

Jesus had been teaching the disciples, but now, at the end of the ministry in Galilee, it was time for them to go out and do what they had seen in Him. ¹ *And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases,* ² *and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.* Luke 9:1,2

Jesus has the authority to give power and authority over all demons and to cure all diseases. Then He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. You would think it would be worded, “cast out demons and heal,” but when the kingdom of God advances it drives the demons back (10:9ⁱ). It sets captives free, thus we give more emphasis to proclaiming the Gospel than casting out demons. Mark tells us that they went out in teams of two inviting people to repent (Mark 6:7ⁱⁱ, 12ⁱⁱⁱ).

What did that feel like to suddenly have such power? Did they feel anything? Was it only until they exercised it that they realized what authority they had? Or did they feel power go from them when they healed, just as Jesus felt with the hemorrhagic woman (Luke 8:46^{iv})? It would be a heady thing to anoint a leper and see his body suddenly whole! But let us remember this power is only evidence that their proclamation of the kingdom of God is true (11:20^v). It is a kingdom consisting of the hearts of men and women who have embraced Jesus as Lord (17:20^{vi}). It is the best news of all, that God is inviting mankind to once again walk with Him through the unmerited grace granted through faith in Jesus. That is the gospel they preached in verse 6, though at this point in time they did not understand it was made possible by the death and resurrection of Jesus, but rather only that the Messiah was among them ushering in His kingdom.

³ *And he said to them, “Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics.* ⁴ *And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart.* ⁵ *And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them.”* Luke 9:3-5 They were learning to live by faith and trust that God would provide for them. That is how they had been living with Jesus. People donated to their work. They were not beggars but did receive the gifts from grateful people who were blessed by their ministry. Those who were especially interested would be hospitable and let them stay under their roof. They were learning to trust Jesus for everything. It is humbling to depend on the generosity of others. Later, they will say that during this mission they lacked nothing (22:35^{vii}). We cringe at the thought of having to live from donations, but it is how most missionaries function today. The laborer deserves his food. (Matthew 10:10^{viii}). It gives others a chance to support the ministry and thereby be blessed with a heavenly reward.

They were to stay with the first host who offered them lodging and move on when their welcome wore out or mission was accomplished. That may have been to keep them from moving to nicer accommodations if it were offered. The hungry souls, whether rich or poor, are equally in need of hearing the Gospel.

If a town refuses to hear the message, they were to shake off the dust of their feet as a testimony against them. When Jews left other lands and entered back into Israel, they would shake the dust off their clothes. The idea was that God would judge the unbelievers, so they did not want the dust of the land that God was going to judge upon them so that none of the judgment would affect them. The shocking thing was that these were their fellow Jews who thought that all of Abraham's descendants were destined for

heaven. The dramatic demonstration testified that those who would not listen had rejected the message that could save them from judgment. It would cause those who saw it to reconsider what they heard. When we witness to others we need to let them know there are dire consequences for rejecting the good news of Jesus.

⁶ And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere. Luke 9:6 They must have divided up the regions of Israel to cover as much as possible. What an effect that must have had. In fact, when they returned, and Jesus heard their report He said, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (10:18^{ix}).

I never thought deeply about this passage until preparing for this sermon. Think of how that would have affected the nation. If a pair of men came to our town and healed everyone who was sick or demented, and we heard news of it happening in other towns, you would hope we'd listen to their message. Imagine the cancer ward cleared out, and those who suffering with chronic diseases completely cured. I would think we'd be clinging to every word they taught about their rabbi, the Messiah. It was the turning point for the nation. When the church began to spread, communities of believers in the Messiah were rejected and ridiculed by the Jews who did not accept Him. From that time forward there would be only two groups of Jews. Forget about orthodox or reformed or Kabala, there are only Jews who accept their Messiah and those who don't (Galatians 6:16^x).

⁷ Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was happening, and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had been raised from the dead, *⁸ by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen.* *⁹ Herod said, "John I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?"* *And he sought to see him.* *¹⁰ On their return the apostles told him all that they had done.* Luke 9:7-10a One of the effects of the disciples proclaiming the kingdom everywhere was the rumors of who Jesus was. Even the ruler of the region, Herod the tetrarch, was perplexed by the news he was hearing. He had executed John. Was John back more powerful than before?

