

# OpenTheo

## Luke 9:49 - 10:20



### Gospel of Luke - Steve Gregg

In Luke 9:49-10:20, Steve Gregg discusses the events and teachings that took place in Galilee and Perea. He mentions the power of invoking Jesus' name to remove demons and the importance of not forbidding those who are not against us. He also talks about the disciples' journey to Jerusalem and Jesus' rebuke of those who sought positions of power. Jesus warns his followers of the challenges they will face in preaching the gospel and encourages them to prioritize their loyalty to him over their worldly commitments. Finally, Gregg cautions against the dangers of demonic deception and the importance of maintaining the authority given to Christians.

### Transcript

All right, let's turn to Luke chapter 9. We got through most of Luke chapter 9 last time and I deliberately stopped when I did because we had been covering material that is paralleled in the other synoptic Gospels and I mentioned, I've mentioned several times, that from this latter part of chapter 9 through part of chapter 18, I believe, if you think it goes that far, there is material that's unique to Luke. Now I should clarify, first of all, I made a mistake of saying where that material begins. It was pointed out to me after class last time that I was thinking that material begins at verse 49 and in fact it starts two verses later.

Verses 49 and 50 do have a parallel in the Gospel of Mark. Not in Matthew, but in Mark. So it's not unique to Luke, although we still have to take those verses, verses 49 and 50.

When we come to verse 51, we come to that material that is regarded to be uniquely Luke's material. Now as we go through these chapters that are said to be uniquely Luke's material, you may be surprised that there are actually passages in Matthew especially, and maybe some in Mark, that are very similar to it. And you might say, well why would they say that these aren't parallel? The reason is that most commentators believe that from verse 51 on, Jesus goes down to Judea and Perea.

See 51 says, now it came to pass when the time had come for him to be received up, that he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. So at this point he moved south and it

seems to be the end of the Galilean ministry. Now you're going to find some teachings and some events in these chapters ahead that have very similar, maybe even identical teachings in other Gospels, but which took place in Galilee.

It's not surprising that any teacher worth his salt would repeat himself in different places to different audiences or even to the same audience at times in order to make an impact. And so the assumption is that although there are some passages in Matthew that are going to be similar in content to the ones we're going to find in this section, that this section is still talking about different occasions than the ones recorded in any other Gospel that might hold similar material. This is an opinion of course only because another opinion could be that Matthew is talking about the same events but placing them in a different chronological context because Matthew does sometimes arrange things topically rather than chronologically.

So you could look at the material two different ways. You could say that that which has ostensible parallels in other Gospels really are parallels, the same events, the same statements, perhaps rendered a little differently, a few different wordings or something, but Matthew is simply putting them in a different chronological place but they are the same event. In other words, two things that sound similar really were one thing recorded a little differently and placed in different places.

That's not impossible, but we're going on the assumption that Jesus said some things more than once and some things that are similar are significantly different in some of their wording in Luke than in maybe passages that are roughly similar in other passages. So I'm going to suggest, as most I think commentators do, that from Luke 9.51 to maybe Luke 18.14 or so, these are events and sayings of Jesus that took place in locations that the other Gospels do not talk about Jesus ministering in. Mostly in Judea and in Perea.

Perea is the region to the east of the Jordan, outside of Israel technically, what we might call Transjordan and sometimes it is called that. And Jesus did some ministry there often to avoid the clutches of the power brokers who were out to kill him in Judea. All right.

Now we do need to look at verses 49 and 50. This was not covered last time. Then John answered and said, Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name and we forbade him because he does not follow with us.

But Jesus said to him, do not forbid him for he who is not against us is for us. Now this little brief episode or exchange between John, the Apostle John, and Jesus raises some interesting questions. John encountered somebody who was not one of the disciples.

Not only was he not one of the apostles, but he does not even follow with them. He does not seem to be somebody who has become a follower of Jesus really. Now John would have known there are many people who are in some extended sense followers of Jesus even if they do not roam about with him.

For example, Mary and Martha and Lazarus would certainly have been among those who would have been called followers of Jesus, though we have no reason to believe they moved around the country with him. They lived indefinitely. They hosted him when he was there.

He had followers who didn't literally follow geographically and that John would have known that. And yet it would appear that this man that he had encountered was not even a follower in that extended sense. Somebody who is not perhaps in any other respect other than that he's casting out demons in Jesus name, identifying himself as a Christian at all.

Now why this would work and why Jesus would think this is okay needs to be considered because after all we have that case in Acts chapter 19 of some people who didn't follow Jesus, were not Christians, and they tried to cast out demons in the name of Jesus whom Paul preaches and it didn't work out well for them at all. And so how are we to think about this? Do you have to be a follower of Jesus in order to cast out demons in his name? The Sons of Sceva story would seemingly suggest that. Though here we, this raises other questions.

Here's someone casting out demons in Jesus name but not necessarily identifying with the disciples, not identifying himself as one of the Christians we might say. And we're not told what kind of success he had. Maybe he was trying and failing, although John makes it sound like he was literally casting demons out in Jesus name and it was working.

We've already encountered before the suggestion that there would be people on the day of judgment who said, Lord, we cast out demons in your name. And he'll say, I never knew you, which suggests that there are people who are not Christians who either successfully do cast out demons in Jesus name or at least are deceived into thinking that they're doing that. That is something happens when they invoke Jesus name and they interpret it that demons are coming out.

Of course, demons are invisible so they might fool people and act like they're coming out and not really do so. It's hard to know all the factors behind these stories or these statements. But it raises the possibility that the name of Jesus is so potent, we might say, against the powers of darkness that in some cases, even a person unqualified to use it may see results.

I've mentioned before that we encounter different degrees of demonic possession in the scriptures. People like the man of the tombs and his friend there were very severe cases. Other cases seem to be instances where a single word makes them flee, screaming in terror.

And I believe there are demons of various ranks and of different strengths. I think some demons are wimpy and some not wimpy. I myself have encountered demon possessed

people who were able to mock the blood of Christ and yet I've read many stories of people who said that as soon as they mentioned the blood of Christ, the demons fled.

