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Luke

Chapter 9 - A Peculiar Kind of Calling

Animated by Divine Directives (vs. 10-17)

Luke 9:10-17: When the apostles returned, they gave an account to Him of all that they had done. Taking them with Him, He withdrew by Himself to a city called Bethsaida. But the crowds were aware of this and followed Him; and welcoming them, He began speaking to them about the kingdom of God and curing those who had need of healing. Now the day was ending, and the twelve came and said to Him, “Send the crowd away, that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside and find lodging and get something to eat; for here we are in a desolate place.” But He said to them, “You give them something to eat!” And they said, “We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless perhaps we go and buy food for all these people.” (For there were about five thousand men.) And He said to His disciples, “Have them sit down to eat in groups of about fifty each.” They

did so, and had them all sit down. Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them, and broke them, and kept giving them to the disciples to set before the people. And they all ate and were satisfied; and the broken pieces which they had left over were picked up, twelve baskets full.

This Luke Chapter 9 is about discipleship. Discipleship. We read this particular incident, this narrative dealing with the five loaves and two fish, or opposite and we realized that Luke isn't focusing on the event. He's focusing on the disciples. So, as we read this, what we begin to understand is that God is calling us. And that calling is a very unique calling. It's bizarre as we've been going through the Gospel of Luke, there are so many things that are not like us. And of course, one of the reasons why when we come as God calls, we have to repent. We have to think differently because we don't think like Him.

We come to this passage and He is calling these that are, I mean, just such a mixture of individuals that you would

never think that they would ever come together, tax collectors, fishermen, or whatever; though they are basically in the same region, the individuals that we have are very unique and very different. Yet they come together to do a work for the sake of the kingdom. A very unique work, might I add. And the way that they do the work, the way that they proclaim the message, is that they're not necessarily trying to convince people to change; they're just believing that the power of the message itself will change them. So, He tells them, "Go into these towns," and "As you go into these towns, proclaim this message, proclaim the gospel." And it says that they went about preaching the gospel.

If you look in Luke 9:6 in particular,

"Departing, they began going throughout the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere."

The healing everywhere, of course, was the display of what the message was about. And clearly, the gospel is the good news of God. And all you have to do is go back to Luke 4 as Jesus begins to proclaim what the message is all about, and that is to cause the blind to see, free the

prisoners, and preach good news to those that are poor. What a wonderful gospel it is, good news.

The transformation that takes place in the lives of those caused them to want to be devoted to God. I mean, you find something that actually works, then you're transformed. And as you look at the beginning of Chapter 8, you even see women, some like Mary Magdalene, who have been possessed by 7 demons, become a follower of Christ. And they're attached forever because of the validity of the message. It's not just something that somebody's talking about. It actually works. People's lives are changed. And once you begin to see the power of the gospel, you'll never go back to anything else. You'll never see any other method, any other program to have any validity but the gospel. Because you realize that when you proclaim the gospel, you not only fix the initial problem, but you also fix eternal problems. And what a wonderful message it is.

So, He calls out these twelve. And at the very beginning of Chapter 9, we see Him with this calling. He calls out the twelve, and they come. And He gives them this power to

do all these marvelous works and all these marvelous powers in this particular region. Now, we know it's largely around the Sea of Galilee. So, as you're looking at this, different sections are actually controlled by different rulers. A large part of the area is actually controlled by Herod Antipas, or Herod the Tetrarch, which means that he's in charge of like 4 quarters. However, by the time that this Herod is in control, he just has two. But you realize that he has a force that he's in control of, and it's mainly on the west side of the Sea of Galilee. And then as you go a little bit further south down towards the Dead Sea, he's in control of Perea. So, as you go down there, you realize that he has this kind of control. And then there's Philip, his brother; they have other control. The point of the matter is that it's a hostile territory. And these that Christ is sending out are going out into that hostility.

I think of the passage that Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 16:9, his statement to the Corinthians is,

“For a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.”

