

Luke Chapter 9 v 10 - 17

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[0 : 00] So Luke and chapter 9 beginning at verse 1, page 1038. When Jesus had called the twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases.

He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal those who are ill. He told them, take nothing for the journey, no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt.

Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave the town. If people do not welcome you, leave their town and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.

So they set out and went from village to village proclaiming the good news, healing people everywhere. Now Herod the Tetrarch heard about all that was going on and he was perplexed because some were saying that John had been raised from the dead.

Others that Elijah had appeared, still others that one of the prophets of long ago had come back to life. Herod said, I beheaded John, who then is this I hear such things about?

[1 : 10] He tried to see him. When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. He took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida.

But the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, heal those who needed healing. Late in the afternoon, the twelve came to him and said, Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging because we are in a remote place here.

He replied, you give them something to eat. They answered, we have only five loaves of bread and two fish unless we go and buy food for all this crowd.

About five thousand men were there. But he said to his disciples, make them sit down in groups of about fifty each. Disciples did so and everyone sat down.

Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people. They all ate and were satisfied.

[2 : 17] And the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, Who do the crowd say I am?

They replied, some say John the Baptist. Others say Elijah. Still others, that one of the prophets so long ago has come back to life. What about you? He asked. Who do you say I am?

Peter answered, God's Messiah. Lovely hymn. So Luke in chapter 9, if you'd like to have your Bible there. Particularly verses 10 to 17.

In that very well known event, the feeding of the 5,000. I don't know if you get much opportunity to eat out at a restaurant.

One of the things we like to do when we're on holiday is to treat ourselves and go out for a meal. And we did that while we were on holiday just this last week. It was lovely. But sometimes, of course, you go out for a meal and you order something and just your eyes are bigger than your belly.

[3 : 24] You know what I mean? And you get this, all the portion sizes are really big. Unless you go to one of those really expensive places where the portion sizes are that big. We don't go to those places.

We go to the ones that give big portions. But occasionally, of course, it's maybe too much. And you think, well, there's half a pizza left or half a steak left or something else. I don't want it to go to waste.

And you ask for a doggy bag. Do you do that? I should imagine most of you Yorkshire people would do that, wouldn't you? You Yorkshire people wouldn't like anything going to waste. But you don't have to be Yorkshire to do that.

And you get a doggy bag and you take it home with you. And perhaps you have it the next day or you have it another time. Well, in this feeding of the 5,000, as we commonly call it, it's, of course, one of Jesus' wonderful miracles.

All the four gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John record it. And every one of them tell us that after the people had eaten their fill, as much as they wanted, there were 12 large doggy bags left. [4 : 26] Or baskets, as the New Testament writers tell us there. They all ate and were satisfied. So they all ate. They were full. They'd all had enough. And there were still 12 baskets of pieces of bread and fish left over.

Why? Why? Why were there leftovers at this great feast? Something that puzzles me. Jesus has provided miraculously for all these 5,000.

Well, we're told 5,000 men. But, of course, that would therefore include another, perhaps, load of women. Possibly children. We're not sure. But we're talking a big, big company.

Why would he provide much more than was needed? Isn't that at all strange to you? Doesn't that seem odd? He does the same when he feeds the 4,000.

Matthew and Mark record another miracle similar to this where Jesus feeds 4,000. And there's seven baskets load of leftovers collected. Of course, if we were to think about this purely from a human standpoint, we could answer the question.

[5 : 35] We could say, well, of course, Jesus wanted to make sure there was more than enough. And so, perhaps you've done that when you've laid on a party or a buffet. And you've made sure, we want to make sure there's enough for everybody.

We don't want anybody to go without. Or else, of course, we could say, well, it's understandable. When you're catering for such a huge number of people, you know, it's impossible to measure out exactly how much everybody's going to eat.

You know, even a professional caterer would have trouble not having some leftover. But to understand Jesus providing more than was necessary for those reasons, I think, is to miss the points.

