

Luke 9:7-22

One main lesson I learned living in a small midwest town was that news travels quickly and extensively. If you don't want half the town to know about something then you better keep it to yourself. Once you tell a friend something, by the afternoon it travels to the retirees who have coffee at the bakery, and then within the next 48 hours it gets assimilated into every home. This happens without social media or mass texting—just by word of mouth. The surprising thing is not just how news travels quickly, but how *extensively* it can travel.

That is the connection from vs6 where Pastor Rob left off last week, and v7—the good news has traveled so quickly and extensively that it has reached all the way to Herod. Herod becomes the focus at first and there is something small we can learn.

1. A leader with a question (v7-9)

- First question, why is this account here? In a sense it seems out of place. But it does have a broader connection in Luke.

Two observations:

- 1) Faith comes by hearing and responding, not just a desire to see (Illustrates parable of sower Ch8)— When Herod does see Jesus (23:10) he responds with mockery and contempt.

Fast forward to the end of the Gospel (23:8-11)

—The crowd is no longer curious about Jesus, but is ready for him to be crucified.

Herod now gets his chance to see Jesus....and he is not impressed.

**Curiosity can lead to contempt, unless there is commitment.

- 2) Shows the danger of swimming in the sea of opinions.

Herod is “perplexed because it was said by some”

—Herod has his own question (v9) “Who is Jesus?”

Apply: The sea of opinions is a dangerous body of water to play in. I think our culture is increasingly a culture of opinion. Everyone who has a smartphone, social media, and unlimited data plan can participate. Throw in the mix of some postmodern and pluralistic philosophy, and the sea is large and deep.

It is *eternally* dangerous to swim long in the sea of opinion. If you are curious about Jesus that is good....but not enough. Many have swam in those waters and drowned.

2. A crowd with hunger (v10-17)

- When most look at this, they usually focus on the miracle, which is surely a part.
- It answers the question in Ps 78:19, “Can God spread a table in the wilderness?”
- The answer is a resounding yes!
- But it is not just about the miracle; *mission* is all over this unit. (cf 9:1-6)

Christ wants his church to be thinking missionally.

We've heard the cliché "Frozen Chosen"—but that is a sad reality that a church can be doctrinally air-tight...but have lost its sense of mission.

**5 Marks of Mission.

Jesus does not want his followers to just observe mission, but be active participants in mission.

1. Value Hospitality (v11a): The way to see this is Jesus hosting a great banquet of 5000 people. To be welcoming and hospitable is to be like our Lord. There was a warmth to Jesus that people wanted to draw near to him.

Is that true of us and our church: would people intentionally want to be around us, because we give off the aroma of hospitality?

- Devotion reading in Acts 28:2—when Paul was shipwrecked on Malta “The native people (lit. Barbarians) showed us *unusual kindness*, for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because it had begun to rain and was cold.”

Question: If the barbarians can excel in hospitality, how well are the brethren doing?

Illus: I've never been to Disney World, but one of my best friends went a few years back. He is a pastor and took note of how hospitable the atmosphere was and made the comment: “Disney probably puts most churches to shame when it comes to how they treat their guests.”

Let's make every effort not to let Disney shame us in hospitality. *We have eternal truth, all they offer is overpriced entertainment.*

2. Value Preaching—v11b.

- *For mission to happen, the Word must have priority.*

You've probably heard, “Preach the gospel and if necessary use words”

—That's *not* a missional statement. The only way the church stays on mission is by preaching the gospel by *using words*. It's the model of Jesus Christ, and the early church.

Acts 8:35

Missional Ministry is always a Word-Centered ministry.

3. Value People — (v12 &13) This trip was intended to be a rest for the tired disciples. They were tired from traveling and wanted some down time.

But Jesus keeps them focused: *where there are people, there is kingdom work.*

His approach: solve it. Solve the problem of getting food to these hungry people (v13)

The responses from the disciples.

1. “Send away” (v12). If we are not hospitable, we are drifting into the same thinking.
2. Serious? (v13) Paraphrasing.

Lesson: It is when we feel most inadequate; when we sense our inability and helplessness that the Lord can really work wonders. Jesus reminds us about discipleship in (Jn 15:5) “apart from me you can do nothing”

4. Be strategic (v14)

- Jesus instructs the 12 to divide into smaller groups of about 50, and go from there. *Think small and strategic to reach the masses.
- The point is that even the Son of God used strategy to target the multitudes. It’s not ungodly for churches to have a strategy that leans on God’s sovereignty.
- The picture is pretty clear: *the disciples serve strategically through the power and provision of Christ.*

5. Be ready for mess (v17).

- Note the final sentence in v17:
- Without looking for a deeper meaning, one practical takeaway: a mess is left.

[Excuse the mess, my children are making memories]—

Rather, “Excuse the mess, we are on mission. We are loving people & making disciples.”

Apply: Are we ready for mess? Are we ready for people who are different, have complex needs, and are broken to step foot into our church and homes? A lot of churches can give lip-service to mission...but when push comes to shove they are not ready for the mess.

- Plug for small group: The Gospel Comes with a House Key—*Practicing Radically Ordinary Hospitality in Our Post Christian World.*

Sum: The marks of being missional-minded: value hospitality, value preaching, value people, be strategic, and happy to clean up a mess.

—Yet, is there a goal, is there a target?

Absolutely! V17: “And they all ate and were satisfied”

Principle: *The mission of the church is that we want people to be satisfied with what Jesus provides. That ought to be the driving force in our service and sacrifice.... we want others to be satisfied with what Jesus provides.*

Apply: There is a crowd with a hunger. They live in Irmo, Columbia, Lexington, Ballentine, Central Asia, Europe, China.
Church Family, we are not called to observe mission, but engage in mission.

3. A disciple with an answer (18-22)

- The setting is Jesus praying. In Luke, any spotlight on Jesus' prayer life gets us ready for a key moment.
- Next, an exchange with Jesus/disciples to see if they truly get his identity.

Peter answers correctly: "The Christ of God"

—Popular thinking: The Messiah would *provide* political freedom by death of his enemies.

—Reality: The Messiah will *provide* eternal freedom by death *for* his enemies.

The Kingdom does not come first by sword swinging, but by seed sowing (parable of sower) ... and by the Savior's suffering.

The Kingdom advances by Grace

- I think what Jesus is essentially saying (v22) is this: If you are going to confess me as Messiah, then you must have a high Grace Capacity.

Question: What is a Grace Capacity (GC):

{Like an IQ, everyone has a GC?}

Your Grace Capacity is determined by how you approach God and treat others.

+Low GC= a default to list keeping and law abiding—typical of low GC is hyper critical and judgmental spirit.

+High GC=is broken and understands unworthiness and how *everything* good comes from Jesus alone.

Examples: (Go throughout Luke and note who has a low or high GC)

Pharisees, scribes, Rich young ruler, Elder brother =very low GC

Sinful woman (Lk 7), Prodigal Son, Tax collector (Lk 18) =very high GC

V22 gives shape to our GC: It's all about the voluntary sacrificial death of the Son of God, that freely purchases salvation for God's people.

No doubt drawn from Is 53:3-5

“³ He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions;

he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed."

Conclusion:

On my desk is a mug that has a picture of Charles Spurgeon along with a quote: "My entire theology can be condensed into four words: JESUS DIED FOR ME."

That is a man who lived with a high level of Grace Capacity (also lived on mission and with conviction). Let's seek to live there with him.