You would not put the two together, a wide and effectual door and adversaries as being the same. But it shows that it's not the adversaries that hold us back from doing our ministry. That when God opens the door, it's His Spirit that opens the door, and we listen to Him. As these disciples listened to Christ, we listen to the Spirit of God, not to the circumstances that are surrounding us. Because things were not good, especially with the Herods. I mean, all you have to do is go back to Herod the Great, and just to kind of mention what kind of wonderful fellow he was, Herod the Great murdered his sister's husband, murdered his wife's grandfather, his wife, her mother, her two sons, and oh yeah, wanted to slay every child in Bethlehem that was two years and under. We understand that he also killed 46 of the Sanhedrin, slayed them. And at the time where he was getting ready to die, which was shortly after the birth of Christ, he actually gathered together Jewish dignitaries in the region of Jericho, had them all locked up, and he gave orders, "When I die, kill them all, so that I will be mourned on this day." Because he knew that people wouldn't mourn him, but he did want people crying on the day that he died. This is the surrounding

influence. And the son of Herod the Great, of course, was Herod Antipas. And he's in control of the region of Galilee. And at this juncture, as is already kind of interrupted in Luke 9:7-9, in clear Luke fashion, what he does is, he interrupts the text.

If you look at Luke 9:1-6, you have the disciples going out, and they're preaching the message, and they're doing all the things that Christ has called them to do, and He's basically telling them what to do in that particular passage. He interrupts the text, and we go immediately to Herod and what's going on in his life. Why? Because he's letting us know about the hostile influence that's there. So, the passage is very clear that this is the guy that chopped off the head of John the Baptist. He betrayed his own brother. And ultimately, he will try to hunt down Christ. How do we know that?

Well, if you look with me in Luke 13, if you come towards the end of the chapter in verse 31,

(Luke 13:31) “Just at that time some Pharisees approached, saying to Him, “Go away, leave here...”

I don't know how yours reads, but mine reads,

“... for Herod wants to kill You.”

(Luke 13:32) And He said to them, “Go and tell that fox,”

that conniving, manipulative, sly individual,

“Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach My goal.”

(Luke 13:33) Nevertheless I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next day; for it cannot be that a prophet would perish outside of Jerusalem.”

Now, what Jesus was saying is, “I know he's trying to kill Me. But I don't want to die here because the prophecy is that I die in Jerusalem.” So, once again, Jesus is not afraid of dying. He's just saying, “I can't die here.” But He knew that Herod was trying to kill him.

It'll be the same Herod, if you look with me in Luke 23, that Jesus will ultimately stand before as this particular Herod, Herod Antipas, has been trying to see Him. And it says within the passage that Pilate, ultimately at the time of crucifixion of Christ, hands Him over to Herod because of the fact that, “Okay, He's maybe a Galilean, so I'll put

Him in his jurisdiction." So, that begins to happen. And Herod's glad about this.

It says in Luke 23:8,

"Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him."

Always considering entertainment as a desire.

"Luke 23:9) "And he questioned Him at some length; but He answered him nothing.

(Luke 23:10) And the chief priests and the scribes were standing there, accusing Him vehemently.

(Luke 23:11) And Herod with his soldiers, after treating Him with contempt and mocking Him, dressed Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate."

This is the Herod, and this is where Jesus sends them out.

If you look with me in Luke 10, Jesus will send out 70 others.

And He makes this statement, if you drop on down to verse 3,

(Luke 10:3) “Go; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.”

Once again, my point is that these are hostile surroundings. Nothing is working well, and it doesn't seem like a really good time to send out your people to go minister. He will send them, I believe, a large part into the region that's called the Decapolis, which are basically 10 of the Jewish towns or cities which are a little bit to the southeast of Galilee. And in that particular region, it'll be largely Greeks because the Decapolis are the 10 Greek cities in that particular region around Galilee. And they'll go in there.

What's interesting about that is, if you look with me in particular in Luke 9:10, it says that the apostles returned. And in their returning, which I believe they were kind of coming up from the southern end, from the Decapolis area, and they come up a little bit higher and one of the Decapolis cities is probably only about 10 miles from Bethsaida, and Bethsaida is where they end up meeting.

