

Luke 9:1-6

“Christmas and the Kingdom”

December 22, 2024

1. Intro

- a. Although our main passage for this morning will be these beginning verses of chapter 9...
 - i. If you’ve been with us the past few weeks, you’ll know that most of chapter 8 was spent preparing the twelve for this moment
 1. In Luke 8, verses 22-25, Jesus showed that he had power and authority over nature, as he commanded the winds and the waves to be still...
 - a. And they obeyed
 2. In verses 26-39, Jesus showed that he had power and authority over the demons, as he commanded the Legions of demons to depart from the man from the Gerasenes...
 - a. And they ALL obeyed
 3. And in verses 40-56, Jesus showed that he had power and authority over sickness, as the power emanating from just the hem of his robe was enough to heal the woman with the incurable bleeding condition
 - a. And then of course, Jesus showed that he had power and authority over death itself, as he raised Jairus’ young daughter back from the dead
 - i. In all three of these passages, we saw a very clear contrast presented...
 1. In this life, you can either choose to be consumed with fear, and end up rejecting who Jesus is, as you choose to go your own way instead of following him
 2. OR, you can choose to put all your faith in him, believing that he truly is the one with power and authority over all of these things
 - a. Believing that he truly is the Son of the Most High God
 - i. Will you have fear, or will you have faith?
 - b. This would be the lesson Jesus would show to his disciples in Luke chapter 8, over and over and over again
 - i. And it would be an important lesson for them to learn
 1. For he was now sending them out into the world, without him by their side
 - a. And the same question would remain....
 - i. Would they choose to cower in fear of man... fear of their circumstances... fear of potential suffering and hardship?
 - ii. Or would they choose to walk forward in faith, obeying the commands of Christ, and calling others to do the same?
 4. Chapter 9 marks a major turning point in the lives of these twelve young men
 - a. SO let’s look at this passage together...

2. Luke 9:1

- a. *¹And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases,*
 - i. This is a key verse for the beginning of their ministry, isn’t it?

1. It doesn't say that Jesus just commanded them to go out and cast out demons and cure diseases
 - a. Verse 1 says that HE gave them power and authority over the demons
 - i. HE gave them the power and authority to cure diseases
 - b. These are not magical abilities that we can conjure up on our own
 - i. In Acts 19, we read of seven sons of the Jewish high priest trying to cast out demons in their own power and in their own authority
 1. And, even though they used the name of Jesus, the demon acknowledged NONE of their authority, and he sent them running out of the house, naked and wounded
 - c. Nor are these abilities we can purchase with gold and silver
 - i. In Acts 8, we read about Philip performing many signs and wonders among the Samaritans
 1. Peter and John hear about all of this, so they go to Samaria, they lay hands on the new believers, and, for the first time, the Holy Spirit falls on the Samaritan people
 - ii. One of the people watching all of this unfold is a man named Simon the Magician
 1. And as he sees this incredible power and authority coming from Peter and John, Acts tells us that he tried to buy this power from them with money
 - a. Peter instantly rebukes this man for his sinful attitude, and he calls him to repent or perish
 - d. My friends, the disciples could do NOTHING, if Jesus had not given to them from HIS power and from HIS authority
 - i. They had seen him rebuke demons
 - ii. They had seen him rebuke diseases
 1. And now, he gave to them from HIS OWN power and authority, the command AND the ability to do the same
 - a. But theirs was not JUST to be a mission of signs and wonders
 - b. It was also to be a mission of PROCLAMATION

3. Luke 9:2

a. ²and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.