Now, maybe that's true with the name of Christ too. Maybe the sons of Sceva ran into a particular virulent demon who was not going to be chased off by the name of Jesus without it being uttered by somebody who had some authority in the matter. Whereas other demons may be very much more skittish and the name of Jesus wielded by anybody is sufficient to scare them off.

I don't know. These are some possibilities. The point Jesus makes does not in any sense explain the phenomenon.

He takes it as a given. Okay, so there's some people out there who aren't our disciples using my name and casting out demons. Jesus doesn't say, well, they're being fooled.

It's not really happening. He doesn't explain why that is possible. All he says is don't forbid them because he says, whoever is not against us is for us.

In another place, Jesus adds to that and says, no one who speaks, who casts demons out in my name will quickly turn around and oppose us. In other words, at this point in Jesus' ministry, there's so much opposition that maybe we should just let people alone who aren't against us. A person who's using my name to cast out demons, he may not even be saved.

He may not even be a Christian. We don't know what his status is. Jesus doesn't comment on it.

But in any case, he's not an enemy, obviously. No one's going to be using my name to cast out demons if they're antagonistic toward us and right now we can use all the friends we can get. Jesus on another occasion had said in Matthew chapter 12, he said, if you're not for me, whoever's not for me is against me.

Now he says, whoever's not against us is for us. Some people think that's a contradiction. But I think that what he's saying is there was a time when the tide was so in his favor that a person would have to be rather opposed to him in order to be against him.

Everyone was for him except for those who were against him. If you aren't for me, you're one of those people who's against me. Because most people were for him in the time of his popularity.

But in time where most people are against him, he's happy to find a few who might be for him or at least not against him. Anyone not against him is okay with him at the moment. Better than the average.

They're for us. At least we can count it. It's like a penny saved is a penny earned.

When you save a penny, you haven't really earned one. But it's as good as having earned one. And although this man might not be for us, it's as good as if he's for us in the context where most people are against us.

It's a strange little interchange here, and it leaves many questions unanswered. But it's clear that Jesus didn't concern himself with the specific case and explaining how this could be or what the real circumstances were. Was this person really a secret disciple who wasn't associated with him? Was he not a disciple and he's just using the name of Jesus illegitimately, but it's working out okay? Jesus could have clarified that, but he doesn't even address it.

He just says, listen, right now we can use all the friends we can get. I think that's essentially what his statement is. Don't alienate people who aren't already alienated from us.

Let's just do our business and be glad that not everyone is opposing us right now. Now verse 51, we read this a moment ago. Now it came to pass when the time had come for him to be received up that he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.

It's interesting that at this early point, chapter nine, Luke says this. Now we're talking about the time when it came for him to be received up. Almost sounds like he's going down to Jerusalem for the last Passover week to get crucified.

And yet there's a great deal of travel. No doubt the passage of many months in the chapters that follow. However, I think what it's saying is his time of popularity, which is primarily in Galilee, had passed.

And now is this new season in his life. This new season was going to be characterized by eventually him getting killed. He's going to be opposed from this point on.

And the ultimate expression of that opposition was going to be he's going to die. And that time had come, not specifically the time that he's going to die right away, but that he's moving in that direction. He's going down to Jerusalem.

He's going to be operating in that realm where he's likely to be more vigorously opposed, eventually captured and so forth. But there's still a great deal of movement, a great deal of activity after this, which makes these words seem like they require some explanation. Why does it say it's now time for him to be received up? It's probably months in advance of that.

Yet, I think it means the times had changed. There had been a change in the wind, as it were. The wind was blowing favorably toward him.

Now the wind was blowing toward his crucifixion. And so he, in one sense, kind of welcomes that. He goes down to Jerusalem, right where that's going to be the heart of the opposition.

That's where he's going to face that kind of opposition. Now, it's not as if he doesn't ever go back to Galilee again, but this is recognizing a change in the mood of the country toward him, I think, and that it's now time for him to start thinking in terms of death, although he's already predicted it a couple of times. It's not until about this point that it begins to be a real threat to him.

So he steadily set his face to go to Jerusalem and sent messengers before his face. As they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans to prepare for him, but they did not receive him because his face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. And 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 just as Elijah did? And he turned and rebuked them and said, you do not know what manner 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 to another village. Now, Jesus, apparently, and his disciples were not like other Jews who would skirt Samaria when traveling between Galilee and Judea.

Samaria lay immediately between, and obviously the shortest route between Galilee and Judea was right through the central district there of the province of Samaria. And most Jews had such animosity towards Samaritans, they didn't even like to go into Samaria. It was an unpleasant experience to encounter Samaritans because there's so much hostility.

So most Jews in making this trip south would leave the country in Galilee, cross over the Jordan, over into Perea, and then travel south along the eastern side of the Jordan, missing Samaria altogether, which is on the west of the Jordan. Then they'd cross westward into the Jordan again once they got parallel to Judea. So they would make the trip that could have made directly through Samaria, but they'd go the long way around.

Jesus apparently wasn't doing that. He's going to Judea, he's going to Jerusalem, so he's going to go through Samaria. He did the same thing in John chapter 4 when he decided to leave Judea and go to Galilee.

He says he must needs go through Samaria, and on that occasion he met the woman at the well in John chapter 4. Once again, Jesus is not showing the racial prejudices that his own countrymen exhibited. Even when the Samaritans are here inhospitable to him, he doesn't seem to have any animosity toward them. We don't know why they didn't receive him.

It says it's because his face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. This may have simply

been their prejudice. If he was coming to settle among them, who knows? They might see him as someone they'd listen to, but he's clearly on his way to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was the capital of the Jews. Samaria had a separate capital in rivalry. They were not friendly with each other.

It seemed like Jesus was associating with the Jews and Jerusalem to them, and so they weren't hospitable, I suppose. I mean, this is how we're supposed to understand it. So, the village, whatever village it was in Samaria, didn't receive him.