Some people thought Jesus was Elijah. Malachi predicted Elijah would return to ready people for the day of the Lord (Malachi 4:5^{xi}). Even in Passover meals today, the Jews set a place for Elijah and look out the door to see if he is coming. Jesus declared that the prophecy was speaking of John the Baptist (Matthew 11:14^{xii}). Or perhaps He was Jeremiah who was known to weep, or one of the other prophets like Isaiah or Ezekiel.

The question was one they needed to ask themselves. It is one we need to ask as well. Who raises the dead? Who speaks to nature and it obeys? Whose touch makes a person whole? Herod Antipas wanted to see Him who did such things. Herod seemed to be curious of the spiritual and yet unable to be free of his bondage to carnal desires.

The disciples were proclaiming the Good News. The kingdom was at hand. After Pentecost the message would be even clearer. Jesus is the message. He is the love of God expressed to the world. If we see Him, we see the Father (John 14:9^{xiii}). We don't preach how to have a better life. We preach Jesus, and ourselves as servants representing Him (2Corinthians 4:5^{xiv}). We preach His victory over death and His promise to raise us as well (1 Corinthians 6:14^{xv}). We preach forgiveness to all who will receive Him because of His sacrifice in our place. Our lives surrendered to Jesus' life in us should cause others to ask, "Who is this man or woman?" That is not because we are special, but because the One who is in us is. How urgent it is that we speak more of Him! Let us be increasingly yielded to His life in us. He is the message! He is the only hope for all mankind.

10b And he took them and withdrew apart to a town called Bethsaida. Luke 9:10b Bethsaida is on the northeastern shore of Galilee. Another site was thought to be the ancient town and even made into a national park, but recently archeologists have found evidence that confirms another site closer to the edge of the lake. Five of the disciples came from this one fishing village. It was just outside Herod's jurisdiction.

11 When the crowds learned it, they followed him, and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing. Luke 9:11 Mark tells us that Jesus had taken the disciples here from Capernaum so that they could rest. The crowds were so demanding that they couldn't even find time to eat (Mark 6:30,31^{xvi}). From the docks at Capernaum and the shoreline all the way Bethsaida, the crowd could have seen the route of the boat. They followed along on land and met the boat when it arrived. Jesus didn't complain that He and the disciples were tired. Instead, He welcomed them. They had made the effort to walk those eight miles to hear more from Jesus and He honored their effort. Then He did just what the disciples had been sent out to do. He spoke of the kingdom of God and healed the sick.

Kent Hughes described the activities in his commentary: *He preached at great length (as the Greek suggests) on the same positive kingdom theme that the apostles had been preaching. Using Old Testament exposition, original parables, and brilliant reason, he heralded the kingdom, the sovereign reign of God. He called them to kingdom living, kingdom ethics (cf. Luke 6:20ff.), and humility and repentance. The kingdom was theirs for the taking! He invited them to enter that kingdom and did miracles to confirm that the kingdom had come (cf. Luke 11:20).*^{xvii}

12 Now the day began to wear away, and the twelve came and said to him, "Send the crowd away to go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging and get provisions, for we are here in a desolate place." Luke 9:12 Above Bethsaida is a lowland area through which a creek runs down to the lake. The creek source is further up a gradually ascending plain to the edge of the Golan Heights. There were no villages in the area and Bethsaida was too small a village to handle so many people. It had been another long day of ministry for Jesus and the disciples, so the disciples asked Jesus to send them away to get food and lodging before it got too late.

13 But he said to them, "You give them something to eat." They said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we are to go and buy food for all these people." *14 For there were about five thousand men.* Luke 9:13,14a Jesus' response must have shocked them. "You give them something to eat." A little boy had shared his lunch with the disciples (John 6:8,9^{xviii}). It consisted of five barley rolls and two little salted fish. The little boy could have eaten the whole thing but seeing the miracles of healing and hearing Jesus teach must have touched his heart to give the food to the disciples.

The disciples then offered a practical solution. They could run to Bethsaida and try to buy as much as they could afford. John's account says they didn't have enough money to make a dent in the need before them (John 6:7^{xix}). That's because there were about five thousand men plus women and children. There could easily have been fifteen thousand people in total.

Jesus was perhaps alluding to 2 Kings 4:42-44^{xx} where Elisha commanded his servant to feed a hundred men with twenty loaves of bread. His servant asked, "How can I do that?" Elisha told him, "The LORD says: 'They will eat and have some left over.'"