To misunderstand what Jesus is doing there. Everything that Jesus did, he did with forethought, with understanding, with clarity. He never made a mistake. He never over or underestimated a situation.

He knew exactly what he was doing. There can only be really one explanation why there was all this extra food.

[6 : 40] Jesus intended that there should be this extra food. In fact, it was his plan that there should be this extra food. When John records what happened to the feeding of the 5,000, he gives a little bit more intimate detail.

And Jesus asks Philip to provide for them, the people, this food. And we're told in John chapter 6, verse 6, Jesus asked this only to test him, for he, Jesus, already had in mind what he was going to do.

So when he says here, you feed them, it wasn't because he expected that the disciples could or would. It was a test of their faith. He knew exactly what he would do.

He knew exactly how he would provide. You see, he knows the appetites of every person. He knows us completely and absolutely and totally. Well, he knows all human beings.

He created us, each and every one of us. He's the manufacturer. He knows what our levels are, what our appetites are.

[7 : 51] And he was in perfect control of the situation. He miraculously creates, to the finest detail, every part, every ounce, as it were, of flour or a fish for that situation.

What he's doing here, again, of course, is revealing to us something that only he could do as God in this world. The reason why each one of those gospel writers includes this is because those who were there were meant to think and to remember what God had done before in the days of Moses, in the wilderness, when manna was provided for all the people.

There was a lot more than 5,000 there. Hundreds of thousands, possibly millions of people provided. And you know the amazing thing that happened when God sent the manna each day? Exodus 16 tells us. Those who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little. God overruled so that everybody had exactly the right amount of all that they needed.

And that's what we're meant to recognize here. In the feeding of the 5,000, we're meant to see that here is God again supplying and providing for the needs of people.

[9 : 08] Here is God again ministering and providing in a wonderful way for the very real material needs of those that he loves. And we're meant to see that.

We're meant to see that this is what it's all about. That's why we have this event sandwiched between two questioning periods, don't we?

Look at verses 7 to 9. We're told about Herod, the Tetrarch. He was sort of the ruler of Galilee, that northern part of Israel. Questioning, who then is this?

I hear so much about. And all the speculation. Who is this Jesus? And then afterwards, verses 18 to 20. That's why I included them. We have Jesus asking the disciples, who do people say we are? And the conclusion coming to Peter, who we know was given that answer by God, the Holy Spirit. Your Messiah, God's Messiah. And we're meant to understand the questioning at the beginning, the questioning at the end.

[10 : 11] There's the answer in the middle. It's God. God's Messiah. God's Messiah. God's chosen one. God's provider. God's savior. And he demonstrates it here in this event.

But why such extravagance? Why such generosity? Why is there 12 doggy bags left over? When Mark talks about this event, he goes on later to tell about how Jesus was upset with the disciples because they failed to understand what was going on.

In Mark chapter 8, Jesus spoke to them and he said to them, Do you have eyes but fail to see and ears but fail to hear?

Don't you remember? When I broke the five loaves for the 5,000, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up? 12, they replied. And when I broke the seven loaves for the 4,000, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?

They answered, seven. He said to them, Do you still not understand? There's a lesson in the leftovers. A lesson that the disciples fail to grasp and a lesson that we often fail to understand as well.

[11 : 30] A lesson that we are blinded to. That leaps out at us. That shouts at us. Not only about the deity, the reality that Jesus is God but something more beside.

That we are to see here revealed the very character and nature of Jesus. The very character and nature of God is to be abundantly generous.

The character and nature of God is to be abundantly generous. Back in that passage in Mark and chapter 8, Jesus had warned the disciples about the yeast of the Pharisees.

The false teachings of the Pharisees. He likened them to yeast, which is commonly used in the making of bread. But throughout the Bible, yeast is always a symbol of sin.

Of something that permeates and affects every part of our lives. In fact, when an offering was brought to God in the Old Testament, no yeast could be used. Always had to be what we call unleavened bread.

[12 : 34] Flat bread. Unyeasted bread. But when Jesus spoke to them about this false teaching, they started having a discussion about bread.