What that looked like, I'm not exactly sure. Messengers were sent ahead, probably looking for lodging, obviously, someplace for him to sleep and get some food as they passed through. And when the Samaritan people in the village heard that it was Jesus and that he was just passing through to Jerusalem, they said, no, we don't want your money.

We don't want him in our town. Which sounds a little strange, very hostile, but that does underscore what we've been told, and that's the Samaritans and the Jews generally had no contact with each other, but Jesus did find, apparently, another village, as it says in verse 56. Now, in seeing this inhospitable behavior toward Jesus on the part of the Samaritans, James and John say, well, this is really an insult to you.

Should we call fire from heaven upon them like Elijah did? Now, notice it was John also, in the previous little exchange, who wanted to forbid these people from casting out demons in Jesus' name if they weren't in the right club. It was also James and John who, on another occasion, wanted to sit at Jesus' right and left hands in his kingdom and sent their mother to petition Jesus about this and got the other disciples mad at them for that. These guys were ambitious.

They were, I was going to say, what should we say, angry men. Jesus called these two brothers the sons of thunder. Boanerges is the name he gave them, which means sons of thunder.

And yet, this is the John who later wrote 1 John and the Gospel of John and advocated love. He became, actually, as some would call him, the apostle of love at a later date. But in these early days before the Holy Spirit was given, before the fruit of the Spirit began to be matured in him, he was a hothead.

He wanted to call fire out of heaven on them. Now, this is almost certainly just because of his fierce loyalty to Jesus and his inability to see people snub Jesus without making him want to rise to Jesus' defense. But Jesus said, you don't know what manner of spirit you're of.

Now here, very sadly, we have a difference in the manuscripts. The Alexandrian text is considerably briefer in this particular point here because it says in verse 54 in our text,

shall we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them? That's where the Alexandrian text ends this question. It doesn't say just as Elijah did.

Our textus receptus says just as Elijah did. And then the Alexandrian text says, and he turned and rebuked them. And that's all he said in the Alexandrian text.

It doesn't even say what he said. It just says he rebuked them. But the textus receptus that we're using actually gives us the wording of his rebuke.

Now, many times I think the Alexandrian text probably reads better or more authentic to the original. I'm not sure, but it's often thought that it does. In this case, I really want to stand with the textus receptus, although I'm not sure that it's right.

I really like this particular quote from Jesus. And if he didn't really say it, somebody very much like him did. And I think it probably is an authentic saying of Jesus.

It's possible, of course, since the earlier manuscripts leave it out here, that Luke didn't put it here. Maybe the older manuscripts may reflect a briefer text that Luke wrote. And it may have been added because somebody else knew this as a genuine saying of Jesus that he gave on a different occasion.

They thought this was a good place to put it in. We don't know much about the origin of it, but I really like what Jesus said. Now, Elijah had called fire out of heaven on a number of groups of soldiers.

King Ahab had sent soldiers out to arrest Elijah the prophet. And as he sat on a hill, a group of 50 soldiers and their commander came and said, man of God, the king commands you to come and present yourself before him. And Elijah said, if I'm a man of God, let fire come out of heaven and consume you and your 50 men.

And fire came out of heaven and consumed that man and his 50. And so Ahab sent 50 more with another commander. And that commander also spoke gruffly to Elijah and said, man of God, the king commands you to come and present yourself before him.

And Elijah said the same thing. If I'm a man of God, let fire come out of heaven and consume you and your 50 men. And that happened.

And then another group of 50 were sent. And the third guy said, sir, don't destroy me, please. You know, I'm just following orders here.

The king wants me to come and bring you in. Would you please come? And Elijah said, okay. And so he went.

And he just, you know, Elijah's words in the first two instances seem to be saying, you're calling me a man of God and you're talking that way to me. Is that what you think about a man of God? If I'm a man of God, then let God vindicate me as his man, you know. But,



you know, if I'm a man of God, you ought to treat me better than that.

Just for God's sake. I mean, that's just irreverent to God if you're addressing a man of God that way. Now, James and John thought, well, Elijah did it.

Maybe we should do that. These people have been insulting to us and especially to Jesus. Should we call fire out of heaven and consume them like Elijah did? I'll bet they would have loved to see that happen.

I mean, it'd be pretty spectacular, wouldn't it? And yet they knew they couldn't just do that unless Jesus said, yeah, let's do that. I mean, the disciples knew that if Jesus authorized something, it'd get done, but they couldn't just do supernatural things without him authorizing. It's like when Peter saw Jesus walking on the water, Jesus said, well, that Peter said, if that's you, command me to walk on the water.

And Jesus said, okay, come on. And then Peter was able to do it, but Peter wouldn't dare do it if he wasn't commanded by Christ. So it's, you know, that'd be presumptuous.

Likewise here. They're saying, Lord, you want to authorize us to call fire out of heaven? That'd be really cool. And Jesus, if these words of Jesus that are recorded are authentic on this occasion, Jesus said, you don't know what manner of spirit you're of.

I think that's really, that's just really a great line all by itself. You know, you're on my side. I can see that.

You're backing the right horse here. You're on the side of Jesus and not on the side of the Samaritans who are against him. But your spirit's not right.

You know, there's, you've got loyalty to Jesus, but you don't have the spirit of Jesus. The son of man didn't come to destroy people. He came to save people.

And you standing as his representative have more of a spirit of destruction, more of a spirit of condemnation. And that's not what he came to do. Now, we don't know if Jesus really said these words, the son of man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

But he did say something similar in the gospel of John. He said that he did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. He did not come to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved, which is obviously a similar concept.

So these words of Jesus are not unlike him, whether they are actual words he gave or not in this occasion. But it definitely is a challenge to those who are zealous for God. And by the way, there's a lot of people in the church, very zealous for God.

We saw a film last night of a guy with a megaphone out there, you know, speaking against, I think he was speaking against Christians who were reaching out to

homosexuals. I know the guy was obviously against homosexuals, but seemed like he was blasting Christians who were being overly friendly in their outreach to homosexuals. I wasn't quite sure what he was doing, but he certainly didn't know what manner of spirit he was.

