

Discipleship - power, privilege, cost, glory, experiences, test

Part 1

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[00:00:01] Perhaps I will not just follow on what my brother has been bringing in yet, may, but I would like to return to Luke, chapter 9, the subject that has been before us this afternoon, and I'd like to give a little sketch of this chapter on the subject of discipleship, and that of course is following. So I'm going to just close and follow the Lord, the disciple, Him, the learner. I've long enjoyed a number of things in this ninth chapter in connection with discipleship.

We've had a number this afternoon, and we'll have a little more tomorrow, late, but perhaps we can just recap a little.

And as I said this afternoon, the first verse speaks of disciples.

He called His twelve disciples. He doesn't say apostles here, they're spoken as disciples. And He gave them power and authority over all demons and cured diseases, [00:01:01] sent them to preach the kingdom of God, so on. And as we look at this chapter, and you have picked out verses in connection with the subject of discipleship, I believe that the whole chapter has to do with discipleship, various aspects.

And as we just indicated this afternoon, the first point, the power for this rugged path of discipleship is being attracted to the Lord Jesus Christ.

We refer to Luke 5, Peter, and Levi.

They were just drawn out to Him, and He must be the one. Greatness of His person, the loveliness of Himself, as we were saying, there's the power for discipleship.

And prayer was mentioned, and so it is sustained by prayer, that dependence upon the Lord day by day.

If we said it's a daily thing, think of the cost daily, the Lord said, and that means daily dependence upon Himself. Now, I believe that in verses 11 through 17, we have what we may call the privilege of discipleship.

[00:02:15] You know, we were talking about the cost this afternoon, but we must not forget there are other lovely aspects of discipleship.

It's not just all what it's going to cost us. And to see here the lovely privilege that these disciples had to be used of the Lord to feed the multitudes. Now, it was just briefly referred to in verse 12, they said, send the multitude away.

They may go into the towns and country round about and lodge and get fiddles, for we are here in a desert place. But He, the Lord, said unto them, give ye them to eat. You know, we follow the Lord in this path of discipleship, we learn lessons.

[00:03:06] We learn lessons. And as we said, we make mistakes, but if we learn and prompt it from our mistakes, it's well. And that's the path of discipleship. Now, they had to learn a lesson here. They said, send the multitude away. And other places, you know, they said, well, we've just got so much. Well, what are these among so many? Well, who do they have in their midst? He says, give ye them to eat. There are multitudes of hungry souls round about us. The Lord wants to use us as his vessels to reach out and give them to eat, the bread of life.

We know who has the bread of life, who is the bread of life, and we've eaten of him and we have. Yet we've got to say, let them go.

Yet we've got to say, let them go.

[00:04:01] And in another account, the Lord said, I have compassion. Oh, in the path of discipleship, we need to learn the heart of the Lord. His love and grace going out to poor and needy sinners round about us. I have compassion much as I want you to have compassion.

You give them to eat. Well, they said, we've got five loaves and two fishes. It's not what we've got. It's what he has. We're just but channels. And so, but he wants to use what we have.

The little we have. Wasn't it to Moses? He said, what is in my hand? Another said, what's in your house? The Lord don't ask us for what we don't have.

He wants to use what we do have. Some say, I have so little. I can't do like brother so-and-so or sister so-and-so. God's not asking you or me to do as brother so-and-so. [00:05:01] I've been saying lately, God makes no duplicates. We're all distinct individuals. And therefore, we have an individual place and we're filled for him to be used. So, he says, make them to sit down.

Make them to sit down. And then verse 16, he took the five loaves and the two fishes. See, he would take what we have. They had these. And we must be willing to give it up to him. Surrender. That's discipleship, isn't it? Surrendering to him. Denying self. What we have is his.

And let him use it. So, he took it. And he blessed them and great.

And gave to the disciples to set before the multitude. This is the great point here, I believe. What a privilege it is for these disciples to be used of the Lord. To be the multitude. They couldn't do it. But they surrendered what they had. And the Lord blessed them.

As we know, he multiplies them.

[00:06:02] They did even, they're filled. So, I think this is wonderful. Just get this caption here. The

privilege of disciples. What a privilege. God's not using angels. It might be only a great archangel. Or Gabriel, mentioned. The two that I know that are mentioned. But he would use us. Redeemed sinners. The gift to eat. He would put it in our hands and multiply. All right. Now, we've had from verse 22 this afternoon.

Verse 25 and 26.

And they call the cost of discipleship.

Yes, it's going to cost us something. But let's get before us first. The privilege. And the power of attraction to Christ. His loveliness. Being in touch with him. There's the power. [00:07:01] Sustained by prayer. Then to get ahold. What a privilege it is. To serve him.

