

The title of this morning's sermon is, "*Our Response to the Gospel.*"

On Sunday mornings we're working our way through Luke's Gospel verse-by-verse and we find ourselves at **Luke 9:3**. Let's back up to verse 1 to get the context...

1 And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, 2 and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.

Notice the words **called** and **gave**:

1. First He **called** them.
2. Then He **gave** them what they needed to do what He **called** them to do.

As far as what He gave them, there were two things: **power and authority**:

- **Power** is the ability to do something
- **Authority** is the right to do it

Jesus told them to do something and He gave them what they needed to do it.

The Lord works the same way today, and this brings us to Lesson 1...

LESSON 1: WHEN GOD CALLS HE EQUIPS.

Whatever God wants us to do, He'll give us what we need to do it. So let's think about the questions we shouldn't ask, and the question we should ask...

We shouldn't ask:

- *Do I want to do this?*
- *Do I feel like I can do this?*
- *Do I feel adequate enough?*
- *Do I feel like other people would do this better than me?*

The question we should ask is, "Does God want me to do this?" Then if the answer is, "Yes," we can trust Him to equip us to do what He's called us to do.

There's actually someone in Scripture who serves as a great example of what we should NOT say:

- He was clearly called:
 - He had a conversation w/ God.
 - He didn't have to wonder if God wanted him to do it.
- And he made so many excuses – five to be exact – that God finally lost patience and got upset w/ him!

Any guesses? Moses!

Moses' excuses can serve as examples to us of the excuses we typically make:

1. **Exo 3:11** – Moses said, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” First, he said, “I’m not good enough.”
2. **Exo 3:13** – Moses said, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” Second, he said, “I don’t have all the answers.”
3. **Exo 4:1** – Moses said, “But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, ‘The LORD did not appear to you.’” Third he said, “People aren’t going to believe me.”
4. **Exo 4:10** – Moses said, “Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.” Fourth he said, “I’m a terrible speaker.”
5. **Exo 4:13** – Moses said, “Oh, my Lord, please send someone else.” Finally, he said, “Send anyone but me!”

Moses made plenty of excuses before he finally ended up going.

When we feel like him we should remind ourselves of **2 Cor 3:5-6**...

2 Cor 3:5-6a NOT THAT WE ARE SUFFICIENT IN OURSELVES to claim anything as coming from us, but OUR SUFFICIENCY IS FROM GOD, 6 WHO HAS MADE US SUFFICIENT TO BE MINISTERS of a new covenant.

The idea is we don’t have in our own effort or strength what we need to do God’s will. We’re not **sufficient in** and of **ourselves**. BUT – fortunately – our sufficiency comes from God. **He makes us sufficient** – or He gives us what we need – to be His faithful **ministers** and servants.

So let me just ask you some questions to answer in the privacy of your own heart:

- Is there something God has been burdening you to do, but you haven’t felt equipped?
- Is there someone in your life God has wanted you to...
 - Share the Gospel with...
 - Or encourage...
 - Or confront...
 - But you’re like Moses and you feel like you won’t know what to say?
- Is there some ministry God wants you engaged in...
- Is there some way God wants you to serve Him...
- Is there some outreach God wants you to start?

If the answer to any of these questions is, “Yes!” you can be encouraged that if God has called you to do this, He’ll also equip you to fulfill that calling.

Next, look at **verse 3**...

3 And he said to them, “Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics.

These 12 men were given a mission, and we could say it was one of the most important missions in all of history. Let me share something with you that stood out to me as I thought about this, and I want to illustrate it by sharing something from the military...

In the military when you're given a mission, you're also given a HUGE equipment list. It contains all the important equipment and supplies you need for the mission to be successful. It seems like every exercise or operation that's conducted is like this.

Maybe you can see why I'm sharing this...

This verse is the exact opposite of that. Jesus says, "Take nothing" and then instead of giving them a list of stuff they're supposed to take, He gives them a list of stuff they're not supposed to take!

Since we pack and travel differently, we miss the significance of what Jesus mentioned, but it's almost like He told them not to bring everything you WOULD normally take w/ you on a trip:

- The **staff** was a walking stick, which in Jesus' day – and even somewhat today – is the universal companion of travelers. It was also used for protection against criminals or wild animals.
- They couldn't take a **bag**, which would carry possessions and food.
- Even though only bread is mentioned, this was really His way of saying not to bring any food at all.
- No money meant they couldn't buy any of the possessions they needed, which they'd definitely need since Jesus told them not to bring anything.
- The **tunic** was a long garment worn next to the skin, and He even told not to take two of them. Basically they could only go w/ the clothes they were wearing.

As far as why Jesus told them not to bring anything w/ them, there could be a few reasons...

First, Jesus' instruction shows the urgency of the mission. They were supposed to get going. They weren't supposed to take a lot of time making extra preparations.