Certainly the people from Westboro Baptist Church who carry signs that say God hates fags and do other things, they protest funerals of soldiers, you know, and say your son who's being buried here is, you know, he's evil, he's burning in hell and so forth. You know, I don't know. I mean, even if they are correct, and there's, I don't know how they would know if they're correct, but even if they're correct, and obviously their convictions are based on their loyalty to their religious convictions and what they think Jesus stands for, their spirit isn't right.

That's a fact. You're not seeing the spirit of Jesus there. And therefore, what these words, if authentic, really would be saying is we need to be concerned not only about whether we're favorable toward Jesus and believe what he says and even following him, but is the spirit of Jesus reflected in our behavior, in our comments when we are interacting with enemies as these people are inhospitable people, hostile people.

What is the spirit that they are sensing coming from us? Jesus said the disciples didn't know what spirit they're of, and this is the problem. They had a wrong spirit, but they didn't know it. They thought that their attitude was good because they were on the right side of this hostility.

They didn't, you know, the people who are hostile against Jesus, John and James were hostile against them. And they didn't have a clue that their spirit was not what would please Jesus. It wasn't the spirit of Christ that they were exhibiting.

And so he, one thing we don't do know is the Alexandrian text says in verse 55, he turned and rebuked them, but it doesn't contain in that text. Those manuscripts leave out the actual words of his rebuke, but we do have them here. Verse 57, now it happened as they journeyed on the road that someone said to him, Lord, I will follow you wherever you go.

And Jesus said to him, foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head. Then he said to another, follow me. But he said, Lord, let me first go and bury my father.

And Jesus said to him, let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow you, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house. And Jesus said to them, no one having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.

Now there's a similar passage to this in Matthew chapter eight. Verses 19 through 22, it

only mentions two of these characters, I believe, rather than three. But, uh, and whether it's the same two as the two of these, or whether this similar encounters happened a lot to Jesus in different places, we don't know.

It, it might seem that these are very specific things. These guys are saying that you wouldn't expect it to happen twice, but actually what they're saying is, uh, really not that unusual. For someone saying, I'll follow you, wherever you go, Jesus must've had people all the time saying, I'll follow you, I'll follow you.

And here we read of a man doing so that may not be the only case of this. When one man said, let me first go bury my father. This would be considered to be a very normal obligation among Jews and probably most ancient people that when your father dies, you, you give him a, uh, an honorable burial.

And to bury my father might even mean to live with my father until he dies and is buried. Then I'll come because many feel like the wording here does not necessarily mean that his father was now dead and he was in the process of burying him and needed to finish the job, but rather his father had not yet died. But once he's, his father's died and he's buried him.

Once I buried my father, I'll come to you. In other words, the man might be putting it off for possibly years. And Jesus on occasion did say, if you love father and mother more than me, you're not worthy of me.

And it's, uh, it would, it would be addressing certainly a culture, a patriarchal culture that, that shows great respect for the father and his will. And to follow Jesus against the father's will would be a very hard thing for someone to do, though. Jesus said, people need to do that if necessary.

If the father, if your father and mother doesn't approve, you need to love me more than them. But yet many people would think, well, my dad doesn't approve, but when he's gone, I'll, I'll be glad to follow you then. You know, I've got, got to keep my dad happy until he's dead and buried.

Those kinds of excuses could have come up in many cases. Um, likewise, the man who said in verse 61, Lord, I'll follow you, but let me first bid them farewell who are at my house. That hardly seems like an unusual request.

There must've been numerous people who made such a request. I'll follow you, but hey, let me run home and say goodbye to my folks. And, uh, so it's not necessary if we find other cases of some of these kinds of encounters and Jesus' response as being the same, that they wouldn't necessarily be the same instances.

Jesus being the phenomenon he was going about for three years or so, uh, and, and being one that thousands of people interacted with could easily have had multiple cases

like this. Luke gives these three, uh, maybe because they happened in rapid succession at this particular point, chronologically, or maybe they happened at different times and he's putting them together because they all are kind of examples of people who express some level of interest in following him, but they have their reservations. Now, the first person who says that actually the first person was, Jesus didn't even ask him to follow it.

The other two, Jesus called them to follow him, but, uh, or actually no, I only the second one, Jesus called him, but this man just comes to Jesus apparently on his own. It says, Lord, I'll follow you wherever you go. He doesn't even state any conditions.

He doesn't say, let me do something else first. But Jesus, apparently knowing that this man is perhaps a little overeager and has not counted the cost says, well, you know, foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head. Obviously it means even the woodland animals and birds have someplace to call home.

They have the comforts of a home somewhere. It may be a kind of home that you wouldn't want to live in, but at least they got something and I don't have anything and you're going to follow me. You're going to be like me.

You're going to be with me. I'm going to not be in a home. Sometimes I'm going to be in somebody else's home.

I have staying in. I get to sleep out under the stars. Sometimes it's a, it's a, it's a, uh, an uprooted kind of a lifestyle.

Is that really what you want? Now, we don't know how the man responded to that, but Jesus apparently said that knowing the man needed to hear that, knowing that the man thought initially it would be an easy thing to follow Jesus, but he hadn't really realized what it might cost him, and Jesus is trying to make him realistic about it. Later on in Luke 14, Jesus is going to say, if anyone comes after me and does not hate his father, mother, wife, and children and his own life also, he can't be my disciple. And if anyone comes to me and does not take up his cross, he cannot be my disciple.

And if anyone does not forsake all that he has, he cannot be my disciple. These sayings are going to be found in the 14th chapter of Luke. And these are cases where, again, Jesus is trying to make it clear to people, there's a cost to following me, and don't just jump on the bandwagon real quick, because better that you don't jump on at all than that you jump on and then find it to be less tolerable than you had counted on and depart.

And that's why in chapter 14 he's going to say, you better count the cost first before you start this. And he's letting this man count the cost. He thinks the man has not done so.