One greater than Elisha was teaching His disciples about our insufficiency and His all-sufficiency.

Mark referred to this location as a desolate place (Mark 6:32^{xxi}). The Greek word is used for a desert. Another analogy we can see in the wording is Moses in the wilderness asking for God to feed the multitude, and God's answer of manna coming from heaven. One greater than Moses was present. (John 6:31^{xxii}, 58^{xxiii}; Exodus 16)

^{14b} And he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." ¹⁵ And they did so, and had them all sit down. Luke 9:14b,15 Jesus had challenged their faith and their compassion. They had thought of only natural resources. Now Jesus will show them supernatural resources. First, He had the disciples organize the crowd into groups of fifty. It would be easier to distribute the food that way. Jesus already knows what He is about to do and has complete faith that it will be done, for He is one with Jehovah Jireh (Genesis 22:14^{xxiv}), God the Provider (Philippians 4:19^{xxv}).

¹⁶ And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. ^{17a} And they all ate and were satisfied. Luke 9:16,17a I've always wondered how that took place. *After he broke the bread and fishes into pieces, he "gave" (literally "kept giving," imperfect tense) them to the disciples. Jesus kept producing the bread and fish in his hands by the supernatural power of God.* - C. Marvin Pate "The pieces grew under his touch, and the disciples always found his hands full when they came back with their own empty" (Maclaren). Jesus kept creating tons of barley cakes and fish between the palms of his hands. That was creation power at work!

But how He did it is not the point. Jesus is showing His all-sufficiency. In doing so He is also showing He can meet the spiritual hunger of the world. He alone is complete satisfaction for the soul of everyone who will receive Him as the bread of life.

In John's gospel, the first sermon after this event Jesus declared that He is the bread that came down from heaven (John 6:35^{xxvi}). In that sermon Jesus taught that manna was a foreshadow of Himself. Think about the profound depth of that statement. We are walking through the wilderness of this life. We would all spiritually starve if God did not send us bread from heaven that we could collect each day to feed our souls on the way to the Promised Land. Jesus is not just greater than Moses, He is heaven's sent sustenance for our souls, and not for ours alone but for all who will open their Bibles in faith or their hearts in prayer and hear enough from Him for each day.

Think of this in the flow of (the last chapter in) Luke. Jesus is the Lord of nature, so that the raging sea calms at his command (Luke 8:22-25^{xxvii}). He is the Lord of supernature, casting out evil spirits, again with a word (Luke 8:26-39). He is the Lord of providence, ordering the tapestry of life (its times, its meetings) to accomplish his will (Luke 8:40-56). He is the Lord of life as he restores a woman's health (Luke 8:40-48) and the Lord of death as he raises a young girl to life (Luke 8:49-56).

Now here he is the Lord of creation. This miracle was not ex nihilo (out of nothing), but it might as well have been, because material creation flowed from his hands just as the universe itself had. "For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together" Colossians 1:16, 17.^{xxviii} Kent Hughes

17b And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets of broken pieces. Luke 9:17b Once everyone had their fill, the Lord asked the disciples to pick up what was left over (John 6:12^{xxix}). People had so much they didn't ask for a take home bag but left it on the ground. All twelve of the disciples' baskets were completely filled. Some have speculated that this implies Jesus is sufficient for the twelve tribes of Israel. In other words, He is the bread of life for all Israel, while the feeding of the 4000 with seven baskets left over implied that He is sufficient for the spiritual needs for all the nations of the world (Mark 8:5-8^{xxx}).

I wonder if the full baskets were a personal sign to the apostles, that Jesus is more than enough for their every need (Mark 8:19-21^{xxxi}). The miracle took place after Jesus told them to give them something to eat. They had said they only had a little amount that was given them. Jesus showed them they each had a full basket because they have Him. There is a Proverb that says that the one who gives out what he has will have plenty, but the one who withholds suffers want (Proverbs 11:24^{xxxii}).

Do you hear the Spirit say, "You give them something to eat"? Share Jesus with the spiritually starving. Put yourself in Jesus' hands and you won't run out of things to share with people or people to share with, nor will you lose anything in the process. In fact, you'll have more than when you started. Do you only have a little boy's lunch of spiritual nourishment? Thank God for it and start giving it out. You give them something to eat and you'll find you end up with a basket full of leftovers that will be more than enough to satisfy you. Don't let any of it go to waste. Make notes of what you have seen of Jesus, the truth that the Holy Spirit is teaching you from Scripture.