Jesus, it's because we've got no bread that Jesus is warning us about the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod. They completely missed the point. Completely missed the point of what Jesus was teaching them and what Jesus was saying to them.

They'd forgotten. And he draws their mind back to the extra leftovers of the 5,000 and the 4,000. He wants them to understand that in Jesus they have more than enough of everything.

That they can trust Jesus with every need, with every want. One of the things I believe that hinders us as Christians, dear friends, is that we do not view God in this way as abundant and lavish and generous.

That's because we judge God by our own standards, don't we? We judge God by ourselves. We are tight and mean and selfish. And we think God must be the same.

[13 : 49] But he's not. Let me just ask you a few questions. Let's see whether you've grasped and understood. Whether you really believe that God is generous and lavish and giving.

I ask these questions. How would you answer them? Are you ever worried about your finances? Do you ever think that your problems or cares cannot be solved by God?

When you pray, do you ever doubt that you shall receive the very best answer from God? When difficulties come into your life, is your first thought, God is punishing me for my sin?

And when you consider the future, are you scared? Not just about life after death, but even life before it.

If you answered yes to any of those or all of those questions, then like me, and I have to be honest, you have not yet grasped the overflowing goodness of God in every part of your life.

[15:12] The overflowing abundance of God, the generosity of God. See, the Bible is filled with the declaration that God is a gracious, lavish, generous giver.

The Bible is full of the events of God, the promises of God that say to us, he can be trusted with everything. And that it is his desire and delight, not only to meet our needs, but to exceed our expectations.

Listen to Paul. Paul's testimony about how he became a Christian. Remember Paul, who was Saul, the persecutor of the church, the murderer of Christians, the harsh, hard-hearted man.

This is what he writes to Timothy. On Timothy 1.14. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

That's why he was a Christian. It wasn't because he was a good man or a righteous man or because he deserved it. Notice, the grace of the Lord was poured out on me abundantly, overflowing.

[16:25] That's how you became a Christian too. If you're a Christian this morning, it's because God has abundantly poured out his grace upon you. Here's Romans in chapter 5, verse 17, comparing the power, the awful power of sin in a person's life compared to the wonderful goodness of God.

For if by the trespass of the one, that's Adam's sin, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive, listen, God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ?

In one sense he's saying this, if sin, which Adam brought into the world, has so affected your life and mine to destroy it and to ruin it, how much more in comparison the abundant provision of God's grace gives life compared to death?

And then 2 Corinthians 9, verse 8. We could just read verses after verses after verses, but here it is about living the Christian life and serving the Lord.

And God is able to make all grace abound to you so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

[17:49] Are you abounding? Are you abounding? Are you an abundant Christian? Well, you are if you're a Christian because that's what God has given you.

It's not how you feel. It's not about what you think about yourself. This is the truth, the reality. God has made his grace abound so that at all times, in every way and in every need, you will abound in the Christian life.

It's all there and more besides. Under this wonderful umbrella of God's grace is every blessing, every provision for us in every part of our lives.

Everything he gives comes out of grace, comes out of undeserved, unmerited love. Sometimes we think that God blesses us because we've been good.

Never. God blesses us because we're faithful. No. God blesses us because God is God. God gives good things to you, not because you've deserved them or earned them or worked for them, or because you've even prayed for them, but because God is God.

[19:04] He loves and delights. See, the truth is this, and if we understand this, then we'll understand sin. In fact, if we understand sin rightly, then we'll understand grace rightly.

See, the truth is you and I deserve nothing from God at all apart from judgment and eternal punishment. That's all we deserve from God.

We've spitefully abused God. We've rejected God. We've lived our lives completely and utterly dependent upon ourselves. We've rebelled against him and his commandments.

We've decided that we know better than God. We're going to live our lives how we want to live them. We're going to look for the best for ourselves and our families. And ultimately, in all this, the Bible tells us, Ephesians 2, 3, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

Deserving of God's anger. That's all you deserve. You and I. None of us. Not me. Not you. None of us deserve anything else but God's anger against our sin, our lovelessness towards him and one another.