Second, this would allow them to concentrate on their task w/o being distracted by concerns for provisions. This wasn't a vacation or trip for pleasure. They're on business. The work for the Lord is so important they couldn't be focused on anything else.

Third, they had to move from place-to-place, and it would be much easier to do that w/ less stuff. They wouldn't be hampered by the weight of transporting extra supplies.

The fourth reason Jesus could've wanted them traveling light was to keep them dependent on God. They had to trust the Lord to provide for them. They were really traveling by faith.

Fifth, it made a good witness to those they came in contact with:

- It revealed they were trusting God.
- When they told people to trust God, they had credibility.

- Nobody could accuse them of being greedy.

You could look at how little they took and wonder if they almost starved to death. So briefly turn to **Luke 22:35**...

Luke 22:35 And he said to them, “When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?” They said, “Yes, it was crazy. We almost died! What were you thinking?”

Nope. They said, “Nothing.”

One reason I wanted to look at this w/ you is so you can see they didn’t lack anything.

The second reason I wanted to look at this is I wanted you to see that the instructions Jesus gave them here are different than the instructions He gave them in **Luke 9**. Look at **verse 36**...

36 He said to them, “But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one. **37** For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: ‘And he was numbered with the transgressors.’ For what is written about me has its fulfillment.” **38** And they said, “Look, Lord, here are two swords.” And he said to them, “It is enough.”

These instructions are the opposite of the instructions they received in **Luke 9**:

- Then they were told, “Take nothing.”
- Now they’re told, “Take a lot...even a sword.”

When the Twelve Apostles went out in **Luke 9**, what was the worst they might face?

- Rejection
- Possible ridicule
- Perhaps some mocking

But in **Luke 22**, this is right before Jesus’ arrest. This is the height of hostility against Him...and those w/ Him. What’s was the worst they might face now? Imprisonment or death.

- There’s a reason the Apostles scattered when Jesus was arrested...
- There’s a reason Peter denied knowing Jesus to a servant girl...including even swearing and cursing to convince her – and others in the area – that he didn’t even know Him.

The reason is, they knew what could happen to them.

So Jesus says, “*Times have changed. Don’t expect the same generosity from others that you did back in Luke 9. Now you need to expect hostility.*”

There’s a bigger point I want you to recognize though, and this brings us to Lesson 2...

LESSON 2: CONSIDER CONTEXT SO DESCRIPTIVE DOESN’T BECOME PRESCRIPTIVE.

I touched on this last week when discussing the supernatural power the Twelve Apostles were given. I wanted you to know that same power isn't give to us. It's descriptive versus prescriptive.

I think this point is so important I wanted to make it even clearer w/ a lesson. And here's part of my motivation...

No pastor – given multiple lifetimes – could ever teach his congregation everything there is to know about God's Word. John MacArthur spent most of his ministry – half a century – teaching through JUST the New Testament...and I heard him say one time that he could've done even better if he went SLOWER! So trying to teach your congregation everything in Scripture is impossible.

But one thing I can do is give you tools or principles for when you read the Bible, so you can interpret it correctly. And this is one of those really important principles!

- Don't make descriptive prescriptive!
- One of the biggest mistakes people make when reading the Bible is taking something that was said to a certain group at a certain time, and then imagining God is saying that to them.

For example, if people were thinking of going out to serve the Lord and they read **Luke 9**, they could say, "When I go, I better make sure I don't take anything... no staff, bag, bread, money, or extra clothing."

- One problem is Jesus said this to the Twelve Apostles and not us.
- The other problem is Jesus even gave the Twelve Apostles different instructions in **Luke 22** than He gave them in **Luke 9**:
 - He went from, "Take nothing" to "Take all this stuff."
 - So you can't even look at what Jesus said to The Twelve Apostles in **Luke 9** and think that's what He's saying to you, b/c He said something different to them in **Luke 22**!

And these instructions in **Luke 22** are different than the instructions He gave them later in **Matt 28**. We commonly call this "The Great Commission"...

Matt 28:16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. **17** And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. **18** And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

The point is Jesus gave instructions to particular people, based on particular times and particular ministries. If we don't understand this we'll take what's described in Scripture and make it prescribed for us.

So you could look at this and say:

- *Well, if Jesus isn't speaking to us, does this mean there's nothing we can learn?*

- *Does this mean there's no application for us?*

No!

Even when Scripture isn't speaking directly to us, there's still application for our lives, and this account is a good example. So let me discuss a few things we can learn from these verses...

LESSON 3: YOU NEED VERY LITTLE TO PREACH THE GOSPEL.

Please turn back to **Luke 9**...