There are some Christians who misuse the concept and say that God will satisfy your every desire. Want a Rolls Royce? Ask Jesus! But Jesus meets all our *need* not all our wants or desires (Philippians 4:19; 1Thessalonians 5:18^{xxxiii}). And every good gift comes from Him (James 1:17^{xxxiv}). He graciously provides us all good things (Romans 8:32^{xxxv}). But remember that He only gives us what is good for us. He knows what will distract us from His life in us. If we need a time of hunger or discipline, He will faithfully provide. Let us give thanks for all that He gives, for He gives us what we need.

Questions

- 1 Why did Jesus give the Apostles power to heal?
- 2 Why were they to take nothing with them?
- 3 What did shaking off the dust mean?
- 4 Why was this a huge shift in the nation?
- 5 In what way is our message the same?
- 6 Why did they go to a desolate place?
- 7 Why didn't Jesus turn them away?
- 8 How was the need met?
- 9 What does it tell us?
- 10 How can we experience this concept?

ⁱ **Luke 10:9 (ESV)**

⁹ Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'

ⁱⁱ **Mark 6:7 (ESV)**

⁷ And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Mark 6:12 (ESV)**

¹² So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent.

^{iv} **Luke 8:46 (ESV)**

⁴⁶ But Jesus said, "Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me."

^v **Luke 11:20 (ESV)**

²⁰ But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

^{vi} **Luke 17:20 (ESV)**

²⁰ Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed,

^{vii} **Luke 22:35 (ESV)**

³⁵ And he said to them, "When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?" They said, "Nothing."

^{viii} **Matthew 10:10 (ESV)**

¹⁰ no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his food.

^{ix} **Luke 10:18 (ESV)**

¹⁸ And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

^x **Galatians 6:16 (ESV)**

¹⁶ And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

^{xi} **Malachi 4:5 (ESV)**

⁵ "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.

^{xii} **Matthew 11:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴ and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come.

^{xiii} **John 14:9 (ESV)**

⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

^{xiv} **2 Corinthians 4:5 (ESV)**

⁵ For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

^{xv} **1 Corinthians 6:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴ And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.

^{xvi} **Mark 6:30-31 (ESV)**

³⁰ The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. ³¹ And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat.

^{xvii} Hughs, Kent, Preaching the Word – Luke, Volume I: That You May Know the Truth.

^{xviii} **John 6:8-9 (ESV)**

⁸ One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him,

⁹ "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?"

^{xix} **John 6:7 (ESV)**

⁷ Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little."

^{xx} **2 Kings 4:42-44 (ESV)**

⁴² A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. And Elisha said, "Give to the men, that they may eat." ⁴³ But his servant said, "How can I set this before a hundred men?" So he repeated, "Give them to the men, that they may eat, for thus says the LORD, 'They shall eat and have some left.'" ⁴⁴ So he set it before them. And they ate and had some left, according to the word of the LORD.

^{xxi} **Mark 6:32 (ESV)**

³² And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves.

xxii **John 6:31 (ESV)**

31 Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

xxiii **John 6:58 (ESV)**

58 This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever."

xxiv **Genesis 22:14 (ESV)**

14 So Abraham called the name of that place, "The LORD will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided."

xxv **Philippians 4:19 (ESV)**

19 And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

xxvi **John 6:35 (ESV)**

35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

xxvii **Luke 8:22-25 (ESV)**

22 One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they set out, ²³ and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger. ²⁴ And they went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm. ²⁵ He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?"

xxviii Hughs, Kent, Preaching the Word – Luke, Volume I: That You May Know the Truth.

xxix **John 6:12 (ESV)**

12 And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost."

xxx **Mark 8:5-8 (ESV)**

⁵ And he asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" They said, "Seven." ⁶ And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd. ⁷ And they had a few small fish. And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them. ⁸ And they ate and were satisfied. And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full.

xxxi **Mark 8:19-21 (ESV)**

19 When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" They said to him, "Twelve."

20 "And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" And they said to him, "Seven."

21 And he said to them, "Do you not yet understand?"

xxxii **Proverbs 11:24 (ESV)**

24 One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want.

xxxiii **1 Thessalonians 5:18 (ESV)**

18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

xxxiv **James 1:17 (ESV)**

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

xxxv **Romans 8:32 (ESV)**

32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?