And the text reads this way,

(Luke 9:10) “When the apostles returned, they gave an account to Him of all that they had done. Taking them with Him, He withdrew by Himself to a city called Bethsaida.”

Bethsaida is kind of on the northern end of Galilee, kind of on the eastern side, which would kind of then go down as you go down to the Decapolis and the different cities that are there.

What's interesting about this city is, if you ever read John 1, is we realize that Andrew, Peter, and Philip as well come from this town, Bethsaida. And the name itself just means house of fish. And so, it was right on the coast there of Galilee, and it was the place in which oftentimes these fishermen came from, and many of those that were close to Christ were from there. What's interesting about it is that there is a large influx of Greeks as well. And the reason I say that's interesting is because Peter, strangely enough, had a hard time accepting Gentiles. We know that as you go into the Book of Acts in particular. And then you go into Galatians and you see his struggle with even sitting with the Jews. He wants to sit with the Jews,

but not with the Gentiles. So, you see him wrestling with that. Of course, God will send him this great sign and says, "When I say it's clean, it's clean, and you must go." And he'll actually be the founder of that first Gentile church with Cornelius. Nevertheless, it takes a lot of convincing. What's interesting about that is that his brother, Andrew, is very accepting of Greeks. And as you read in the Gospel of John in particular, the Greeks will come to Andrew and Philip, who are very accepting of Greeks, and they'll be the ones that introduce the Greeks to Jesus but Peter's going to have a difficult time with that. It's letting us know that they're in foreign territory, and many of the people that Peter, as he's one of the disciples, is going to be ministering to are people that he feels a little skittish about. So, we have this ministry setting in which they're going out and ministering to people that they may or may not like and possibly have a little bit of desire to avoid, as well as going into a territory that's extremely hostile.

When I think of ministry, I oftentimes think that most people when they talk about ministry, are looking for the planets to align. And as long as it's not Friday the 13th,

and as long as it's not a full moon, and as long as they actually feel good, you know how people go, "I'm just not feeling like it today. stomach's a little upset; cholesterol is a little high. I don't think I'll go out and try to tackle anything really big." But in the passage, none of these issues can come up because Jesus just sends them out and they come back and report. It's an amazing text because what you're seeing within the passage is that they're animated by the command of Jesus. They're not animated by anything else. And the world is moved by a lot of other things. I mean, when you consider why the world does what it does, they're talking about schedules, time restraints, and itineraries. "Can you do this?" "Well, I don't know." People don't have Rolodex anymore, do they? But anyway, "Let's just look at my schedule." And they think in those kind of terms. "You know, maybe I'll do it if I find the time to do it."

When you think of a passage such as Matthew 22, you remember the king gives a wedding feast, and then he sends his men and he says, "Tell them to come." And of course, a lot of the guys don't come, and he goes, "Okay,

kill them." You go, "Wow, that's pretty desperate." Yeah, but it was the king that commanded it. And I think we have a low perspective of who it is that's calling us to do what it is. We are saved by grace. I get that. But grace doesn't mean license. Grace means, in fact, the way that it's put in Hebrews, how should we escape if we have so great a salvation? I mean, by the fact that we're actually saved by grace puts a greater responsibility on us, not a lesser one. For it was His love. I mean, why would you crucify again to open shame the One who saved you? And so, there is a devotion that goes beyond the law. There's a devotion that we are compelled, as Paul will say, "The love of Christ compels me." And the things that he does, I mean, "We were beaten. So many times we were shipwrecked and stoned," and what he begins to describe are things that he willingly walked into for the sake of the gospel, and you realize, okay, he's not being held back by his schedules or itineraries, the things that he's doing.

There's another passage in Luke 14 in particular where a man was giving a big dinner and he invited many. Same fundamental principle that goes into it. And of course,

people began to make excuses within that particular text. And you see that everybody has an excuse for not doing what they really don't want to do. But if in fact this is something that is a part of your life, you can't refuse it. It's the Spirit of God that calls and you have to go. The same thing is true with physical cravings. And what you're going to see within this passage is that there are going to be all these kind of things that are coming into play that you would say should hamper ministry in some way. And Luke's going to be focusing on, "They're not going to. God's not going to let them." And you're going to see the hand of Christ go, "You do this."