- i. We'll deal with this verse in more detail in just a bit, but note here what Jesus DID NOT send them out to proclaim
 1. He did not send them out to proclaim the Kingdom of Israel
 - a. Even though the people would eventually herald him as a King, and call for him to become the political ruler of Israel, that was NOT the message he had come to preach
 - i. Never once did Jesus call for his followers to rise up against the tyranny of their Roman oppressors
 - ii. Never once did Jesus call for his followers to take up arms and take what they believed to be rightfully theirs
 - iii. Never once did Jesus seek to establish any kind of earthly political rule
 2. From the very beginning of his ministry, Jesus had come proclaiming a DIFFERENT Kingdom
 - a. John the Baptist, the one sent to prepare the way for Jesus, came proclaiming in Matthew 3:2, "*Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.*"

- b. And after John was arrested, Jesus continued on with the same message in Matthew 4:17, as we read,
 - i. From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.”
 - 1. This was the message of John the Baptist
 - 2. This was the message of Jesus
 - 3. And this was now the message that Jesus gave to the twelve to proclaim throughout the villages of Judea
 - a. “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven – the Kingdom of God – is at hand.”
 - c. And then in verse 3, he gives them this command...

4. Luke 9:3

- a. ³And he said to them, “Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics.
 - i. Now, we have to note here that this is not a normative command for all who would follow after Jesus
 - 1. There are some who would look at passages like this and say, “This is the way we are commanded to go forth as well...
 - a. In order to do missions, we don’t need to bring a bunch of food...
 - i. We don’t need to bring extra money...
 - ii. We don’t need to bring extra clothes...
 - 1. All we need to do is go out in faith, and Christ will provide everything we need
 - a. Isn’t this what this verse teaches?
 - 2. Well, yes... and no
 - a. Christ did indeed give them these explicit instructions here in this verse
 - b. And he’ll give very similar instructions in the next chapter as he sends out the 72
 - i. But in chapter 22 of Luke’s Gospel, Jesus will tell them that now IT IS time to take a moneybag and a knapsack with them
 - 1. Now IT IS time to make sure they have provisions and resources on which to live and survive
 - a. So what is the difference?
 - 3. The difference is that, for now, here in Luke 9 and in Luke 10, Jesus was still in the world with them
 - a. He had a mission that he had been sent to accomplish, and that mission involved taking care of his disciples and keeping them from harm
 - i. But, as Jesus neared the end of his ministry, as the hour had come for his death on the cross
 - 1. He was preparing them in chapter 22 for their sifting
 - a. After Jesus’ death and burial and resurrection, life did not become easier for his followers
 - b. After the Holy Spirit came and fell upon them at Pentecost, life did not become a bed of roses for the disciples
 - b. In fact, they would ALL be persecuted for their faith
 - i. Many would be martyred for their faith
 - 1. And they would REJOICE that they had been counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name of Jesus

- ii. Here in Luke 9, Jesus is still with them and guarding them from the evil one
 - 1. But NOW, though we affirm wholeheartedly that Christ is STILL with us and STILL watching over us...
 - a. We also affirm that all who would follow after him are in a war against the great deceiver of this age, Satan himself
 - i. And we are to live our lives in full awareness of this spiritual battle that we have been immersed in
 - 2. Jesus goes on in verses 4-5...

5. Luke 9:4-5

a. *⁴And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. ⁵And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them.*

- i. Here we are presented with the realities of the world in which we live
 - 1. The disciples were given the power to cast out demons
 - 2. They were given the authority to cure diseases
 - 3. They were given the message to proclaim that the very Kingdom of Heaven was at hand
 - a. And yet, with all of this incredibly good news, Jesus tells them that there will be entire towns that refuse to receive their message
 - i. There will be entire villages that see all of these signs and wonders and yet they will say, like the crowds of the Gerasenes back in chapter 8, "Please... get away from our village"
 - ii. There will be entire groups of people that hear the message that the Kingdom of God is HERE, NOW, even as we speak, and they will say, "No thanks. Not interested."
 - 4. And Jesus says to his disciples, when that happens, shake the dust off your feet, and move on
 - a. In the next chapter, when Jesus sends out the 72 with the same mission and the same message, he tells them that, for those who refuse to receive them, *"It will be more bearable on the day of judgement for Sodom than for that town."*

ii. My friends, the Scriptures are clear...