To be used of him. Blessing the souls.

We sing hymn channels only. Channels. They must be, if you will, hooked up to the source. Unexhaustible source. Channels. To be used of him. Now then, we have the cost of discipleship. Yes, it's going to cost something. We had that this afternoon. I don't need to go over that. Deny yourself. Take up a cross and follow me. Lose your life. In the eyes of the world. There'll be a lost life. But in eternity, a life gained.

You know, of those who've gone out in the mission field. Brilliant young people. Surrendered their life to Christ and went out. And perhaps took the other two years to die. [00:08:02] And it looked like a lost life. Ah, but what fruit. What fruit. So we don't look at things the way God looks at them. But taking his word. The cost, it'll pay. Now, in the next section, we begin with verse 26.

And I understand you're going to have that tomorrow afternoon. But here you see the glory of discipleship.

Because he says here in verse 26, when he will come in his glory, his own glory, in his father's and of the holy angels. And just to point out the words in verse 31.

There on that mount, he appeared in glory. And verse 32, they saw his glory. It's the mountaintop experience for these disciples. Who had left all and followed him. Were paid a price. There's the glory of discipleship. And that offsets any sort of hardship, doesn't it?

[00:09:02] Yes, it's a rugged path. You got to get out of the armchair of self-ease. Get out of the rugged path of self-denial. And it's so little that we're called upon to deny ourselves of. But there's the glory. It's ahead. To claim with him.

We'll go into this tomorrow, I expect, in the reading. But I think it's nice that that follows right after. You know, Luke puts things together in a moral order. He doesn't follow a chronological order. And he treats the things quite differently, not in detail. But there's a moral route. And so the moral teaching to me is, right after the cost of discipleship, he introduces the glory. The one who's going to come in his threefold glory. I ask the world to give him the cross. Rejection. But he's glorified in heaven. And he's going to come in his own glory, his father's glory, and the glory of the holy angels. And we're going to be with him. Associated with him. [00:10:01] And reign with him in power and great glory. This is a miniature picture here of the coming day. We'll leave that for tomorrow. All right. Then we find, in

verse 37, another section.

My Bible, there's a paragraph indication. You know, the Bible is really written in paragraphs rather than verses. It's a convenient way for us to find things. But that was not a part of the original scripture. But the paragraph here begins in verse 37. Next day, he came down from the hill, from the mountaintop. And here, there's a man that cries out.

The only son, the spirit was tearing him.

He says, I sought thy disciples to cast them on, and they could not. And verse 42, the devil threw him down, tore him, and Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the child, and delivered him again to his father. They were all amazed at the mighty power of God. [00:11:02] I call this experience of disciples.

We will make experiences. But before I go into that, I'm just reminded of a thought I've thought of before. I don't want to say it, so I have to back up a little bit. The cost of discipleship. I was reminded, what I read years ago, of a young believer who was talking to an old saint. And she said, I will give the world to have your experience.

And she said, that's just what it will cost you. Get out of the world. But what is this present evil world? Something to be known? Peter says, we are saved from the corruption that is in the world to lust.

I just throw this out. The devil whispers to young believers and others, you're missing something. [00:12:02] You're walking in this path, you know, the Christian, and you're missing a lot out there. Yes, you're missing something. You're missing the corruption that's in the world to lust. Flying over here across the Atlantic, whether I wanted it or not, I had to be exposed.

The movies they show, they put you right up in the front seat, you know, almost right next up to it. And you close your eyes, but what's going on?

And it was a demonstration that you had to sit there under for seven hours on the corruption and the lust, the violence that's in the world. And all these people drinking it in. What an awful thing. Well, there's some of the experiences we need. The power of Satan, as we see here, the power of Satan.

Come down from the hill, and there we see the power of Satan. But they experienced how the Lord cast the demon out, healed the child.

[00:13:07] And so amidst all this world of evil that has Satan as its god and prince, as disciples who can make some lovely experiences, the power of God. This stresses on one hand, we see greater is he that's in you than he that's in the world. And the power of God at work. Well, that's just a little bit to suggest something of the experiences the disciples can make in this path.

Well, then in verse 46, we have another section. And here we have, we've talked a little bit about it. There was a reasoning among them, who should be the greatest? And the Lord perceived the thought of their heart, took a child, set him in the midst. Whoever will receive me, he's least among you, the same shall be great. And some more things here. [00:14:02] And this we can call lessons that disciples have to learn.

Yes. Yes. Discipleship is a school of learning.

We said one of the meanings of disciple is a learner. Scholar, a follower.

And following our blessed master, we learn.

My, what a school they were in. They had to be. He was preparing them. They acted very foolishly and manifested themselves.