So, as we read the passage, if we pick up, it's clearly letting us know, of course, verses 7 through 9, that Herod's in the neighborhood. Let me just put it in geographical context. We know that Herod has a palace down in Machaerus. Now, Machaerus, if you have your little map there, goes down to the Dead Sea and off to the east of the Dead Sea is this very rocky terrain. And he actually built a palace there. Well, there was a palace there, and he kind of added to it. The palace itself was

about the size of a football field, and it has walls that go up to 30 feet. And he's on kind of the side of a cliff, so the palace itself is on the side of a cliff. It actually overlooks the Dead Sea, and from that position, he feels pretty safe. His walls are 30 feet high, and he's still on a cliff, so nobody's going to touch him. This is where he beheads John the Baptist, in this area. Josephus tells us this. But he rules this particular area, but he also rules in Galilee. And the place that he also ruled and probably spent the most of his time was Tiberius, that city that he built so that he could get close or on the good side of the Caesar Tiberius. So, he builds this city in a few short years, massive place, and he puts his palace there. Well, that's only about 5, 10 miles at the most, away from where the disciples are in Bethsaida. So, he's very close to them.

And the reason I bring that up, too, is that there's a parallel passage, if you look with me in John 6, the parallel passage of this feeding of the 5,000. And it's interesting that John will actually refer to the Sea of Galilee as "the Sea of Tiberias". He'll first mention it's the Sea of Galilee, then in a parenthetical phrase, he'll say, "the Sea of

Tiberias,” which is letting us know that Herod is already claiming the territory.

The way that it reads in John 6:1,

“After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias).

(John 6:2) A large crowd followed Him...”

And we'll see that within the passage that we're looking at as well. And it is in this context, of course, the multitudes that are following Him, that He questions Philip, because Philip is probably the most approachable when it comes to the foreigners, i.e. the Greeks. So, it'll be Philip that'll ask, “How are we going to feed this great company of people?” And of course, Philip will do the bean counting thing in verse 7,

(John 6:7) “... “Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient...”

And then the other acceptable disciple, the one who receives Greeks is Andrew.

And you see in verse 8,

(John 6:8) "One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him,

(John 6:9) "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish..."

So, the passage is putting it in a setting.

What's interesting to me is, if you drop on down in verse 22, it says,

(John 6:22) "The next day the crowd that stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other small boat there, except one, and that Jesus had not entered with His disciples into the boat, but that His disciples had gone away alone.

(John 6:23) There came **other** small boats from Tiberias..."

I know that's just a small phrase, but what do you think is happening? Herod's sending out people to find out what's going on. He's in control of this city, Tiberius, and he wants to find out what's happening. So, the fact that these disciples are being sent out in this condition, with these people surrounding this particular area, it's like Jesus is literally putting them in harm's way. Nevertheless,

this is not about schedules. It's not about restraints, time restraints. It's not about itineraries. It's not about physical cravings. As we go into the passage, what we're going to see is the need to take care of yourself, it's not about that. Ministry goes way beyond that. And when Jesus talks, you just do it.

So, the way the passage reads, if you look at me in verse 10,

(Luke 9:10) “When the apostles returned, they gave an account to Him of all that they had done. Taking them with Him, He withdrew by Himself...”

Underline the word “Himself” (privately) for me.

“... to a city called Bethsaida.”

That is to say, “the House of Fish,” the fishing village that was there, kind of had a mixed population. The word “privately” (Himself) that is used is making reference not to the fact necessarily that they were kind of secretly doing something, but actually, the word directly translated, would mean something belonging to somebody. “*Idios*” is the word that is used. So, the point

of the word is that they came together at a place that they were used to coming to because it was a place that... Well, you know how you have favorite places, and you almost say, "This is a place that belongs to me." Of course, Peter, Andrew and Philip were from this place, Bethsaida. So, on the outskirts, I'm sure they had a favorite place to go when they met. The point is that they were meeting at a place that they would oftentimes meet together, that they all knew about, and they came together for that. Now, the reason why I took a little bit of time to define that is, I would think that you might perceive that they're hiding, but they're not. They're just going to a familiar place, a place that they normally go to.