[20 : 13] But, every dealing therefore that God has with us, the fact that God allows you to breathe his air this morning is because of his grace.

Not because you deserve it but because he longs to give it. He delights that you should have it. And all God's dealings with us come through the filter, if I can put it that way, of his grace.

Don't know whether you've got some sunglasses. One of the things that happens, well, we were on holiday anyway, you get these people coming around all the time trying to sell you fake sunglasses. Oh, you know, I can't remember the famous names, Dolce and Gabbana or somebody like that. Anyway, and they try and sell you these fake sunglasses. And you say, no, I don't have any sunglasses. That's fine. But, have you ever had those sunglasses? A few people, they're sort of quite cool, I think. Those of you who are a little bit older than me remember in the 60s, people like John Lennon, they had those yellow sunglasses, didn't they?

Or you have sometimes red lens sunglasses or blue lens sunglasses. And whatever you look through in those sunglasses, it's always tinted with that color. It was tinted yellow.

[21 : 24] It was tinted red or blue or whatever it is. So whenever God looks at you, dear Christian, he looks at us through the lens of grace.

When he looks at us, yes, he sees our failings. He sees our sins. He sees our shortcomings. He sees us just as we really are, as nobody else sees us.

But when he looks upon us, though, his eyes look with grace. There's a filter of grace. You wear sunglasses to protect your eyes from the sun.

But actually, God's grace glasses protect us from the judgment that we deserve, from his holiness, from being burnt up by his justice.

Ephesians 2.3 tells us that we are all by nature deserving of God's wrath. That the immediate verse follows and says this, but because of his great love for us.

[22 : 25] It's not just ordinary love. And love, if I can put it this way, which is ordinary, is wonderful anyway. Special, glorious, real love is amazing.

Now, this is great love for us. God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ, even when we were dead in transgressions. It is by grace you have been saved.

Rich mercy, great love. See, the language that God is wanting to impress upon us, that he is lavish, that he is generous, that he is overflowing with. So if you're a Christian this morning, you're someone who's received an abundance of God's grace.

You've received his grace already. No matter what's going on in your life, no matter what pressures there are, no matter what difficulties there are, no matter how things are pressing in, you are a recipient of the lavish, abundant grace of God.

It's already been poured out into your life, poured out upon your life. But that's not the end. God's grace to us is not only, even if it was just only our salvation, our being brought into that place of life rather than death, being brought into that place of forgiveness rather than wrath, even if it was only that, that would be more than enough for all eternity for us to be absolutely thankful and delighted and rejoicing in God.

[23 : 52] But there's more than that. See, what I want us to understand from this amazing incident in the life of our Lord Jesus and all the incidents that we see is that God is the one with whom there is no limit to his giving.

There's no lack. There's no shortfall to meet your needs, to meet your supplies. Here's Romans 8, verse 32. He, that's God, who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all.

How will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Think about it. If God has given the most expensive, the most lavish, the most costly gift in the giving of his son, his beloved son, to live and to die and suffer for us, is he going to be stingy with the other things?

When he's given us everything, he's given us the most amazing, the most costly. Is he going to say, well, you know, I've given you Jesus and everything else. I think I'll keep back some of these other less important things, these trivial things.

No, of course not. The whole argument is this. If God has given you everything in Jesus, he's given you the greatest, the most costly, most wonderful thing, then everything comes with him. God did not spare his son for you.

[25 : 15] And he won't spare anything else, but will lavishly give to you, dear friends, everything that you need, in every circumstance, in every situation. And so what I want us to do, just as we close this morning, I want to read through some of the promises of God that we have concerning

the meeting of our needs, those things particularly perhaps that we feel a lack of, or we find it hard to trust God for.

And what I'd like you to do is, as I read through those promises, is to, in just 10 or 20 seconds of quiet, I'd like you to pray, to respond to God's word in prayer, and to simply but sincerely pray something along this line.