The man's eager to follow him, to be part of the movement, but Jesus knows the heart.

You know how he was with the rich young ruler. He told him to sell what he had and give to the poor, and he knew that was the thing that would be the deal breaker for that man.

And perhaps Jesus mentions this particular point because this would be the deal breaker for this man. In any case, this man may have said, okay, cool, I'm with you. Or he might have said, oh, well, in that case, well, you know, maybe I was a little hasty.

I've got some other plans for my life. We don't know what the man did, but we know what Jesus said. And we know that Jesus said it in order to put him off, if he could be put off.

Jesus wasn't always trying to give a sales pitch for his movement. In fact, he never was giving a sales pitch for his movement. He was rather trying to tell people, you know, the cost is higher than you think.

The opposite of what advertisers do. They always try to make it seem like the cost is low and affordable. Jesus is saying, this is a little more costly than you may be thinking.

You might not want to buy this product. The second man said, Lord, let me first go and bear my father. And the third man said, Lord, I will follow you, but let me first go and bid them farewell, who are at my house.

Both of these guys have in their statements to Jesus, the phrase, me first. Lord, me first. Let me first do this.

Not you first, me first. I'm not going to go with you first. I'm going to do me, what I think I need to do first.

I've got my own agenda here, but I'll be glad to follow you once I've done what I first want to do. And it's clear from these statements that that's how people often want to follow Jesus. They want to be a Christian.

They assume there's something desirable about being a Christian. Probably going to heaven is what's on their mind, but maybe even they like the adventure or they even like Jesus, but they really don't like him enough to put him first. It's going to be me first.

I'll come with you if it can be me first. If I don't have to die to myself, if I don't have to put something first that I'm not accustomed to putting first, that is anything but me. I've always put me first, and I'll still follow you if I can still put me first.

I've got a plan. I've got an agenda. I've got something I want to do, and if I can do that first, then I'm good with following you.

Now, the man who said, let me first bury my father, I mentioned the man might not have even been dead. If his father was dead, they'd be burying him that very day because they didn't leave bodies around until the weekend to have a memorial service and a

burial. When someone's rotting out in the sun and you don't have any embalming stuff or refrigeration, you put them in the ground before sundown if you can.

That was typical. So, either this man's father was not dead, and he's just talking about, well, someday my father's going to die, and I'll bury him, and once I've buried my dad, I can follow you. Or else the man's father had died and was being buried at that very moment.

But we don't read that this man was burying his father. In fact, it's not likely that if he was involved in burial arrangements, he would have seen Jesus go by and say, oh, by the way, I'll follow you. Seems likely this man, when he encountered Jesus, felt like there was some moral obligation to follow him but felt there would be some resistance from his home, from his dad.

And so he thought, well, this will be easier once my dad's gone on and buried and so forth that I can do it. Now, Jesus' answer was, you let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God. Now, this man was called to go and preach.

Not everyone was. Jesus didn't call everyone to go and preach the kingdom of God. Even all the Christians saved on the day of Pentecost didn't necessarily preach the kingdom of God.

There were preachers and there were people who were not preachers. Preaching is just one of the many gifts of the Spirit. And it seems to me as reading the book of Acts, the minority of Christians were really called to preach.

But this man was called to preach. He's called to be perhaps an apostle or something like that. Not one of the twelve, but we might say certainly an evangelist.

Just like the man of the tombs was sent back to testify about Christ to the people of his town, this man was called to be a witness and a preacher. And that's a high calling. And not everyone can do that.

You have to, for one thing, be a follower of Jesus to be qualified to be a preacher of Jesus. Now, burying dead bodies, anyone can do that. Spiritually dead people who aren't Christians can bury dead bodies and do a whole lot of other things.

There's lots of things a non-Christian can do. They're usually things that are much less important than the things that only a Christian can do. Only a Christian can be an acceptable preacher of the gospel.

Only a preacher can do certain ministries of Christ. But there's lots of activities that a non-Christian can do just as well. A person spiritually dead can bury dead bodies.

And Jesus was calling this man to not be spiritually dead, but to be alive, to be a

preacher. And the man may have responded or may not. Once again, we're not told how the man responded.

We're simply told that Jesus said, if you're called to preach and you're saying, well, but I'm doing, I'm running this business here. I'm doing this kind of thing. I'm doing these chores and so forth.

I mean, Jesus answers, those chores can be done by people who aren't called to preach, who aren't even spiritually, who aren't even Christians, who aren't even alive spiritually. People who are spiritually dead can do things like bury dead bodies. That's, that's a task anyone can do, but preaching the gospel, not everyone can do that.

I'm calling you to do that. And maybe the guy did or not. We don't know.

Verse 61, another said, Lord, I will follow you, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house. Now this seems reasonable enough. And this even reminds us of the time when Elijah called Elisha because Jesus said, anyone who puts his hand to the plow and looking back is not fit for the kingdom of God.

When Elijah called Elisha to follow him, Elisha was plowing and Elijah walked by and threw his mantle over Elisha, which was an emblem of saying, I'm calling you to be a prophet like me. And Elisha said, can I go back and say goodbye to my family first? And Elijah's answer is kind of enigmatic. It's hard to know even what it meant, but apparently he did allow Elisha to go back and say goodbye.

And then Elisha came in and broke up the plow, slaughtered the ox that was pulling the plow and offered a sacrifice on it. But it's interesting that Elisha, when he was called to follow Elijah said, let me go say farewell to my household. And Elijah seems to have allowed him to do that.

And there was also this plowing going on at the moment. So Jesus might be alluding to this, though he's not, you know, is he, is Jesus forbidding this man to go back and say goodbye to his family or not? Jesus didn't say, no, that's a bad thing to do. You go with me now and just let them wonder what happened to you.

You know, just get on the bus and go off to our commune. Like the children of God cult was doing, they're running into kids on the streets in Los Angeles and here, get on the bus and go out to our commune and they wouldn't even say goodbye to their parents. They actually use this scripture.