In **verses 1 and 2** you see a few responsibilities the Twelve Apostles were given:

1. Cast out demons
2. Cure diseases
3. Proclaim the Kingdom of God
4. Heal

Of all these tasks, preaching the Gospel was the most important, b/c it's the one that saved people:

- The miracles helped people physically and temporarily, but the preaching helped people spiritually and eternally.
- You might say preaching the Gospel was the greatest healing they performed...and the same is true today!

And you can see what they needed – or didn't need – to do this:

- They didn't need sophisticated equipment to preach a simple message...
- They didn't need lots of supplies...
- They didn't need some amount of money...

What did they need? They needed the same things we need to preach the Gospel:

1. First, we need to be a Christian. We need the Holy Spirit indwelling us.
2. Second, we need to be willing. Just like Jesus told them to go and they went, we need to be willing to go if we're sent.
3. Third, we need to have knowledge of the Gospel. In a sense, we have to have been a disciple before being sent out. We have to learn before we can tell others. But I want to provide some balance to this:
 - a. We don't have to have a LOT of knowledge:
 - b. We also don't have to have such huge amount of maturity...sharing the Gospel isn't for elite super Christians.
 - c. I mention this, b/c it's unfortunate, when people feel like...
 - i. They don't know enough to share the Gospel...
 - ii. Or they haven't been a Christian long enough to share the Gospel...
 - d. If you know the Gospel, you can share the Gospel!

Also, notice the Twelve Apostles didn't have to be at a specific place!

More than likely they shared the Gospel:

- In open-air settings, such as street corners or marketplaces
- In synagogues, as they found opportunities to speak
- In small groups or one-on-one conversations

My suspicion is they used the avenues that were available in that day. They didn't have newspapers, podcasts, or Facebook, so they took advantage of what they had

The same is true for us: there's no right time or right place for sharing the Gospel.

So let me give you some encouragements...

Don't get too caught up in:

- *I have to make sure I know exactly what to say...*
- *I have to say everything perfectly...if I mess up one word, people won't get saved.*
- *I have to make sure I know the person way better than I do now...*
- *This isn't the right time...what if we start talking and I get interrupted?*
- *This isn't the right place.*

These sorts of fears can paralyze us from sharing the Gospel:

- If we're always waiting for the right time and place...
- If we're always afraid of what we're going to say...

We'll probably never find the right time or place.

Let me conclude this lesson by asking one important question...

What's one of the most overlooked places for sharing the Gospel?

I'd say our homes! If you're a parent, you need to be sharing the Gospel w/ your children!

Fathers, I haven't addressed you in a while:

- You are the pastors or shepherds of your homes.
- Have you been sharing the Gospel w/ your children?
- Your children are the number one audience God has given you!
- They're the main people you need to be discipling!
- In a sense, you should be to them what Jesus was to The Twelve.

Now if we go back to the account itself, we left off w/ The Twelve being told to take nothing w/ them. This begs the question, "How did they live? Where did they get the provisions they needed?" The answer is in **verse 4**...

4 And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart.

This deals w/ more than just housing. It's implied the houses they stayed at would provide their necessities. God's plan was to use faithful Jews to give the Apostles what they needed. It's similar to the way missionaries receive support on their missions, or the way pastors receive support from their congregations.

The parallel account in **Matthew** provides a few more details that I want you to see. Please turn to **Matthew 10:11**. We won't turn back to Luke...to be clear this is the parallel of **Luke 9**...

Matt 10:11 And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. 12 As you enter the house, greet it. 13 And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.

Matthew's account makes it clear they'd enter an area, find a place to lodge, and remain there until the ministry in the area was done. Then they'd move on to the next area and the process would begin again.

So they weren't supposed to "pick and choose." They weren't supposed to act like someplace wasn't good enough for them, and then move on to find better accommodations. They were supposed to be content w/ what they received.

This served a few good purposes:

1. First, it kept them from wasting time finding other homes.
2. Second, it taught them contentment.
3. Third, it prevented any hosts being offended when they moved out for a nicer house down the street.

Something I thought about this week in my studying is Jesus' instruction shows a lot of wisdom even in something as simple as this.

Considering how long they might be in a location, and considering the people they stayed w/ were responsible w/ providing everything they needed, the home they stayed in was a pretty big deal. In **verses 11 and 13** what word did Jesus use to describe the home?

The word **worthy** occurs three times in two verses. The worthiness of the home is really emphasized.

Being **worthy** was a pretty big deal, b/c look what happened to **unworthy** homes...

14 And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. 15 Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.

If I say, "Tell me the names of the WORST cities you can imagine," what cities come to mind? Probably Sodom and Gomorrah. They're the notoriously wicked cities. Jesus didn't just say **unworthy** homes would be like Sodom and Gomorrah, He actually said they would have it WORSE

than Sodom and Gomorrah. When **Sodom and Gomorrah** have it better than you, you know you've really blown it! Being **worthy** is clearly a big deal!

