

Over the last several weeks, Luke has given us a front-row seat to the power of Jesus.

We've watched Him calm a storm.

We've watched Him deliver a man possessed by demons.

We've watched Him heal a woman who had suffered for twelve years.

And last week, we watched Him take a little girl by the hand and call her back from death.

But as I mentioned last week, the miracles were never merely about displaying the power of God... they were ultimately about revealing the Person of God!

The power of the miracle pointed people to the Person behind the miracle!

That's why, after Jesus calmed the storm, the disciples asked: Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?

That's the question Luke has been answering: Who is this?

The storm says: He has authority over nature

The demons say: He has authority over the spiritual realm

The woman says: He has authority over sickness

Jairus' daughter says: He even has authority over death

Miracle after miracle, Luke has been showing us: Jesus Among Us!!

But now we come to chapter 9, and something changes ...up until this point, the disciples have primarily been "watching Jesus"...

They've watched Him teach. They've watched Him heal. They've watched Him confront demons.

They've watched Him calm storms. They've watched Him raise the dead.

We have discovered, just like they have WHO Jesus is by what He does!!!

But now Jesus turns to the people who have been watching Him... and He sends them!

That's the bridge that takes places between chapter 8 & 9!

They've seen His power. They've heard His message. They've experienced His presence.

And now Jesus essentially says: "It's time for you to go."

Church, there comes a point in following Jesus when watching has to become participating... a point when what Jesus has done in us begins to move through us!

Listen, Jesus doesn't simply call us "TO" Himself... He sends us "FOR" Himself! That's that I want you to see this morning!

The title of my message is: **When Jesus Sends You!**

Luke 9:1-6 (ESV)

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. 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." 6 And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

There's a progression here that jumped off the page at me when I was preparing for this message...

In just six verses we see: He called them. He gave them. He sent them. He said to them! And then... they went! ... that's the entire message for today!

1. He Called Them: Our Mission Begins With Jesus

Luke. 9:1

And he called the twelve together

Before they ever did anything "for Jesus" ... they had been "with Jesus"!

That's pretty important, right? These men had walked with Him. They had listened to Him. They had watched Him. They had seen His power firsthand... They had been with Jesus!

When writing the book of Acts, that was how Luke described Peter and John...

Acts 4:13 (ESV)

13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

You see, that's where mission begins! Not with our ability, personality, education or your resources.... It begins with Jesus! Before Jesus sends us out, He calls us to Himself!

Christianity is not about being called to a cause... it's being called to a person ... to Christ .. and we need to be careful about becoming so busy doing things for Jesus that we neglect simply being with Jesus!

Ministry that doesn't flow from relationship with Christ eventually becomes empty activity... and so we don't go for Jesus until we've been with Jesus!

But there's another danger... We also can't spend our entire Christian lives simply watching... spectators of truth and not ambassadors of truth!!

Christianity is NOT a spectator sport ... it calls us to mobilize, to prioritize and to evangelize! Jesus calls all of us to participate in the work of the ministry which is why He has given us different gifts, roles, opportunities and networks ... but the same mission!!

Our doing, which everyone of us will give an account to God for, flows out of our being with Jesus!!

And lest you say, I have nothing to give, I don't have the right kind of personality, I don't know enough, I'm limited in what I have ... it brings us to you second point:

2. He Gave Them: What Jesus Calls Us To Do, He Equips Us To Do

Verse 1 continues:...and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases."

Notice the order here ... even before He sends them on mission, He gives them what they need for the task ahead!

Jesus didn't say... You've watched Me do it. Now go figure it out yourself... They've seen Jesus do some pretty amazing stuff... I'm sure they wondered of they were up for the task!

But, before He gave them the assignment, He gave them what they needed for the assignment!

He gave them power. He gave them authority. And neither belonged to them independently... It came from Jesus!! This was delegated authority.

So even when the disciples begin doing extraordinary things, the spotlight remains on Jesus!