And it says,

(Luke 9:11) "But the crowds were aware of this..."

So, if you're hiding, who told everybody? And how is it that everybody knows where they're going?

"But the crowds were aware of this and followed Him; and welcoming them..."

I oftentimes think of the Gospel of Mark, and when you read the Gospel of Mark, you begin to see that, I mean, Jesus was literally inundated. And as Mark will say, His own relatives thought He was crazy. They said, "You've lost Your mind." That's a quote. "You've lost Your mind. I mean, we can't even sleep, can't eat. People are cutting holes in our roof." I mean, what do you do in a place like this? But He doesn't turn them down. He welcomes them, the passage says, which gives this ready acceptance of the people that are coming in. Man, I just am not that gracious.

"... He began speaking to them about the kingdom of God and curing those who had need of healing.

(Luke 9:12) Now the day was ending, and the twelve came and said to Him, "Send the crowd away...""

Now, before you jump on the disciples, I just want to remind you, verse 10, that they just came back from walking miles to the different cities and the surrounding cities proclaiming the message. And so, they've just come back to their favorite place to relax. In fact, Christ has called them aside, "Let's just pull aside, regroup, tell Me

about what you've done." It kind of reminds me of Acts where Paul and Barnabas got out and they go to the church and they began to report all the things that were going on, which is clearly telling us that they're getting their orders from Jesus and really nobody else. Otherwise, you'd be reporting to somebody else, right? So, the day begins to decline, and in all fairness, talk about time restraints, it's getting dark, "So, I would stay longer, talk longer, help you guys more, but it's getting late." Well, that makes sense, doesn't it? Not on Jesus' schedule. That's what's so interesting about this. So, there are no time restraints within the passage, and of course, they're probably hungry as well.

"... that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside and find lodging and get something to eat..."

"We're familiar with the town itself, so we know where they can go."

"... for here we are in a desolate place."

More specifically, he's talking about the fields of grass that they were at. It's not necessarily desert in that particular region.

“Why not let them go eat?”

(Luke 9:13) “But He said to them, “You give them something to eat!” ...”

Now, once again, the emphasis of the passage is not centered around the miracle itself, which we have a tendency to focus on the miracle. I mean, it's a great miracle. You feed 5,000, anytime you feed 5,000, that's a miracle. But that's not the focus of the passage. The focus of the passage is His apostles coming back, they're returning; they're just coming back from, I mean, a lot of work, a lot of walking, and almost immediately, as the sun's going down, He's putting them back to work.

“But He said to them, “You give them something to eat!”
And they said, “We have no more than five loaves and
two fish, unless perhaps we go and buy food for all these
people.”

Of course, Philip has already figured out the amount that might be necessary.

(Luke 9:14) “(For there were about five thousand men.)
And He said to His disciples, “Have them sit down to eat in
groups of about fifty each.””

Now, watch this very simple phrase,

(Luke 9:15) “They did so, and had them all sit down.

(Luke 9:16) Then He took the five loaves and the two fish,
and looking up to heaven, He blessed them, and broke
them, and kept giving them to the disciples...”

Why is He giving them to the disciples? Why doesn't He just make it happen that the people get whatever they need? Because He's teaching the disciples to serve. You know, discipleship is we're being discipled not to follow man, but we're being discipled to follow Christ. He's actually molding us, transforming us into His image. What does that look like? Well, what it looks like is that you minister when it's not convenient. And you minister at times where it could even be dangerous. Nevertheless, if God tells you go, what do you do? You go with it.

And as it says in verse 17,

(Luke 9:17) “And they all ate and were satisfied...”

Isn't it amazing how God satisfies everybody when we do what He tells us to do? I mean, you would think that they would be unsatisfied. One, they probably haven't had enough sleep. Two, they're pretty tired. Three, they've been serving. And somehow, they had the energy not only to serve, but then they had the fulfillment of being satisfied at the end. And I'm reminded that as the Scripture tells us, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." And certainly, these are.