Here following the meek and the lowly one. And they're thinking about who's going to be the greatest. Our natural thoughts. But the Lord is the patient teacher. And he teaches us.

He taught them this lesson of lowliness.

Then we have verse 49, John.

[00:15:01] Oh, John is that lovely disciple. Say, John is that disciple whom Jesus loved. But listen to him here. John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out demons in thy name. We forbade him because he followed not with us. He thought he was very zealous for the Lord. John. Oh, yes.

He was a son of Borne. Borne.

I saw the real thunder come out. One time he said, shall we command fire? Come down from heaven. Is that here too? But one place.

Yes. The spirit of sectarianism.

Mr. Darby said, the most natural weed of the human heart.

He don't follow with us. And while we must contend for the truth. And to walk in the way of truth as God has showed it to us. We must never get our heart narrowed down to our little circle.

[00:16:07] Feet in the narrow path. The heart as large as possible. A large heart in a narrow path.

That's what we must strive for. It's not easy. Either go to one extreme or the other. Because our heart is large, then our feet get in a large path. And because the path is narrow, our hearts are liable to get narrowed. So Paul had a right to the Corinthians. You're straightened in your own balance. Be enlarged.

So it's the spirit of sectarianism was one that said collective selfishness.

I think Mr. Darby also said, getting a little interest in a circle around ourselves. The circle must have Christ as the center. That's what we need to learn that lesson.

[00:17:02] And then he said, they sent messengers to the village of Samaritan to make ready.

Verse 53, they wouldn't receive him because his face was the way he went to Jerusalem. When his disciples, James and John saw this, they said, Lord, without a week, command fire to come down from heaven. Consume them even as Elias did, ready to execute judgment.

So here they had to learn of the spirit of grace. The Lord says, you don't know if you rebuke them.

You don't know what manner of spirit you are. That's when you get rebuked in this pathway.

But he does it very well. As we were talking recently at the Grove City Conference about feet washing and a towel.

The Lord used a towel.

The question was asked, what's a towel?

Well, he said, it makes you feel comfortable after getting your feet washed and dried. [00:18:07] And so to wash somebody's feet, to show you, make them feel comfortable afterwards. Any correction, the Lord always uses the basin and the towel. He does it well.

But he says, you don't know what manner of spirit you are. We have to learn the spirit that should become us as disciples of Christ, that we show his spirit.

And so he says, the Son of Man has not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. They went to another village. These are some of the lessons to learn. Many others, but there's a sample of lessons to learn in the school of discipleship. The last section, we didn't have time to really speak of it this afternoon, just touch a little bit. He went in the way. Isn't it good to be in the way? In the way home, the way to the glory. [00:19:01] He was going in the way. And that's the right way. You follow the Lord, go in that way.

And now comes various things, and I call this last section, the seventh section, tests and hindrances to discipleship.

He would test us. And there are certain things that are plainly shown as hindrances to discipleship. He said, I will follow thee. The Lord says, well, you better think about who you're following.

Verse 58, the foxes of foals, the birds of the air have nested. The son of man of not where to lay his head. And we don't read any more about him following. He would say, I'm a rejected Lord.

The only place he had was the father's booth.

No place here. [00:20:02] If you follow this blessed Lord, you don't want to look for reward here. Recognition. Follow this blessed one who had no home here.

The second one comes and says, he said to one, follow me. He had an excuse. He said, suffer me first. Go and bury my father.

And the tension was called this afternoon. There's a little expression, me first. Big hindrance. And there are some me first Christians. You put me first. That's a big hindrance to discipleship.

His father wasn't dead, but that was just an excuse.

And of course, it brings in here the thought of our earthly relatives.

[00:21:03] There are those who are gifted and have not followed the Lord because they have put flesh and blood first.

We're not to neglect our own, as we know the scripture teaches us, but seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. It's not me first, but the Lord first. As we say in our closing, in our daily life, give the Lord the first place.

Let the dead bury the dead. Those who are dead in sins and trespasses, plenty of dead things they can do, but we are to go and preach the kingdom of God. Next one said, Lord, I will follow thee, but let me first go and bid them farewell. Let you at home in my house. Me first again. These are hindrances to discipleship.

Now the last verse is really a lesson in perseverance.

He says, no man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom [00:22:04] of God.

Put your hand to the plow, keep right on.

That's the way you make a steady road, straight road, looking right on the goal ahead. And so let us persevere.

Let us a little outline, I think, of this chapter. Power for discipleship, privilege of discipleship, the cost of discipleship, the glory of discipleship, the lessons or the experiences of next week.

Experiences that disciples can make, the power of Satan, but the power of the Lord is greater. And the lessons we need to learn and the tests and hindrances.

So may we be encouraged and helped in this path of discipleship.