Whatever authority they exercised, ... it was Jesus who gave it to them.
Whatever happened through their ministry ultimately pointed back to Jesus!

And there's an important principle here: Jesus will always equip you to do what He has called you to do!

That doesn't mean you'll always feel qualified. It doesn't mean you'll never be nervous. It doesn't mean you'll have every answer... there's far more that I don't know than I do know ... but what I know is enough at the moment for the task Jesus has called me to ... and if he wants to expand my mission... He'll expand my ability to fulfill it ... that helps me sleep at night, btw!

Jesus equipped them ... and Jesus will always equip you to accomplish what He's placed on you to accomplish ... because we are His workmanship in Christ, Jesus!

3. He Sent Them: We Are Called to Participate in His Mission

Luke 9:2

And he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal

He equips them ... and then He sent them!

Jesus is moving these men from observing His ministry to participating in His mission!

And what does He send them to do? To proclaim the kingdom of God! In other words: Go tell people about the King!

They aren't being sent to make a name for themselves. They're not being sent so people will be impressed with their gifts. They're being sent to point people to Jesus!

And two thousand years later, that hasn't changed! The mission of the church is still to point people to Jesus!!

That's what we're all about here at Integrity Church... our mission is Reaching Up, Reaching Out and Reaching.... Reaching up in dynamic Worship, Out to the unchurched In ...

And you see, this where Luke 9 gets very personal! God has placed you in places I will never go. There are people who will listen to you who may never listen to me. There are conversations you'll have that I'll never have.

There are people in your family, your workplace, your neighborhood, your school, your circle of friends... that God has already positioned around you!

Sometimes we hear the word "sent" and imagine God calling us to the other side of the world. And He may... but most of the time, being sent begins by recognizing the mission field you're already standing in!

Your workplace. Your neighborhood. Your family. The friend who calls you when life falls apart. The person you see every week who doesn't know Jesus. You don't need a pulpit to be sent by Jesus. You simply need to be available.

That's why one of our core values is that "Every member is a missionary" (or imposter)

And so the prayer for the sincere Christian ought to be, "Jesus, wherever You've placed me... use me."
...

But notice something, Jesus doesn't only send them... He tells them "how to go"... which brings us to our 4th point:

4. He Said To Them: Jesus Shapes Our Mindset as We Go

Luke 9:3

And he said to them, 'Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics.

At first, these instructions sound like a packing list. But Jesus is doing more than telling them what to carry... He's preparing them for how to think as they go!

And I see three important mindsets in Jesus's instructions...

1. Go Dependent

Jesus says: "Take nothing for your journey...". Ultimately, He's teaching them: **DEPEND ON ME.**

Don't make your obedience dependent upon having everything figured out first. They were going to have to trust God's provision. They were learning that if Jesus sent them...Jesus could sustain them!

And that's difficult for the person that's a planner... the detail oriented folk! ... you know who you are ...

God, show me the plan
Tell me how this is going to work
Tell me how we're paying for this...
Tell me how it's going to turn out...Then I'll go!

That wasn't me when we started this church ... there were so many unknowables ... 3 boys and Laura was pregnant with number 4 and the Lord told me to plant a church ... its all I know ... didn't know who, how, where ... I just knew the "why" ... because God told us to!

I remember talking to Laura about it ... not knowing where the income would be, what job Her response: The safest place to be is where God wants us ... let's do it!

And God came through every step of the way, over and above whatever we expected!

God Dependent on Jesus! Trust Him for what you need.

Then Jesus says: And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart

2. Go Content

Jesus doesn't want His disciples moving from house to house looking for better accommodations.

He says: Stay there! In other words, receive what God provides and stay focused on why you're there because comparison can become a tremendous distraction from mission. Jealousy is the enemy of contentment!

We're always looking at somebody else's gifts. Somebody else's opportunities. Somebody else's circumstances. And meanwhile, we miss what God is doing right where He put us!

When Jesus sends you somewhere...be there with all of yourself!!

Don't become so consumed with wishing God had placed you somewhere else that you miss what He's asking you to do right where He's placed you!!