Hebrews 6:10 reads this way,

"For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints."

"Well, what about me?" God's not unjust. He saw what you're doing, and He saw who you're doing it for. And there is great satisfaction.

(Luke 9:17) "And they all ate and were satisfied..."

And that which was left over, surprise upon surprises, 12 baskets. Just happened to be 12 of them in the passage,

right? So, what you have is this interesting picture of men that are sent out, and it's not the time limits, it's not the physical cravings of their own. I remember Jesus when, there He is talking to a woman at the well, and of course they say it's time to eat, and He goes, "I have food that you don't even know about." And He then goes on and says within the same passage in John 6, "Look, work for food that doesn't perish." And you begin to realize that God is able to give you energy at a time in which perhaps you, humanly speaking, wouldn't have energy. It's kind of like the testing of Christ when He's up at the mountain, I mean, 40 days, 40 nights. Where's the food? And you realize that there is a power, as Jesus will say, And Moses will say, "Man can't live by bread alone, but by every word that precedes out of the mouth." Did God tell you to do something? "I don't know. You know, once again, the planets haven't aligned. I'm feeling a little queasy. It's a little difficult time. I'm not really feeling it." Sometimes we actually use that excuse, "You know, I'm just not feeling it." And when God gives opportunity and God calls, you've just got to do what He tells you to do. That's part of being a disciple. It's part of the calling as well. And

it's not a convenience or it's not an emotional inclination in that regard.

There's a passage that's always meant a lot to me in Luke 17, if you turn there with me. And I know we've read it several times, but it's just a good reminder. And let me say this, if you don't have this one marked or circled or underlined, do something to remind you of just what we're called to do.

So, it says this,

Luk 17:5) “The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!””

Of course, everybody wants to grow closer to God. We wouldn't think that faith is based on our service, but it is.

(Luke 17:6) “And the Lord said, “If you had faith like a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and be planted in the sea’; and it would obey you.””

We won't go into the depths of that particular verse, but that's a great, great example.

(Luke 17:7) “Which of you, having a slave plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come immediately and sit down to eat?’

(Luke 17:8) But will he not say to him, ‘Prepare something for me to eat, and properly clothe yourself and serve me while I eat and drink; and afterward you may eat and drink?’

(Luke 17:9) He does not thank the slave because he did the things which were commanded, does he?

(Luke 17:10) So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, ‘We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.’””

That's a different way of thinking, isn't it? "Wait a minute, we've been working all this time. We need a break." No, no, you can't say that. You've made yourself a follower of Christ. If He tells you to do something, you're going to do it. And you're not going to think of yourself. That's an unusual calling when you consider that we're very much into the whole realm of convenience, and we're very much into preference and our emotional state of being. And let me just say something else as well. We're very

much into security and safety. I mean, if in fact we feel like we could endanger ourselves or endanger people that we love. I think probably one of the things that spoke to me most, there was a Dr. Cook, and it's unusual because the president of Biola University was a Dr. Cook, but this was another Dr. Cook; and he would come in about, I would say, once every year and share about some of his mission work. Anyway, one of the places that he had gone to, and his family, was in a place where there were hostile people. And they would eat humans. So, it was a pretty hostile place. He brought his family into that and lost, by virtue of the hostility, five of his children. And he would share. And then he said, "But the Lord told us to go back." And as they went back, the tribe began to change, and souls were saved. Now, what person would do that? We are servants of God. We do not have the option to think about safety. We do not have the option to think about security. If that were true, this is not the place to do the ministry. You don't want to be 5, 10 miles away from Tiberius. You don't want to be there. Nevertheless, there they are.

John 11, if you look there with me, Jesus decides it's time to head on to Judea. And we know that bad things were happening at that time in Judea.

Jesus will make the statement, if you look in John 11:7, "Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go..."

I like that "let us go" type of thing, right? "Whose idea is this?" "All of ours."

"... "Let us go to Judea again.""