You don't need to say goodbye to your parents. You got to put your hand to the plow and just keep going forward. And don't let, you know, your parents can just wonder what happened to you.

It doesn't say that Jesus said no. It just said that Jesus warned him, if you put your hand

to the plow and look back, you're not fit for the kingdom of God. He's not necessarily, at least not clearly saying that saying goodbye to your parents is looking back.

But he might be saying goodbye to your parents, might tempt you to do so. And if you're going to go say goodbye to your parents, you better be mindful of this, that if this causes you to hold back on your resolve, to look back and say, well, I don't really want to leave my family after all. Here they are and they might not even want me to go.

I might be alienating myself. You know, I'd like to follow you, but maybe I won't want to when I go back and talk to my parents about my family. And Jesus may be just saying, well, be careful.

You go back and if you do that, if you go back and say goodbye to your family, it's like plowing and looking back. You're going to be distracted. I've been told that people who plow with oxen, and I don't know any who do, but I've heard that if they don't keep their eye straight forward on the furrow, that it only takes a second for the ox to go off to one way.

You have to steer the ox with the yoke. And if you look around, you know, elsewhere than where you're supposed to be looking, you look back again, you've not cut a straight furrow. So you don't look back or else you're not going to do your job properly.

I remember Danny Layman saying when he was first a Christian, he was working at a mushroom plant in Santa Cruz area. I guess it was a cannery or, no, it's a mushroom processing place. And he was supposed to pull this lever on this machine that dropped mushrooms into a flat as they went by on a conveyor belt.

All these empty flats were going by his station on the conveyor belt. And when they came, he was supposed to pull this thing and drop the mushrooms in. And there were other people at other conveyor belts doing the same thing.

And he said as long as he paid attention to what he was doing, he never fouled up. He said every time he thought, I wonder how other people are doing. He looked at what they're doing.

He always missed one. The flat went by without getting his mushrooms in it. And he was thinking of this, you know, you keep your eye forward, you keep your eye on what you're doing.

You don't worry about what someone else is doing. You've got to concentrate or else you're going to miss your opportunity. It's like when Jesus was asked by Peter about John, what's this man going to do? And he said, if it's my will that he tarries until I come, what does that to you? You just preach the gospel.

You just follow me. And so the idea is if you're going to follow me, you've got to keep



your eye on the prize. You're going to have to keep your eye on the furrow.

You can't be looking back. Now that doesn't mean that Jesus forbade him to say goodbye to his parents. But he might have.

If he did in that particular case, it would be because Jesus probably knew if you go back there, they're going to talk you out of this. So I'd say don't. But Jesus didn't say don't.

He just warned him. If you look back. And that doesn't mean that saying goodbye to your parents is looking back.

But it might result in doing so. And therefore, perhaps Jesus is just saying, I'm not going to forbid you to do that, but just make sure that they don't talk you out of it. Because you're not worthy of the kingdom of God if you're going to start looking back and missing things.

Remember Lot's wife, she looked back. Now chapter 10. After these things, the Lord appointed 70 others also and sent them two by two before his face into every city and place where he himself was about to go.

Then he said to them, the harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go your way.

Behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves. Carry neither money bag, sack, meaning a backpack probably, nor sandals, and greet no one along the road. This apparently just means don't delay and have conversations on the way.

You just got to get to your next destination. Don't stop and visit with people on the road. Just keep focused.

But whatever house you enter, first say peace to this house. And if a son of peace is there, or as it says in Matthew in a similar place, if the household is worthy, if it's a worthy house, your peace will rest on it. If not, it will return to you.

That is, your peace will return to you. It won't rest on it. You bless the house with peace.

You wish peace on the house when you come in. If it's a house that is worthy of that peace, your blessing will alight upon it and it will be a peaceful house. If there in some sense is an unworthy house, and he doesn't say what constitutes an unworthy house, but if it's a house that isn't worthy of this blessing, then your peace will just come back to you without lighting on the house.

The house won't get your peace on it. You actually have the ability apparently in some circumstances to bring and minister peace to the environment of your host. Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you, and heal the sick who are there, and say to them, the kingdom of God has come near you.

But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into the streets and say, the very dust of your city which clings to us, we wipe off against you. Nevertheless, know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you. But I say to you that it will be more tolerable in the day, in that day, meaning the judgment day, for Sodom than for that city.

Now, we saw Jesus sending out the twelve at the beginning of Luke chapter 9. And he actually said some of the same things to them about not taking things with them, and even about stamping the dust off the feet of the city that's not receptive to them. This act was a very Jewish action. The Pharisees would do that if they were concerned that a house or a city was too compromised to be worthy of their endorsement or presence there.

They would stamp the dust off it, and say, you know, not only am I leaving, but I don't want to bring anything with me from you, even dust on my feet from you, I'm going to make sure that's not there anymore, because I don't want any contact with you ever again. And that's Jesus telling his disciples to have sort of that approach toward those that were not receiving his gospel when they preach it. Twice he tells them that their message is the kingdom of God has come near to you.

Verse 9 he says, if they receive you, say that. And in verse 11 he says, if they reject you, tell them, nevertheless, even though I'm leaving you, you got close. The kingdom of God got close to you, close enough for you to touch it, close enough for you to come into it, but you didn't.

The kingdom was very eminent, and they were to bring the message of the kingdom to these cities. Now, it says 70 others here in verse 1, although some manuscripts, the Alexandrians says 72. Which number is more likely correct? I don't know if we can say.

72 would be exactly six times 12. And it might be that there were, you know, each of the apostles overseen six people or three teams of two or something like that. We have no idea.

72 would be a good round number divisible by 12, which makes it seem like it could be the number. And that's what the oldest manuscripts say. 70 is also a good number just because it's a, you know, seven times 10, both of them significant numbers in Jewish numerology.

It doesn't matter, of course, to us, whether there were 70 or 72, but it's a larger group than he sent out in chapter nine. And that's the point. He sent out the 12, two by two in chapter nine.