- 1. To refuse Christ, to refuse His Kingdom, has disastrous consequences
 - a. And if you do refuse to receive him and his Kingdom, then he will shake off the dust from his feet, and he will move on as well
 - i. This is a sobering reminder for all of us, that not everyone will be saved
 - ii. Not everyone who lives a good life here on this earth will enter into heaven
 - iii. Not everyone who says to Jesus, "Lord, Lord," will inherit eternal life
 - 1. It is ONLY those who FULLY place their faith in Christ who will be saved
 - 2. IT IS ONLY those who receive HIS Kingdom who will enter into it

iii. And so, our passage concludes with verse 6, as we see the disciples laying aside their fear, and walking forward in obedient FAITH...

6. Luke 9:6

- a. *⁶And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.*
 - i. Well, this leaves us with the question, what is this "gospel" that they were preaching?

1. This is a question of MASSIVE importance for us today... what IS the Gospel?
 - a. Is the Gospel simply that Jesus loves you, he died on the cross for you, so won't you now accept him into your heart?
 - b. Is the Gospel that Christ suffered on the cross for you, and by his stripes you have been healed, so now you can claim your good health, you can claim your riches, you can claim your prosperity in THIS life, for that is what Jesus has purchased, FOR YOU?
 - c. Is the Gospel that God is love, and so He sent His Son into the world to die for EVERYONE's sins, and therefore we are ALL eventually going to end up in heaven, regardless of what path we take to get there?
2. My friends, as nice as all of these things sound, they simply ARE NOT the Gospel
 - a. And therefore, none of these messages have the power to save
 - i. If I can give us all a gentle rebuke this morning, then hear this...
 1. YOU are NOT the center of the Gospel
 - a. I know that is hard to hear in the me-centered world in which we live, but let me say it again
 - i. YOU are NOT the center of the Gospel
 2. So what IS the center of the Gospel... the center of the Good News that we have been called to proclaim?
 - ii. In Matthew 4:23, we read,
 1. ²³*And [Jesus] went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel OF THE KINGDOM...*
 - iii. In Luke 16:16, Jesus says,
 1. ¹⁶*The Law and the Prophets were until John [the Baptist]; SINCE THEN, the [Gospel] OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD is preached...*
 - iv. In Matthew 24:14, as Jesus is speaking of the end times, he says,
 1. ¹⁴*And this gospel OF THE KINGDOM will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*
 - a. Friends, this Gospel that Christ came to proclaim...
 - b. This Gospel that he sent his disciples out to proclaim...
 - c. This Gospel that we are still called to proclaim today...
 - i. This Gospel is the Gospel of the Kingdom of God
 1. And this Gospel is HERE... TODAY!
 - v. So what IS the Gospel of the Kingdom of God?
7. Well, this Gospel began all the way at the beginning with Adam and Eve in the Garden
 - a. In Genesis 1 and 2, God creates Adam out of the dust of the earth, and then He forms Eve out of one of Adam's ribs
 - i. And He gives Adam and Eve dominion over the entire earth
 1. God had created an earthly kingdom, and He appointed Adam and Eve, mankind, to be His vice-regents
 - a. They were to rule over all things, bringing glory to HIS name as their good and loving Creator
 - i. But it wasn't enough for Adam and Eve to simply rule as vice-regents, was it?
 - ii. They had been given the freedom to rule and reign over ALL things, except for one tree in the middle of the Garden
 1. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil
 - a. If they would have just been content with that, everything would have been great, right?