Watch how the disciples respond.

(John 11:8) "The disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone You, and are You going there again?"

(John 11:9) Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world.

(John 11:10) But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

He said, "We've got to go."

Of course, Thomas kind of got it when you read in verse 16,

(John 11:16) "Therefore Thomas, who is called Didymus (twin), said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, so that we may die with Him.""

As you're reading that, are we reading into any kind of sense of safety that we have to regard? I mean, how many times has maybe that held you back from ministering to somebody? Maybe, in fact, the person that you're ministering to looks diseased? "I don't want to catch anything." Look, if you and I catch something and we die from it when we're ministering, what a way to go! Isn't that the greatest? Isn't that the way you want to go? I'd like to go that way. I don't want to go just sitting around watching TV. I mean, we're going to go, right? I want to go serving the Lord in some way. And so, what he's talking about is that "We're going to do this. It doesn't matter about the security. It doesn't matter about the lack of security. We're going to go."

And let me just add one more thing. We're going to go no matter whether we have the means to go or not. And this

is a very important issue that I oftentimes hound upon. If God calls you, you don't wait for support. Now, I know that's the way it's done. I get it. I understand that. But it was very clear that when He called His disciples, "Don't take a bag, don't try to get the money, don't worry about the support, you go to the house and say, 'Who's worthy?'"

I remember when we first started the church, and we never had anybody that had any money, first of all, which, you know, we were just ministering to people that had needs. And there was just no way that we were going to have support, except it was going to have to come from God in some way. But the compulsion was so strong, because I knew I didn't want to do it. But if I felt so compelled to do something that I didn't want to do, that it had to be God, right? And, man, I could tell you story upon story of how God just took care of us. "The just will live by faith." What does that mean? That doesn't mean that we sit down and we figure out practical supply, financial support. That doesn't say that. There's nothing in the text that says anything about that. I know, once again,

we live in a world that that's what it's all about. You minister if you have money. And that's why people send you all those letters for support, because what do they need? "We can't minister until you send the money." That's not true. You can go talk to somebody about the gospel if you have no money. Silver or gold have I none, but this I have in the name of the Lord. We've bought into this whole concept that everything has to be perfect for us to go into service. And that's not calling. The calling of Christ is, "Go. You do it." "Well, I don't know how these people are going to be fed." "Just start doing it." I mean, that's fundamentally what He says. Oh, you can see Philip counting the money, "I don't know, you guys haven't given the way you should have." You know, and there's the lack, and he goes, "Forget about it. What do we have?" He starts breaking this stuff apart. This is a lesson for these disciples. They're going to learn to walk by faith, and they're going to learn to put their trust in God. How can we preach from this pulpit that you need to walk by faith if we're not walking by faith? The thing that I appreciate about every one of our pastors is that they quit good jobs or they quit certain things in their lives at a

loss to them to come into a ministry that they didn't know whether or not we were going to support them or not. I mean, they literally were working for nothing. But if you're not willing to work for nothing, you're not going to work for God. Because God is a supplier of your needs.

If you turn with me to 2 Corinthians in particular, it's this fundamental truth that Paul's going to bring out. 2 Corinthians 9.

It writes this way,

(2 Corinthians 9:6) “Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.”

(2 Corinthians 9:7) “Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

(2 Corinthians 9:8) “And God is able...”

Sometimes we think, “I don't think God's able to do this.” “And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything...”

I mean, that literally covers all the bases.

“... you may have an abundance for every good deed.”

If He sends you out to do something, is He going to supply? That's what that says.

(2 Corinthians 9:9) “As it is written,

“HE SCATTERED ABROAD, HE GAVE TO THE POOR,

HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ENDURES FOREVER.”

(2 Corinthians 9:10) Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness;

(2 Corinthians 9:11) you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God.”

Is God going to take care of you? It's an interesting calling. It's bizarre, but we are animated not by perfection of circumstances. We are animated by, “Go.” We hear the voice; He sends us out. We don't know how they're going to be fed. He goes, “You feed them.” “How are we going to do that?” “You feed them.” And we obey what He says. And He begins to supply it. We're not afraid about our

security and our safety. We're not wearing masks at a time where everybody's wired. If you need to help somebody, help them. They might breathe on you. But that's okay. God's in control of the breath.

