

JESUS' TEACHINGS ON DISCIPLESHIP

BIBLE TEXT : Matthew 17:14-21; Luke 9:51-62

LESSON 115 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Matthew 17:14-21 (KJV)

¹⁴ And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a *certain* man, kneeling down to him, and saying,

¹⁵ Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

¹⁶ And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

¹⁷ Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.

¹⁸ And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

¹⁹ Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?

²⁰ And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

²¹ Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

Luke 9:51-62 (KJV)

⁵¹ And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,

⁵² And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

A Father's Prayer

Jesus, with Peter, James, and John, came down from the mountain where He had been transfigured. They were met by the other disciples and a multitude, out of which came a man who knew which one was the Lord. The man, seeking mercy, knelt before Him. He had gone to Jesus in behalf of his only child (Luke 9:38). The boy was possessed of the devil and was in such misery that he probably could not pray for himself. His mind was tormented, and at times he fell into the fire and sometimes into the water.

Some children do not appreciate their praying parents. No one knows just what would have happened to this boy if his father had not cared for him, taken him to Jesus, and prayed for him when he was in no condition to pray for himself. There are people today who have the same testimony that this boy could have given: their parents took them to Jesus in prayer, and God broke the chains of sin and delivered them. If you have godly parents, you should feel that you are blest of God. Be thankful for them.

The Right Source

The father took his son to the right person when he took the boy to Jesus. The instruction to the sick today is to go to Jesus. When one is sick he can be healed by having the ministers pray for him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord (James 5:14, 15).

The man was disappointed because the disciples could not heal the child (Luke 9:40) ; and perhaps it caused his faith to waver. In desperation he pleaded, "If thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us" (Mark 9:22). His faith was almost gone, but Jesus encouraged him that blessings come by faith. "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23). The man realized what had hindered — the lack of faith. With tears in his eyes, he asked the Lord to help his unbelief (Mark 9:24) . As Jesus rebuked the devil, the child was healed — not gradually but immediately.

Power over the Devil

Jesus had given the disciples power to cast out devils and heal all manner of sickness and disease (Matthew 10:1), then why could they not heal the boy? Jesus rebuked them for their lack of faith. He wondered how long it would take the disciples to learn that the power was not of them but of the Lord. God had anointed Jesus with power to do good and heal all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him (Acts 10:38) .

Jesus showed the disciples that it really takes prayer and faith to have His power. He said that nothing was impossible if they had faith as a grain of mustard seed, which may be small but has many possibilities to grow and become large when the conditions are right. So it is with faith: a small amount can grow and increase. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

Jesus wanted His disciples to have faith and the power

⁵³ And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

⁵⁴ And when his disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

⁵⁵ But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

⁵⁶ For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them*. And they went to another village.

⁵⁷ And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain *man* said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

⁵⁸ And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

⁵⁹ And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

⁶⁰ Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

⁶¹ And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

⁶² And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

from Above. They had been called to spread the Gospel, and by His power people would know that they were His followers. "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils . . . they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:17, 18). Jesus told them how to get this power — by prayer and fasting.

Apparently the disciples profited by Jesus' instruction; for we read that after Jesus sent out the seventy disciples to preach, they returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name" (Luke 10:17) .

To Seek and to Save

Jesus was preparing His disciples for the day when He would be taken from them, and the spread of the Gospel would be in their hands.

As that day approached they made their way to Jerusalem. They were not received in a certain village of the Samaritans, and the people would not hear Jesus. James and John felt that the Lord should not be so treated and immediately asked for permission to destroy the people.

The Lord was well able to send down fire from Heaven to punish the people if He had seen fit to do so. At Elijah's prayer, God sent down fire to burn the sacrifices and to show the worshipers of Baal that He alone was God (I Kings 18:38, 39).

Jesus did not give His permission that the people of the Samaritan village be destroyed, for He said that it was contrary to the spirit of a Christian. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory" (Philippians 2:3). "Recompense to no man evil for evil" (Romans 12:17). "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19). Besides, Jesus' purpose was not to destroy the sinner but to give him a chance to repent and to have eternal life. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

Qualifications

Jesus was teaching them how His disciples should live and what it would take to be His disciples. There were some who could not be disciples because they could not qualify. One man hastily said that he would follow Jesus wherever the Lord went. Jesus knew that he had not counted the cost. "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him" (Luke 14:28, 29). Jesus knew that the man was like the stony-ground hearer in the parable of the sower and the seed (Matthew 13:5, 6, 20, 21) who was happy to follow Jesus until persecution or tribulation came along to test his faith. He had no depth; his experience was shallow and would soon be gone. Jesus did not tell the man that he could not follow, but Jesus showed him that it would not be an easy path. Jesus does not promise an easy way but He does promise help: "My grace is sufficient for thee" (II Corinthians 12:9). "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:13). The man had to make a choice but we do not read that he followed the Lord.

"God hath not promised skies always blue,
Flower-strewn pathways all our lives
through. God hath not promised sun
without rain,
Joy without sorrow, peace without

pain. But God hath. promised
strength, for the day, Rest for the
laborer, light on the way, Grace for
the trial, help from above, Unfailing
sympathy, undying love."

Jesus called another man to be His disciple, but the man made an excuse (Luke 9:59, 60). (Read Luke 14:16-24.) He wanted to put it off until a later time. He said that he had an earthly responsibility to his father. He did not think of his spiritual responsibility to his Heavenly Father. Jesus told him that there were others — dead in sin, who had not such a high calling — that could take care of his father when he died. But this man was entangled with the cares of this world and apparently did not obey Jesus' command: "Go thou and preach the kingdom of God." "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with . . . cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares" (Luke-21:34).

Another man said that he would follow Jesus, BUT there were some things he wanted to do first; so he hesitated. He wanted to tell his people good-bye, as though he would leave them with reluctance. This was a different spirit from that of Elisha who destroyed those things that might have called him back from following the Lord (I Kings 19:21). Elisha "burned the bridges behind him."

Unfit for the Kingdom

Jesus pointed out the seriousness of looking back to the things of the world. He did not say that "turning back" but "looking back" would Make one unfit for the kingdom of God. To look back means that one is not wholeheartedly following Jesus but has a longing in his heart for the things of the old life. In Genesis 19:26, we read what happened to Lot's wife when she looked back. Because of wickedness, God destroyed the city Of Sodom, in which Lot and his family lived. In answer to the prayers of Lot's uncle, Abraham, God warned Lot to flee for his life without looking back. We are told to "remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32) because she looked back and became a pillar of salt — a monument of disobedience. May this be a warning against looking back as well as a warning against disobedience.

God .does- not want His people to serve Him with a divided heart. "For I the LORD thy God am a jealous God" (Exodus 20:5). "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deuteronomy 6:5). Then there is no room in the heart for any other thing.

Jesus has set a high standard for His followers, and many feel like rallying to meet that standard and upholding it. The Apostle Paul said: "Let us lay aside every weight ... and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:1, 2). "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13, 14).

QUESTIONS

1. Why did not the disciples heal the boy?
2. How can one get God's power in his life?
3. Why did Jesus come to this world?
4. What does the expression mean: "burn the bridges behind you"?
5. How much of your heart does God want?
6. Mention three things from this lesson that Jesus requires of His disciples.