- b. But the same sinful pride that resides in all of us was in Adam and Eve's heart as well
 - i. They insisted on being the king and queen of the Kingdom, and they broke the one law that God had put into place
 - 1. And all of humanity was plunged into sin and death
 - ii. Wickedness and depravity only increased over the centuries
8. Until it became so bad that only one man and his family were left who found favor with God
 - a. And so God tells Noah, *"I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence..."*
 - i. But he commands Noah to build a giant boat
 - ii. He sends the animals to Noah to keep safe in the boat
 - iii. And then God shuts them up in the boat, He sends the great flood that wipes out all the rest of humanity...
 - 1. And only eight survive...
 - a. Noah, his wife, and his three sons and their wives
 - b. But God makes a covenant with Noah, doesn't He?
 - i. In fact, God makes a covenant with ALL of His creation, as He vows to never again strike down every living creature as He had done, even though the intentions of their hearts are evil from their youth
 - 1. He gives the rainbow as a sign of his covenant, and he tells Noah the same thing He told Adam and Eve, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth"
 - a. The Kingdom of God was beginning once again
9. From Noah's son Shem would come Arphaxad
 - a. From Arphaxad would come his descendant, Peleg
 - i. From Peleg would come his descendant, Terah
 - 1. And from Terah would come his descendant, Abram, who we would come to know as Abraham
 - a. Abraham was a pagan man from pagan lands
 - i. His fathers before him were all worshipers of pagan gods
 - b. And yet God called this man Abraham, and he chose to make His covenant with him
 - 2. To Abraham it was promised that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky or the sand on the seashore
 - a. To Abraham it was promised that his descendants would be given a land of abundance, a land flowing with milk and honey
 - b. To Abraham, it was promised that from his descendants would come kings who would bring blessing to all the peoples of this earth
 - i. The Kingdom of God would come through the descendants of Abraham
 - ii. But the Kingdom would not come through ALL the children of Abraham
 - 1. In a moment of fear and unbelief, like Adam and Eve before them, Abraham and his wife Sarah forgot God's covenant with them, and they tried to take matters into their own hands
 - a. Sarah gave Abraham her servant Hagar, and said, "Here, give me a son through her instead"
 - i. And from Hagar's womb would come Ishmael...
 - 1. The father of those of the East...
 - 2. The father of those who would eventually follow Muhammad and his false religion of Islam

3. The father of those who would become the enemies of the people of God
2. God's Covenant did not extend to Ishmael, but it did extend to Isaac
 - a. And then to Jacob
 - b. And then to Jacob's twelve sons
 - i. And then to the entire nation of Israel
10. Israel, the nation that had begun with 70 refugees fleeing into Egypt due to a global famine
 - a. Israel, the nation that God Himself caused to grow to numbers possibly nearing two or three million people within Egypt's borders
 - i. Israel, the nation that existed for nearly four centuries as slaves
 - b. It was Israel whom God rescued out of her slavery
 - i. It was Israel whom God led through the waters of the sea and through the wilderness
 - ii. It was Israel whom God covenanted with on Mt Sinai, as He gave them the law through Moses
 - iii. It was Israel whom God chose for Himself, as he brought them into the land of Canaan, the Promised Land
 1. The Kingdom of God now had a people
 2. The Kingdom of God now had a place
 - a. But these people were a rebellious, and stiff-necked people, weren't they?
 - b. Like Adam and Eve before them, it wasn't enough for God to rule over them
 - i. And so they demanded a king like all the other nations had
11. God eventually appoints his own king over Israel, the young man after his own heart, David
 - a. David, the mighty slayer of Goliath
 - i. David, the one who defeated the Philistine armies
 1. David, the great Psalmist of the Scriptures
 - a. David... the adulterer
 - b. David... the murderer
 - c. David... the king who failed his people
 - ii. Yet in spite of all of this, God chose to covenant with David
 1. Through David, the line of true Israelite kings would be established
 2. Through David, the great Temple of God would be built by his son, Solomon
 3. Through David, God promises that a son would come
 - a. This son will be confirmed in God's house and God's Kingdom forever
 - b. And for this son, his throne shall be established forever
 - i. The Kingdom of God had a people
 - ii. The Kingdom of God had a place
 - iii. And the Kingdom of God now had the promise of a coming King whose rule would never end
 - iii. Sadly, the rest of the record of the Old Testament tells of the failure of the people of God to live up to His laws and commands
 1. Their continued disobedience – of both the people AND the kings – led to their exile from the Promised Land
 - a. A remnant would return to the Land, but it would just be a dim shadow of what had been there before
 - i. And then the Old Testament ends...
 1. And history tells us that there was four hundred years of silence from God
 - a. The powerful kings of Persia would be defeated

