

Luke

Journey to Jerusalem

Luke 9:51

May 02, 2020

Today

His ministry coming to a close, Jesus deliberately turned toward Jerusalem. On the way, he stopped in a Samaritan village. The towns people didn't accept him because he was headed toward Jerusalem. James and John asked if they should call down fire on the village. Jesus rebuked them, **"You don't understand the spirit that is driving your question. The Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."** {Luke 9:55-56}

After this, Jesus appointed 70 believers and sent them out 2 x 2 to go ahead of him into every city and village, **"... The harvest is plentiful",** he said, **"But the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His fields. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves".....** {Luke 10:1-20}

A lawyer came to Jesus to test him, **"Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"**

- **Jesus:** *What is written in the Law?*
- **Lawyer:** *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind and love your neighbor as yourself.*
- **Jesus:** *Correct! If you do that you will live.*
- **Lawyer:** *{wishing to justify himself} Who is my neighbor?*
- **Jesus:** *Let me tell you a story --- The Good Samaritan {10:25-37}*

Traveling along, Jesus came to the village of Martha and Mary. Martha welcomed him into their home and began to prepare a meal for him, but Mary sat at his feet to hear him speak. Martha was irritated with Mary for leaving all the work to her, so she asked Jesus to tell Mary to get up and help. Instead, Jesus said, **"Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only one thing is really important and Mary has chosen it and it will not be taken from her."** {Luke 10:41-42}

Later, Jesus was praying and after he'd finished, his disciples asked him to teach them how to pray -- so Jesus said: **"When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Your name is holy. We pray that Your kingdom will come and that Your will will be done on earth just as it is done in heaven. Give us bread for today and forgive our sins as we forgive those who have sinned against us. Do not let us be tempted and deliver us from the evil one."** Then he gave them 2 parables regarding persistence in prayer and God's desire to give good gifts to his children {Luke 11:2-13}.

One day, Jesus cast a demon out of a man who couldn't speak – the man's voice was restored. Some in the crowd marveled, but some said Jesus cast out the demon through the power of Beelzebub, the ruler of demons. Still others demanded a sign from heaven. Jesus, knowing what they were all thinking, said, **"Any kingdom or house divided against itself will fall",** then he told a story: **"... When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' ²⁵ 'And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order. ²⁶ 'Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first."** He continued by telling them they would not get any signs except for the sign of Jonah:

- *The queen of the south will judge you because she came from a long distance to hear the wisdom of Solomon – and One greater than Solomon is here.*
- *The men of Nineveh will judge you, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah – and One greater than Jonah is here. {Luke 11:14-32}*

As Jesus was speaking a Pharisee invited him home for dinner. Jesus sat down to eat – without washing his hands. The Pharisee was astonished and Jesus replied: **"You Pharisees make the outside of the cup and dish clean, but your inward part is full of greed and wickedness. Woe to you!"**

- *You give God a tenth of your mint and all kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should practice both.*
- *You love the most important seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces.*
- *You are like unmarked graves, which men walk over without knowing it*
- *You load people down with burdens they cannot carry and you will not lift a finger to help them.*
- *You build tombs for the prophets even though it was your forefathers who killed them. By doing so, you testify that you approve of what your forefathers did.*
- *You have taken away the key to knowledge {see Prov. 1:7; 9:10}. You yourselves have not entered, and you hinder those who want to enter.*

The Pharisees and teachers of the Law began to criticize Jesus and asked him many questions hoping to catch him in something in order to make an accusation against him. {Luke 11:37-54}

Jesus warned his disciples against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees:

- *Don't fear those who can only kill the body, but do fear the One who has the authority to also cast you into the trash heap (valley of Hinnom = hell).*
- *Sparrows are pretty cheap, but God knows them all. He even knows how many hairs you have on your head and, by the way, you are more valuable than a sparrow.*
- *If you confess me, I will confess you. If you deny me, I will deny you.*
- *Don't resist the work of the Holy Spirit.*
- *Don't worry about what you are going to say when you are hauled before the authorities. The Holy Spirit will give you the words to speak.*

A man in the crowd wanted Jesus to order his brother to share the family inheritance, but Jesus declined saying he had not been given authority to judge the matter and then he warned the crowd to guard against greed:

- **Then Jesus said to his disciples: "That's why I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. ²³ Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. ²⁴ Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! ²⁵ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? ²⁶ Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest? ²⁷ "Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ²⁸ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! ²⁹ And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. ³⁰ For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹ But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. ³² "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. {Luke 12:16-34}**

People were making incorrect assumptions about Jesus' mission, so one day he asked an important question: *"Do you think I came to bring peace to the earth? Listen, to me. I didn't come to bring peace but division. Because of me families will be divided – even fathers against sons and daughters against mothers"* {Luke 12:49-53 see Matthew 10:34-39; Acts 14:4-7 and Hebrews 4:12}

Once again, we find Jesus getting in trouble on Sabbath:

- He was in the Synagogue. In the audience was a woman who had been tormented by a spirit - bent over with sickness - for 18 years. Jesus called her over and said, ***"Woman, you are freed from your sickness"***, then he laid his hands on her and immediately she stood up straight and began to praise God. A Synagogue official who saw what Jesus had done was indignant, ***"There are six days for work. So, come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath."*** Jesus responded, ***"You hypocrites! Don't you take your ox or donkey from the barn and lead it out to drink – even on Sabbath? Shouldn't this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen years, also be set free on the Sabbath?"*** ***When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing.*** {Luke 13:14-17}

Jesus was going through towns and villages on his way to Jerusalem and one day someone asked him, ***"Are only a few going to be saved?"*** --- {There was much debate at the time about who would be saved: only righteous Jews – all Jews – worthy Gentiles.} Jesus responded, ***"Not everyone who claims to be a child of God will be saved, but People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God."*** {Luke 13:22-29}

At that time some Pharisees told Jesus to runaway because Herod was trying to have him killed. But Jesus was having none of that because he still had things to do. Then he revealed his heart in a most beautiful way:

- ***"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you; you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'" {Luke 13:34-35}***

On Sabbath, Jesus went to the house of a prominent Pharisee. There he encountered a man suffering from dropsy. Jesus asked the religious leaders if it was lawful to heal on Sabbath – they didn't answer. Jesus healed the man and sent him on his way. Then he asked, ***"If one of you has a son or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull him out?"*** They all remained silent.

Jesus noticed the guests were picking the highest places of honor around the table, so he told a story about how embarrassing it is when someone chooses to sit in a place of honor only to be moved down the table when someone more important arrives. He said it is far better to choose a humble place and then be invited to a more honored place. Next, he turned to the host and told him that when he invited his friends or rich neighbors to dinner, they would, in turn, invite him to their house and that would be all the reward he would get. Jesus said it is far better to invite people to dinner who will never be able to return the favor, because that reward is far greater and longer lasting. A guest responded, ***"Blessed are those who eat bread in the kingdom of God"*** Jesus responded by telling another story of a man who had invited many people to a dinner party, but when the time came every guest made an excuse – I just bought a field, I just bought some cows, I just got married ... I can't come to your party – So, the man instructed his servants to go instead to the streets and alleys, roads and country lanes and bring in the crippled, blind and lame to the dinner party because the invited guests had been uninvited. {Luke 14:1-24}

Jesus was popular so a large crowd was following him - he said to them, *"If you value anything above me, including your family or even your life, you can't be my disciple. If you are unwilling to carry your own cross and follow me, you can't be my disciple. Anyone who wants to build a tower thinks about how much it is going to cost BEFORE he begins construction and a king isn't going to go to war without FIRST considering whether or not he can win. If you are not willing to give up everything to follow me you can't be my disciples"* {Luke 14:26-33} Think very carefully about being my disciple and consider the cost FIRST.

Now tax-collectors and other sinners were coming near to Jesus. The scribes and Pharisees complained, *"This man welcomes sinner and even eats with them!"* So, Jesus told 3 stories – Ch. 15:

- **Lost Sheep** - *There will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.* {4-7}
- **Lost Coin** - *There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.* {8-9}
- **Lost Son** - *We had to celebrate! Your brother was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.* {10-32}

Time was running out and Jesus had so much yet to tell his disciples – Ch. 16:

- **The Shrewd Steward** - *Worldly men are more devoted to securing possessions, that have no heavenly value, than people who claim to be children of God are devoted to things that do have heavenly value. The truth is, you cannot be friends of both money and God. You have to choose one.* {1-13}
- **The Rich Man and Lazarus** {a mythical story very popular in Jewish culture} – *If a man isn't going to listen to the words of Moses and the Prophets, then a man rising from the dead won't change his mind either.* {19-31}
- *Stumbling blocks will happen, but woe to the man who causes someone else to stumble. It would be better for him if a millstone was tied around his neck and he is thrown into the sea.*
- *Forgive every time a brother asks for forgiveness.*
- *If your faith is the size of a mustard seed, you can say to that tree, "pull yourself out by the roots and go plant yourself in the sea," and it will obey.*
- *A servant does not expect to be praised for doing what he is told to do. The same is true for you. You are not to seek praise or reward for doing what I have told you to do.*

When Jesus was between Samaria and Galilee he went into a village. There were 10 lepers standing apart from the crowd - they asked to be healed. Jesus told them to show themselves to the priest. On the way to see the priest, they were all healed. Only one, however, returned to thank Jesus – and he was a Samaritan! Jesus asked where the other 9 were, then said to the man, *"Get up and go on your way. Your faith has healed you."*

The Pharisees asked Jesus when the Kingdom of God was coming. He told them it was not going to be in a way they expected as it was already in their midst. He then told the disciples that they would be without his physical presence for a period of time, but while they waited, they were not to be deceived by people who claimed to have seen him "here" or "there", because his return would be sudden and visible to everyone {but first he would suffer many things}:

- *The days of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. The people ate and drank and got married right up until the day Noah went into the Ark --- Then the flood destroyed them all* {Genesis 7:1-12}.
- *It was the same with Lot. The people ate and drank, bought and sold, planted crops and built houses, but the day Lot left Sodom, fire came from heaven and destroyed them all* {Genesis 19:1-26}.