The obvious question is, what made people **worthy** or **unworthy**? **Verse 14** says they **will not receive you or listen to your words**. They reject the Gospel, which is to say they reject Christ.

I want you to see a parable illustrating this. Please turn to **Matt 22**.

This is the Parable of the Wedding Feast. There's also a relationship to **Luke 9**, which I'll show you in a moment...

Matthew 22:1 And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, **2** "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, **3** and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come.

This **call** is the call to salvation, or the Gospel.

If you write in your bible, you can circle the words **sent his servants to call** and write, "*Luke 9:1-6*," b/c this is referring to Jesus and the Twelve Apostles going to the Jews. The Gospel was supposed to go to the Jews first and then the Gentiles.

Look at **verse 4**...

4 Again he sent other servants (this would be the Seventy in Luke 10), saying, "Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast." **5** But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, **6** while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. **7** The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. **8** Then he said to his servants, "The wedding feast is ready, but those invited (referring to the Jews, and look at this...) **WERE NOT WORTHY**."

I want you to consider how odd it is to read the Jews **were not worthy**:

1. First, the Jews were God's chosen people. If anyone was **worthy** you'd think it'd be them.
2. Second, in **Romans 10:2** Paul said the Jews **had a zeal for God**. Usually **worthy** means you've done something. Nobody had done more for God in terms of works or religious activity than the Jews. In other words, if anyone seemed to have shown themselves worthy, it was them. If they weren't worthy, it would seem like nobody's worthy.

"Worthy" can also mean "*great character or commendable excellence*." So maybe the Jews weren't **worthy** b/c their character wasn't good enough. Maybe they were just TOO bad.

There's a problem w/ this though. Look who ends up being invited and finds themselves at the feast...

9 Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find (this refers to the Gentiles – us – who ended up being invited).’ **10 And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, BOTH BAD AND GOOD. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.**

When it says **bad and good**, it doesn’t mean some people are good, as though they’re not sinners:

- It means people all across the spectrum - all manner of people - whether they look good or bad from the world’s perspective.
- It’s referring to the indiscriminate way the Gospel goes out to everyone.

So when you see that there are these **bad** people who were **worthy** enough to attend, but the Jews weren’t, you can see **worthiness** has nothing to do with two things:

- First, it has nothing to do with doing enough. Being religious enough. Engaging in enough religious activity. If that was the case the Jews would’ve been the **MOST** worthy.
- Second, it has nothing to do with character or morality...worthiness has nothing to do with being good enough. If that was the case, these **bad** people in **verse 10** never would’ve been able to attend.

So what makes someone **worthy** or **unworthy**? This brings us to our last lesson...

LESSON 4: WORTHINESS IS DETERMINED BY OUR RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL.

When the Twelve Apostles were sent out, they were supposed to stay in the homes of **worthy** people. When I studied out what made people worthy – or unworthy – it became clear that **worthiness** is determined by people’s response to the Gospel.

The Gospel is salvation by grace through faith, and grace is unmerited or unearned favor:

- Grace can only take place when something hasn’t been earned: **Rom 11:6 if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.**
- Grace is the opposite of being **worthy**; grace is necessary because we’re **NOT WORTHY**. The Gospel is for **unworthy** people...that’s why you see **bad** people at the wedding feast.

You can see from the parable what made other people **unworthy**:

- The end of **verse 3** says **they would not come**.
- **Verses 5** and **6** describe them rejecting the invitation.

They wanted nothing to do with Christ.

None of us are unworthy because of our sinfulness or lack of works, but we are unworthy if we reject the Gospel. It’s as though God says, “I can accept murderers, adulterers, thieves, people who haven’t done anything making them worthy, but I can’t accept anyone who doesn’t love My Son.”

Listen to this interesting verse...

In **John 16:9** Jesus said, “**The Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin, because they do not believe in Me.**”

This sounds like an odd statement considering there are so many sins. We'd expect Jesus to say, “**The Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin, BECAUSE MEN ARE SINNERS.**”

Jesus' words make sense if we understand – eternally speaking – there's really only ONE sin, and that's not believing in Jesus.

- This is the sin that has eternal consequences.
- This is the only sin that can't be forgiven.
- This is the sin that makes people **unworthy**.

People who repent and put their faith in Christ...

- Regardless of what they have earned or haven't earned...
- Regardless of what they have done or haven't done...
- Regardless of their sinfulness or perceived lack of sinfulness...

They become **worthy** of eternal life.

So my question for you is...

If someone asked, what makes people worthy to go to heaven, what would you say? I hope you would say our worthiness for heaven is determined by our response to the Gospel.

If you have any questions about anything I've shared this morning, or you wonder about your worthiness for heaven, Pastor Doug and I will be up front after service and we would consider it a privilege to speak w/ you.

Let's pray.