- b. Alexander the Great would bring his expansive, yet short-lived rule across Europe and Western Asia and Northern Africa
- c. And the mighty Roman empire would come into power
 - i. Defeating the Greeks
 - ii. Defeating EVERYONE, including the demoralized people of God, the people of Israel

12. And then, in the span of just a year and a half, EVERYTHING changed!!

- a. The angel, Gabriel, appeared to the priest, Zechariah, pronouncing the birth of his son John, who would prepare the way for the coming king... the silence of God had ended!
 - i. Gabriel wasn't done though
 - 1. Six months later, he would appear to the young virgin, Mary, and he would give her these stunning words...
 - a. *"Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."*
 - ii. And just nine months later, the Son of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, would enter this earth
 - 1. And the angels would cry out, *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!"*
 - a. God's great King that He had promised... had finally arrived
 - i. In the fullness of time, as the Apostle Paul wrote, God had sent his Son to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth
 - 1. This was the mystery of God's will that had been hidden for ages
 - 2. And it was now revealed in Christ!
 - ii. The King had arrived
 - 1. The Kingdom of Heaven was at hand

13. Although Paul called this a great mystery, God had promised that this was all coming, hadn't He

- a. Look again at the passage that Henry read for us at the beginning of the service, from Isaiah 9:6-7,
 - i. *⁶For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.*
 - 1. Friends, the Son has come
 - a. And he has brought the Kingdom with him
- b. This Kingdom is the Kingdom of the Wonderful Counselor
 - i. This title given in Isaiah 6 conveys the idea of One who has been sent to bring the sovereign will and the intentional plan of the divine will
 - 1. God's plans are eternal... unshakable... God's plans are PERFECT
 - a. And Christ has come to convey this message to us
 - b. How did he convey the perfection of his Father's will to us?
 - i. By living in perfect obedience to ALL the commands of his Father
 - ii. In perfect submission, Christ humbled himself, taking on the form of a servant, and being born in the likeness of men, as a helpless little baby boy

1. But this helpless little baby boy would grow into a man
 - a. And this man, in humble obedience, lived a life of perfect submission to the Father, even unto his death upon the cross
 - c. Through his life here on the earth as the perfect Son, Jesus has become for us the Wonderful Counselor
 - i. He has shown us the sovereign will and purpose of the Father
 - ii. And through his death upon the cross, he has enabled us to live according to God's sovereign will and purpose
 1. He is our Wonderful Counselor!
 - c. This Kingdom is also the Kingdom of the Mighty God and the Everlasting Father
 - i. Friends, do not forget that these are titles given TO JESUS
 1. This is just one passage out of many in the Scriptures that affirm for us that Jesus was no mere man like us
 - a. Yes, Jesus was truly man... he was truly born of Mary... he did truly live a life just as we do
 - b. But Jesus is also truly GOD
 - i. He is one member, one person of the Triune God of all Creation
 1. God the Father... God the Son... God the Spirit
 - a. Each are distinct in their personhood
 - b. Yet they are all God
 2. This is a mystery that our finite minds simply cannot comprehend
 - a. But the Gospel of John is clear...
 - i. In the beginning was the Word... Jesus
 - ii. And the Word was with God
 - iii. And the Word WAS God
 2. This child that has been born, this Son that to us has been given
 - a. He is called Wonderful Counselor
 - i. But he is also called MIGHTY GOD
 - ii. He is also called EVERLASTING FATHER
 1. The Kingdom of God is at hand
 - a. For the Son of God has come!
- d. But this Kingdom is also the Kingdom of the Prince of Peace
 - i. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end
 1. Well this immediately forces us to stop and ask the question, if this Kingdom is truly here, then where is the peace that has been promised?
 - a. If you turn on the news for just five minutes, you hear of war in Israel, and war in Ukraine
 - b. You hear of constant fighting and bickering between Republican and Democrat
 - c. You hear of murders, and robberies, and all sorts of evil things being done by man
 2. But you don't even have to turn on the news to know that peace is a hard thing to find these days, do you?
 - a. All we have to do is look inward, at our own hearts
 - i. Where is the peace of the Kingdom as we are bitter towards our bosses at work, or our neighbors down the street?