Here he sends out the 70, which means he's stepping up his efforts, probably because it's getting later. His time is short and he's starting to, you know, try to reach more

people more quickly. It's clear he had at least 70 or 72 people who were followers of his that could actually be entrusted as preaching for preaching the gospel.

Not every Christian would you put out there to preach and not every Christian would you necessarily want to give the kind of power it takes to heal and raise the dead and do things like that. But he must have still a pretty good size number who were following him, again, because he had lost most of them. With the bread of life discourse, he'd lost them, but now he's in another geographical area.

Apparently new people are finding him and beginning to follow him. So he's got a large number of them here. And this, you know, he gives them similar instructions to what he gave to the 12.

Lots of the instructions we read of in, that he gave to the 70 here were not recorded in Luke 9 as given to the 12, but are mentioned in Matthew 10 as instructions he gave to the 12. So the 12 and the 70 both received almost identical commissions and instructions to do. Now, apparently they went out and it says, in verse 13, he said, These are Jewish cities where he had done some miracles, apparently.

He says, He who hears you, he says to his disciples, here's me. He who rejects you rejects me. And he who rejects me rejects him who sent me.

So to reject Jesus, we understand, is to reject God. But he says even to reject the messengers he sent is to reject him and therefore to reject God. Now, he says about Sodom and Gomorrah in verse 12, It'll be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the judgment than for that city which the disciples have to step the dust off their feet from because they reject Christ.

He also says that Chorazin and Bethsaida, two Jewish cities where apparently mighty works had been done by him, will be apparently judged more severely than Tyre and Sidon, two Gentile cities to the north of Israel. Because again, Tyre and Sidon, he said, would have repented if they'd seen what you've seen, but you haven't. This is again making the point he's made in other ways in different places that sometimes Gentiles are more responsive to God than Jews.

These Jewish cities saw these signs and didn't respond. These Gentiles, had they been given the same opportunity, would have responded. Now, we might say, well, if that's true, why didn't he do it? If God knew that Tyre and Sidon would repent if given these signs, why didn't he give them those signs? Doesn't he want them to repent? Well, obviously God doesn't give the kinds of signs everywhere in the world that he gave through Jesus' ministry in Galilee, especially, and in Judea.

And yet God wants everyone to repent. One thing I think we can say from this is that God knows who would have. And that might be an important thing to know.

Jesus knows who would have repented had they been given the same opportunity. And therefore, we might say that on the Day of Judgment, he will take that into consideration. These people didn't repent, but they didn't have the opportunity that others did, and they would have.

And that means he knew their hearts. He knew that their hearts were such that would have repented under certain circumstances, but those circumstances were not brought to them. Maybe there'll be mercy for them, which is why he seems to imply that when he says it'll be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment.

Well, they didn't repent, but they weren't given the opportunities that these cities were being given with these miracles and casting out demons, raising the dead, and so forth. They're not hearing the gospel. Sodom didn't get the opportunity, but Jesus said they would have repented.

That's why he said Tyrant Sidon would have repented, but the implication is these cities that are pagan and perished under judgment because of paganism, yet they're not as bad because they didn't have as many opportunities that they were rejecting as these Jewish cities. And therefore, that's taken into consideration on the Judgment Day. Some will have a more tolerable judgment than others, and that's what he says in verse 14, but it will be more tolerable for Tyrant Sidon at the judgment than for you.

So God knows they would have repented. The fact that they didn't isn't entirely their fault. Now, of course, it is.

Anyone who doesn't repent, it is their fault, but some are given much more inducement and opportunity, and the ones who don't have as much opportunity are apparently somewhat less culpable in the sight of God so that his judgment is less severe, more tolerable for them. And this only hints at what we can't be sure about, but it may be that on the Day of Judgment there will be some degree of clemency or at least leniency given in judgment to many who never were Christians because God knows more than anyone what they would have done had they been preached to, and they weren't. It may be the Christians who are judged for not having preached to them since he told us to preach to every creature.

We haven't done that yet after 2,000 years under that commission. Now, verse 17, Then the Seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name. And he said to them, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

Behold, I give you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven. Now, Jesus gave these people, these 70, authority to cast out demons, and they went out and they did it, and that seems to be the thing that most impressed

them.

They didn't talk to them necessarily about the healings or other miracles that were done through them, but those demons, that was really amazing. No doubt, people were commonly terrorized by demons. Demons are spooky.

Some of the best horror movies out there are about demon possession and exorcism and so forth because it is a spooky thing. Demons do a lot of harm to people, and even when they don't do specific harm, they're just spooky. It's creepy to think demons can get into people.

It's creepy to think there's a ghost in the house or something. Even if you're not afraid of anything particular, just the haunting of the human race, of the planet Earth by demons and the devil has kept people in terror. We know this because when missionaries go to tribal groups that truly believe in demons, they are held in terror and intimidation by the demons.

In fact, there have been missionaries who have come to tribal groups who have never heard the gospel, and the missionaries bring the gospel, and the elders of the city have said to the missionaries, we knew that there's a God out there who's not these gods that we're worshipping, these demons that we're worshipping. We know that there's a higher God than them, but we have not dared to worship him lest the demons get angry at us and punish us for it. This is actually conversations that some missionaries have had with the people they've reached out to.

Of course, the missionaries were able to give them the good news. You don't have to be afraid of the demons. The God out there has defeated them, and if you go on his side, the demons will be afraid of you.

And that is the good news. But no doubt the disciples prior to being with Jesus, like everybody else, whenever they encountered demon possession, it just freaked them out. They were terrified.

And now they're saying, wow, hey, they're afraid of us now. The demons go out when we use your name. We're feeling our oats here because those that had kept us in terror and oppression, we've now got them on the run.

And Jesus, of course, ends up saying, don't rejoice in that. In other words, don't start feeling overconfident or arrogant about the power you're exhibiting over the demons. Just be glad that God has you in his book.