Lord, I believe that this promise is true for me. And I ask you to make it real in my life from now on. Now, that's not a magic spell. It's not sort of brainwashing ourselves into believing these things. It's not suddenly going to make all our troubles disappear. But what it is going to do is it's going to strengthen our faith.

Because when we read God's word and the promises, unless we act upon the promises, in other words, unless we claim the promises, take hold of the promises, apply the promises of God's word, they have no effect upon us.

[26 : 40] It's like, as we said, sitting at the meal, and there's the food there, and you can smell it more, it's lovely, but you're not going to eat of it or partake of it. The promises of God, we can enjoy them and read through them and say, oh, they smell lovely.

But we never become part of us. We never take them to ourselves and say, Lord, this is for me. Thank you, it's your word to me. We need to do that daily, to constantly be nourished in our souls, strengthened in our faith.

See, the promises of God are true, whether you believe them or not. The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation is true, whether you believe it or accept it or not. That's not going to change it and make it false.

It just means that you're going to miss out. It just means that all the good things, the lavish grace and the abundant goodness of God for you, it's there, but you're just walking by.

You're window shopping. And it's there freely given. Sometimes even as Christians, we can window shop the gospel. We can window shop the word of God.

[27 : 46] We read the word of God and we skim through it, but we don't apply it. We don't take hold of it. We don't say, thank you, Lord. This is for me. This is your word. To me today, this is what you have said. And I know that it's true.

And I take it, Lord. And I believe it, Lord. So we miss out. We're undernourished believers. Why does God's word tell us that we need to read his word?

Why do I say to you, you need to be here under God's word and in the Bible study. You need to be reading your Bible every day. You need to be praying daily. Is it simply for brownie points, so I can say, well, what a great lot of Christians are in my church.

No, it's not. It's because I need it and you need it. And every Christian through history has ever needed it. So I'm going to just read five promises. Read them out and then just pause for 10 seconds or so.

May you make that response of prayer. Lord, I believe this is your word to me today. Lord, let me, let it become real. Let me become part of who I am.

[28 : 54] First of all, promise concerning the forgiveness for all and every one of our sins. Hebrews chapter 10, verse 14.

For by one sacrifice, he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. for comfort. 2 Corinthians and chapter one. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our troubles.

For peace.

Philippians chapter one, verse seven. And the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

[30 : 28] Jesus. For perseverance to keep on living the Christian life.

The peace of God. Right until the end. 1 Peter chapter one. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In his great mercy, he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.

this inheritance is kept in heaven for you who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[31 : 51] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. And finally, for everything else, Philippians 4.19, and my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. and justice we thank you that the proof the evidence the absolute certainty that this is true is the giving of your beloved son the Lord Jesus Christ for us we thank you that there he has done everything so that we might be the recipients and the enjoyers of grace upon grace upon grace thank you that you lavish upon us good things and we thank you oh Lord that that means that all our sins even those of this day and this past week even those that the devil would like us to remember and feel bad about every one of them has been taken away and you've chosen to remember it no more it's forgiven thank you oh Lord that you are the God of all comfort who comforts us and oh Lord in the trials and the sorrows and the heartaches that we have endured we thank you and we look to you afresh that you will comfort and strengthen our hearts that we may know that your love is all encompassing and Lord where we have a lack of peace because we are anxious and distressed where there are fears abounding in our hearts we thank you that you are the God who has said that your peace will guard our minds and hearts Lord again we ask that our Lord your abundant peace may wash away those fears and we know Lord that we feel very weak and for many of us there is a fear for the future will we finish the course will we run the race will we really get to heaven at the end or will we fall away and be lost thank you that you are the God who perseveres with us thank you that the God who has said that you are the one who will finish what you begin that you're the God who shields us by your power how can anything or anyone take us away we thank you that all our needs financial health family church emotional mental spiritual all our needs Lord you are able to provide for with doggy bags loads left over Lord you are abundant we ask again oh Lord that we might not simply window shop your grace but rather we might taste and see that the Lord is good for we ask all these things in Jesus name Amen