

Luke 9:37-56 Christ Patiently Grows Us

Jesus patiently grows us by turning us from our well-worn paths of self-centeredness to the way of the cross.

4 self-centered attitudes Jesus turns us away from toward Himself:

- 1) Jesus turns us away from **self-reliance** to **trust in God** (9:37-43a).
 - a) A Severe Case:
 - i) the desperation of the father
 - ii) the description of the son's condition
 - iii) the display of the demon's control
 - b) The Twelve's authority from Christ: Luke 9:1 "over all demons"
 - c) Compare Mark 9:28-29 "And when He had entered the house, His disciples asked Him privately, 'Why could we not cast it out?' And He said to them, 'This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.'"
 - d) They were not relying on the authority of Christ and the goodness of God.
 - e) Relying on themselves they were overcome by the severity of the case.
 - f) How do you react to "severe cases" you face? What does this reveal about the placement of your faith? Is your faith misplaced in your ability? Or, is your faith in God's good purpose to work even in your weakness?
 - g) Christ does not abandon us to our self-reliance; He grows us to learn to trust in God.
- 2) Jesus turns us away from **self-help** to **faith in Christ crucified** (9:43b-45).
 - a) A Theological Error: God's work is seen primarily in displays of power. Note: "And all were astonished at the majesty of God. But while they were all marveling at everything He was doing . . ."
 - b) Jesus Corrects with Truth: "The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men."
 - c) God's Kingdom will be built, not upon the corpses of Christ's foes, but upon His broken body and shed blood.
 - d) Without Christ crucified, Christianity gets reduced to just another self-help regimen. This is humanity's default religion.
 - e) Christ patiently works to overcome our "tone-deafness" to the cross.
 - i) "Let these words sink into your ears" recalls the parable of the sower and the soils (Luke 8:4-15).
 - ii) "They did not understand this saying" is concerning in light of that parable.
 - iii) "It was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it," when read in light of the parable, seems to put the onus on their hard hearts and Satan's devices. Though it may also point to God's purpose to hide His purpose from the disciples until after the resurrection (Luke 8:10; although, here it is said that to them "it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God"). The Bible teaches compatibilism between absolute Divine sovereignty and human responsibility and secondary causation.
 - f) Jesus is certainly our example; but is He more than that to you? Do you know your need for the cross? Do you measure God's work primarily by your performance or by Christ's finished work?
 - g) Christ does not abandon us in our self-help religion; He grows us to trust in His atoning sacrifice.
- 3) Jesus turns us away from **self-promotion** to **humble service** to others (9:50).
 - a) Two Self-promoting Episodes:
 - i) Argument over who is the greatest (v. 46)
 - ii) Not sharing honor with an "outsider" (v. 49)

- b) A Heart Diagnosis: “But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts”: Sinful pride, self-seeking, self-aggrandizing, self-promotion, self-exaltation—if not first, we like to be near the front of the line
 - c) A Subversive Ethic: give honor to those that society is not obliged to honor; “greatness” is measured in humble service to others
 - d) The greatness of God is seen most clearly in the cross of Christ. Why should greatness among His people be seen in any other way than in self-giving love?
 - e) Why do you do the things you do? Do you want to make a name for yourself? Or, do you want to exalt Christ and serve others? Beware that your “service” does not become a means of getting attention for yourself.
 - f) Christ does not abandon us to our self-promoting pride; He grows us in becoming less in order to make much of Him.
- 4) Jesus turns us away from **self-righteousness** to **redemptive love** (9:51-56).
- a) A Pre-mature Judgment: “Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?”
 - b) Jesus’ Warning of Self-righteousness: “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of.”— Compare to Luke 12:1 “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.”
 - c) The Remedy: “. . . for the Son of Man came not to destroy people’s lives but to save them.”
 - d) Christians are to exercise good moral judgment about people’s conduct and character.
 - e) We must beware of making pre-mature judgments concerning people’s eternal destiny. How many would have condemned Saul of Tarsus to hell?
 - f) In your relationships with non-Christians are you controlled by self-righteousness or redemptive love? What is more controlling in your relationships with your fellow Christians?
 - g) Christ does not abandon us to our shallow self-righteousness; He grows us to be controlled by the compassion of Christ.
- 5) What then?
- a) Don’t be complacent about your progress in faith and holiness.
 - b) Don’t be discouraged by your lack of progress.
 - c) Take courage in Jesus. He is patient and relentless.

Doxology: As we run with endurance the race set before us, let us look to Jesus and praise Him, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.—Heb. 12:2