Be glad your names are written in heaven. There are other great things too, but the fact that God includes you in his family is the main thing to be rejoicing about, not the particular powers that you've received. Some people, they get so fascinated with signs and wonders and the power to heal and the power to cast out demons and so forth that

they kind of forget, really, the most exciting thing is that we have a relationship with God, that God has included us in his book, in his family, that he's forgiven us and we belong to him.

And that isn't boring, but some people get bored with that and they say, I want something more sensational. I want to see the demons. I want to go out.

I want to see miracles worked. I want to see healings take place. And it's almost as if they're thinking, well, sure, my name's written in heaven, but that's old stuff.

That's old, normal stuff. I just want something new and sexy and fantastic and sensational to keep me interested. And Jesus said, why aren't you just satisfied to know? Why isn't it exciting enough to know that God has you in his book and that you belong to his city? You're a citizen of his kingdom.

Now, when they said the demons are subject to us in your name, Jesus' first response is somewhat enigmatic. He said, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. What's that mean? Now, I think many of us just assume that he's referring back to the origins of Satan, which are traditionally seen as an angel who rebelled against God and was thrown out of heaven.

And therefore, Jesus is saying, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven is very commonly understood to mean I was there when Lucifer fell. I was there to see that happen. The devil was an angel.

He rebelled. He got a little too arrogant. And he had to be thrown out.

I saw that happen. Some think that Jesus is giving this statement in order to warn them against their arrogance. Be careful not to be too cocky about this.

Seeing demons go at your word makes you feel kind of powerful. Makes you feel a little cocky. Be careful.

The devil got too cocky. And he got thrown out of heaven for that. So, I watched that happen.

I don't want to see that happen to you. Some people think that that's what Jesus' words mean. And it would fit.

Frankly, I think it would actually fit the context. It would be a fair thing for him to say with that meaning. However, there's another possibility.

And some scholars believe that Jesus is not making any reference to the origins of Satan or the rebellion of Satan and the origins. But rather that he said, You have seen a demon here, a demon there. You've seen an exorcism over here.

You've seen a demon flee from you. What I'm seeing, I saw in the Spirit, something much bigger going on. What you see going on in anecdotal cases, when he says, I'm seeing the big pictures, I see Satan falling.

It's like I saw this vision of Satan just coming down. His kingdom's collapsing. He's falling fast like lightning from heaven.

Now, this is a possibility too, that Jesus is really giving sort of an interpretive statement of what's going on behind the curtain that the disciples can't see. When he says, I saw, he may not mean way back thousands of years ago. He may have said, at this very moment, I'm seeing it happen.

I saw it in the Spirit. I saw it in the spiritual realm. Satan's falling.

You, 70, casting demons out are simply examples of this just because, as Jesus said elsewhere, if I'm casting out demons, then the kingdom of God has come. And the kingdom of darkness, of course, is going to be collapsing. And so Jesus might be making a reference, almost an interpretive reference, to what's going on that the disciples don't see.

But it's happening even through their efforts and in conjunction with their efforts. They are instrumental in making this happen. So his statement could be taken either way.

In verse 19 he says, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Now, nothing shall by any means hurt you doesn't mean you won't die or be tortured or skin your knee or anything like that. What he's saying, of course, is that the demonic powers, the serpents and the scorpions, represent all the power of the enemy, the demonic realm.

They will not be able to hurt you. People can hurt you. And maybe indirectly demons can hurt you through people.

Certainly Satan inhabited Judas and through Judas' instrumentation, Jesus was killed. And that's not what Jesus is denying. What he's saying is, in your confrontations with the demonic, I'm giving you the authority to be unharmed in those confrontations with the serpents and scorpions.

You can trample those under your feet in my authority. Now, my thought is that though Jesus gives that authority, Christians don't always walk in that authority. Remember, Jesus gave his apostles this authority earlier and there was a time they couldn't cast out demons.

He had given them authority over demons before and they had successfully done so. But with the man whose son was demon-possessed and they were unable to do it, they said, Lord, why couldn't we do it? He said, because of your lack of faith. God gives us

authority, but that authority is apparently only as great as our faith in it, in Christ, frankly, in Christ's authority.

And so I believe there are times when Christians are walking in that kind of authority because they've got the faith, they understand that they have authority over demons and they believe that in Christ's name and they successfully do it. I think there's other times when, like those disciples who couldn't cast out that demon, their faith is weak and although the authority has been given to them, they don't have faith in that authority. That faith is not actively a part of their awareness at that moment.

And so they're not really walking in that kind of authority, but that authority is ours. So that John says in 1 John 4, for greater is he who is in you than he that is in the world. And James says in James 4, 7, resist the devil and he'll flee from you.

So we definitely have the authority to stand up even to the face of the devil himself and drive him away, not necessarily instantaneously, sometimes we have to resist him for a period of time before he flees. But the point is, in that confrontation, we have the authority to win it. We have the authority to drive him away, not vice versa.

Yet many Christians, I think, do fall prey to demons. I'm not saying demon possession necessarily, but I wouldn't even rule that out. I don't know that it doesn't happen, but even when Christians are not demon possessed, they often fall prey to the deception of demons or to the temptation brought on by demons because they're not walking in that kind of authority.

When you walk in obedience and faith to Christ, I believe you're walking in the authority of Christ if you're his disciple. You can use his name and it's yours to use. You're him.

You're his body. He's given us that authority and that name, but it doesn't just automatically happen that just because I wake up in the morning, the devil's going to flee from me. I'm going to have to do some warfare.

I'm going to have to have some faith. I'm going to have to be a Christian of a certain kind, not just nominally. So there is this promise of such authority that is given to Christians, and that's a wonderful thing.

Good to know in a world haunted by the devil and his demons that we are not at their mercy. They really are at our mercy, but most of the time they're not because we don't know it or think it or believe it. And so the demons pretty much still run the show to a very large extent.

The whole world lies in the lap of the wicked one, John said in 1 John. But that is something that we have been given the authority to address and to correct. If only we will learn what that means and how to do it.



Well, we're going to have to stop there, unfortunately. We're out of time for this session. We'll have to come back to verse 21 next time.