdom
- The first barrier someone might face is **Hardship**
- **Luke 9:57**
- Matthew's gospel describes this man as a scribe – educated – probably very accustomed to comfort
- **Luke 9:58**
- Making a commitment to follow Christ is likely to bring some amount of discomfort
- It is possible that it could cost you everything to truly follow Christ
- But Jesus also promises something to those who follow Him **Mark 10:29-30**

**So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life."**

- If you are unwilling to expose yourself to hardship or discomfort you will not commit to following Jesus
- You won't serve in the Children's Ministry – you won't share the gospel with friends or co-workers – you won't sacrifice to give to the needs of others or the church
- The second barrier to committing to follow Jesus is **Urgency**
- **Luke 9:59**

- The general consensus with commentators is that this man's father is not actually dead, might not even be dying
  - What he is saying is that he wants to wait until his father dies, before he commits to following Jesus
  - There is no urgency to making a commitment – always something else that is more important
  - Note: Jesus called this man to follow – When? Now!
  - **Luke 9:60**
  - Jesus is not being insensitive – He is exposing this man's excuse for what it is
  - 'dead bury their own dead' = spiritually dead
  - Life is short – preach the gospel – right now – follow Christ now!
  - Our commitment to Christ must be so intense that all other affections and obligations we have pale in comparisons
  - The third barrier to making a commitment to follow Christ wholeheartedly is **Focus**
  - **Luke 9:61**
  - This one is not so obvious on the surface, until you see how Jesus responds to him
  - **Luke 9:62**
  - Jesus uses a farming analogy – when plowing, must keep eyes forward to make straight furrows
  - Ancient proverb – no one looking back can plow a straight furrow
  - Jesus knows that this man's heart is divided between following Christ and his old life
  - God wants all of us **Matthew 22:37**
- Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."**
- If you love anything as much as you love God or more, you will always be looking back to that thing or person
  - God is calling you to a wholehearted commitment to Christ
  - There are times when following Christ is hard – But God enables me to thrive in the midst of hardship as I follow Christ
  - The time to follow Christ is now – if you are not a Christian – become one right now
  - If you are a Christian – commit right now to give Him all of yourself

- Last – Make loving and serving God your highest aspiration
- Jesus was committed to going to Jerusalem to die for your sins and mine
- Don't you think it only right that we respond to what He did for us by committing our life to Him?
- **Pray!**
- Commit to Jesus right now
- Prepared for suffering or hardship
- Give us a sense of urgency – coming back soon
- Give us laser focus on what You want and how we can serve and follow