That's how it's going to be on the day the Son of Man is revealed. {Luke 17:26-30}

Jesus spoke again about prayer by telling the story of *The Persistent Widow and the Judge*. And by comparing and contrasting *The Prayer of the Pharisee vs. The Prayer of the Tax-collector*. {18:1-14}

A certain ruler came to Jesus.... *"What must I do to inherit Eternal life?"*

Jesus: *You know all the Commandments.*

The ruler: *Yes, I've kept them from my youth.*

Jesus: *One thing you lack – sell everything you own and distribute it to the poor {your treasure is in heaven} then come and follow me.*

The ruler grew sad at Jesus' words because he was extremely wealthy, but Jesus wasn't finished: *It is difficult for the wealthy to enter the Kingdom of God. In fact, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.....*

The crowd gasped: *If the rich can't be saved than who can be?*

Jesus: *Things that are impossible for men are not impossible for God.*

Peter: *We have left everything to follow you.*

Jesus: *The one who leaves home and wife, brothers, parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will receive much more now and in the age to come = eternal life.*" {Luke 18:18-30}

Again, Jesus took his disciples aside to prepare them for the events that were fast approaching – They still didn't understand.

A blind man was sitting beside the road to Jericho begging. He saw Jesus, "*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!*" Many in the crowd told him to be quiet, but he just shouted louder, "*Son of David, have mercy on me!*" Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. Jesus asked, "*What do you want me to do for you?*" - "*Lord, I want to see.*" The man responded. "*Go, your faith has healed you.*" Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God.

Jesus entered Jericho --- Zacchaeus was the chief tax collector in town – he was extremely wealthy. He wanted to see Jesus, but he was short and couldn't see over the crowd, so he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore-fig tree. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said, "*Zacchaeus, you'd better come down because I'm going to your house.*" The crowd began to complain, "*Jesus has gone to the house of a sinner.*" Zacchaeus stood up and said, "*Lord, I am going to give ½ of everything I have to the poor and if I have cheated anyone, I will repay him 4 times the amount.*" Jesus replied, "*Salvation has come to this house, because this man is also a son of Abraham. The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.*" {Luke 19:1-10}

After telling the disciples a parable about what good servants do while waiting for their Master to return {Luke 19:11-27} Jesus began the ascent to Jerusalem.

Until Next week, Theophilus!!!

Take Aways

Jesus seemed to get in trouble most often in 2 specific areas of his ministry – Sabbath and Sinners:

Sabbath – The Sabbath is mentioned nearly 50 times in the Gospels and Luke lists 6 specific confrontations between Jesus and the religious leaders as well as the fact that Jesus rested from all his work on the Sabbath {23:50-56 see also Genesis 2:1-3}:

- 4:31-36 – Demon cast out
- 4:38-39 – Peter's Mother-in-law healed
- 6:1-5 – Grain field encounter – {5} Jesus said to them, The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.
- 6:6-11 – Withered hand healed
- 13:10-17 – Woman infirmed for 18 years healed
- 14:1-6 – Man with dropsy healed

The Sabbath commandment has an important spiritual purpose - It points God's people to Him as Supreme Maker of all things and Redeemer from bondage. However, Sabbath observance underwent a dramatic transformation in the centuries leading up to the time of Christ and had become so distorted that it was a burden of epic proportions.

Example: plowing was a prohibited-work category, however, according to first-century rabbinic opinion, the prohibition against plowing could be violated by simply spitting on the ground. The spit could disturb the soil, which in the rabbis' view was a type of plowing! Women were forbidden to look into a mirror on the Sabbath, because they might see a gray hair and pull it out, and that would constitute work.

It was this kind of distorted and critical religious atmosphere {religious fog} that Jesus fought against and that would lead directly to his death.

<https://www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/booklets/sunset-to-sunset-gods-sabbath-rest>

Sinners – Jesus was accused of associating freely and often with sinners:

- 5:30 - But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, "*Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and 'sinners'?*"
- 7:39 – (The woman who anointed Jesus) - When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "*If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is-- that she is a sinner.*"
- 15:1-2 - Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear him. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "*This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.*"
- 19:7 – (Zacchaeus) - All the people saw this and began to mutter, "*He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.'*"

Jesus' Response:

- **5:31-32** - Well people don't need a doctor, but sick people do. Righteous people don't need to repent, but sinners do and those are the people I've come to call.
- **15:4-7 – (Lost Sheep)** - There will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.
- **15:8-9 – (Lost Coin)** - There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.
- **15:10-32 – (Lost Son)** - We had to celebrate! Your brother was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.
- **19:10 – (Zacchaeus)** - For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.

As followers of Jesus, we should do good on Sabbath and work to eliminate the fog surrounding it and we should be about the business of seeking and saving the lost.