- ii. Where is the peace of the Kingdom as we have strife and anger within our own families?
- 3. If the Christ has indeed come to bring the Kingdom of God to this earth, where is the peace that the Prince of peace has promised?
 - a. The answer, my friends, is that the Prince of peace has come to bring peace between you and your God
 - i. You see, just like Adam and Even in the Garden, you have rebelled against the commands of God
 - ii. Just like the people in the days of Noah, your hearts have been full of corruption
 - iii. Just like Abraham and Sarah, you've tried to make things happen according to your own desires
 - iv. Just like the people of Israel, you have been stiff-necked to God's rule over your lives
 - v. And just like David, you have committed adultery in your heart, as you have sought after other gods, including the god of self
 - 1. And you have committed murder, as you have held anger and bitterness in your hearts...
 - a. Towards your neighbor
 - b. Towards yourself
 - c. Even towards God
 - b. The Scriptures are unapologetic in their claims against every man, woman, and child...
 - i. We are ALL enemies of God
 - 1. But, while we were yet His enemy, because God so loved the world, He sent his Son to die on our behalf
 - a. To us, who deserved God's wrath, a child is born
 - b. To us, who deserve nothing but death and condemnation, the Son has been given
 - c. He is the Prince of Peace... the ONLY one who can bring peace between us and God
 - i. And as we receive this Gospel of the Kingdom
 - 1. As we receive Christ fully as both our Savior and our Lord
 - 2. As we place our faith wholly and completely in Him as the Lamb of God who takes away our sins
 - a. Then the Bible says that God delivers us from the domain of darkness, and transfers us to the Kingdom of His beloved Son
 - i. In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins
- ii. How has Christ established His Kingdom upon this earth?
 - 1. By saving for Himself a people
 - a. How will he continue to establish his Kingdom, upholding it with justice and righteousness from this time forth and forevermore?
 - i. By building HIS church?
 - b. My friends, what you see here in this room is not just a gathering of people who like to sing Christmas hymns and who like to talk about Jesus
 - i. What you see here in this room is the very Kingdom of God
 - 1. The world is full of chaos and sin and darkness

2. The world is frantically and uselessly seeking after some kind of hope
 - a. They will never find it in the things they are striving after
 - b. They will never find it in political rulers
 - c. They will never find it in wealth and riches
 - d. They will never find it in comfort and security
- iii. The only place of true hope... the only place of true peace...
 1. Is in the Kingdom of God
 - a. My friends, do you know the Prince of Peace?
 - i. If not, may you surrender your lives wholly to him today
 - ii. May you lay down your rights, your longings, your desires
 - iii. May you joyfully and humbly receive his Kingdom here this morning
 - b. And if you are here today, and the Prince of Peace is indeed your Prince of peace
 - i. Then your calling is simple...
 1. Leave this place this morning, and then go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom
 - a. For as the church is faithful in proclaiming this Gospel of the Kingdom to all nations, then the end will come!
 - iv. And, as Isaiah so wonderfully concluded his passage, we too will joyfully proclaim, "The zeal of the Lord of hosts has done it!!"
 1. Yes, the coming of Christmas means the birth of our Savior
 2. But may we not forget that it ALSO means the arrival of our King
 - a. And his throne has been established, from this time forth and forevermore
 - i. To God be the Glory!!