This is directly tied to 2 Corinthians 10, and I just want to emphasize verses 3 through 5,

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh,

(2 Corinthians 10:4) for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

(2 Corinthians 10:5) We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing...”

Now, I want to stop there. What speculations are we destroying? Well, “*logismos*” is the word that he used within the passage, and it's basically dealing with reasonings. What is he talking about? Well, he's talking about, you know how God sends you to do something, and then you start reasoning, going, “I don't know, seems like a bad time. I don't know it's something that really

needs to be done. It's not convenient, or there's a problem there that's a little scary for me," and we begin to talk ourselves out of something? His point is that we're destroying speculations, and it's interesting, "and every lofty thing". You see the word "lofty" thing? It's actually a word for building up walls and barriers. And what it's talking about is that it's a barrier that we build up to keep us from doing God's will. A very interesting picture. We're destroying anything that we build up that would keep us from doing God's will. That's really what he's talking about.

"... raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."

In other words, what is it that motivates us? Christ, His Word. What does Scripture say? It says this, "We'll do it." "Eh, it's not going to be easy." We're not asking you if it's going to be easy. We're just saying that's what He told us to do. And that's what motivates us. That's what animates us and directs us to do what we do. It's the very lesson that He's going to be teaching the disciples, and it's the very lesson that you and I have to learn. Do we always do

that? No. I struggle with this all the time. I mean, I hear the voice of God, and I know what needs to be done. I mean, John will say, "You have a brother that has a need; you can't close your heart." And James will say, "You can't say to him, 'Be warm, be filled, be clothed.'" So, I know what I have to do in my head, but am I always feeling it? No, I'm tired. I'm getting old. I mean, I have a list of excuses probably longer than you guys. But you hear the voice of God, and He says, "Do it." I mean, how many times have all of us, and I think many of us have served this way; we didn't have the money to do it, but God says, "You've got to help that person." I don't know where I'm going to get the money, and somehow, we're able to help them in some way that maybe it didn't involve money itself, but we were able to help them just because we felt the calling; we felt the leading. You're going to go into dangerous territory. You're going to go into times that maybe the Lord's going to call you. I don't know. I mean, He doesn't call everybody to go into dangerous places. But if He did, would you go? Or would you make excuses?

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today and we give You thanks for the calling that's upon us. What a wonderful privilege it is that God of the universe would call us to work together with Him, with You; what a wonderful calling that is. Nevertheless, when it comes right down to the brass tacks, Father, we have to admit that old flesh comes in, and we start building up walls that keep us from the obedience of Christ. We start speculating in our minds, "Well, that doesn't work. It's not going to work out. It's not going to be easy. It's going to be scary. I don't have the ability, I don't have the time," and You tell us to destroy every one of those walls, that You're the supplier, and You'll supply all of our needs according to Your riches and glory. If You've called us, then faithful are You who will make it come to pass. Father, we come to You in simplicity today, and we lay our lives before You. We call ourselves Christians, followers of Christ. And so, we are. We will listen to Your voice. If You command us, we will do what You tell us. And strangely enough, we will walk away more satisfied than we've ever been before.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed. Jesus never calls His disciples to an easy road. He even told them, “I send you out as lambs to be slaughtered by wolves.” He'll tell them, “Take up a cross. Follow Me. Foxes have holes, the birds have nests, not the Son of man.” But there's something compelling because Father, we know that Your way is best and You changed our lives. We cannot refuse You. We can do no other but obey You. With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, we're asking you to make that commitment to Him, not to this church, not to this pastor, but to Him. And if you hear His voice, come. If you hear His voice and He tells you to go, go. If He tells you to do something, whether or not you seem to have all of the things necessary to accomplish it, go. Let God supply your needs according to His riches. Just a side note, if He doesn't tell you to go, don't. Don't go in your own power, don't go in your own strength. Listen to Him.