Go Dependent, Go Content ... and then Jesus says:

Luke 9:5

And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them.

3. Go Faithful — and leave the rejection behind!

Jesus prepares them for reality: Not everyone is going to receive you! Not everyone will listen. Not everyone will appreciate the message. Some people will reject it.

The shaking of the dust was a testimony against those who rejected the message.

But there's also a powerful picture here for us: DON'T CARRY THE DUST OF REJECTION INTO THE NEXT VILLAGE... shake it off!

The dust is the rejection ... leave it there!! Don't take it with you ... (ie. "oh, I shared Christ with this person and they rejected me ... I'll never do that again...")

Don't allow one person's response to determine how you approach the next person.

Don't allow yesterday's rejection to become tomorrow's discouragement.

Because if you carry rejection long enough, eventually it can affect how you see yourself, how you see other people, and whether you're willing to keep going.

Leave it there ... and leave!

And remember: when you're faithfully representing Jesus and somebody rejects His message, the deepest rejection isn't ultimately of you.

Jesus says later:

Luke 10:16:

The one who rejects you rejects me

That's freeing. I'm responsible for faithfully representing Jesus. I'm not responsible for how someone responds to Jesus!

So don't carry rejection Jesus never asked you to carry. Shake the dust off. Leave the disappointment there. Leave the rejection there.

And... Keep Going!!!

There's another village. There's another person. There's another opportunity

Somebody else's rejection of the message must never keep you from bringing that message to the next person!

Go!!!! How do we go?

Go Dependent — trust Him for what you need

Go Content — stay focused on where He's placed you

Go Faithful — and leave the rejection behind

And then we come to verse 6.

Jesus called them. Jesus gave them. Jesus sent them. Jesus said to them how to go...

And what did they do?

Luke 9:6

And they departed and went through the villages,
preaching the gospel and healing everywhere

Three simple words: And They Went!

That's the sermon.... They went!

They didn't wait until they felt more qualified.

They didn't wait until they had more resources.

They didn't wait until they had everything figured out.

They didn't wait until they knew everyone would receive them.

They Just Went!!!

And what happens next is fascinating!

In verses 7–9, Luke tells us that Herod hears about everything Jesus is doing through His disciples, and he's perplexed!

Some were saying John the Baptist had been raised from the dead. Others thought Elijah had appeared, or that one of the ancient prophets had returned. But Herod knew he had ordered John's execution, and now he's hearing about someone doing extraordinary things!

And listen to what Herod says in verse 9:

"John I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?"

And there it is again! WHO IS THIS?

It's the very question the disciples asked when Jesus calmed the storm! You see, the disciples had witnessed His power and were beginning to understand who He was.

Herod was hearing about His power and didn't know what to make of Him! But here's what I don't want you to miss: The disciples went out proclaiming Jesus, and now even Herod is hearing about Him!

That's what happens when God's people go! The message begins reaching people and places it hadn't reached before. And that's still our mission today—not to make ourselves known, but to make JESUS known!

Because ultimately, the most important question anyone will ever answer is the same question Herod asked: WHO IS THIS?

And maybe that's the word some of you need today. Because it's possible to spend years watching Jesus without ever really joining Him in what He's doing.

You can attend church. Listen to sermons. Study the Bible. Go to LifeGroup. Learn theology. Talk about reaching people.

Pray about reaching people

And somehow... never go!

But Jesus didn't call these men merely to watch Him.

He sent them ... and notice what they did ... their mission wasn't to become friends with the world around them ... the goal wasn't to be liked.. and it wasn't even to meet the tangible needs of people ... it was to present the Gospel...

Listen, friendships are important, meeting needs are important, serving others is important ... because it creates the opportunity to bring the Gospel ... you could become friends with everyone and meet all their needs on this earth, but if you don't point them to Jesus you're not doing them any service at all!

He called them, equipped them, sent them, said to them ... And they went!

So here's the question that begs to be answered ... where is Jesus sending you?
Who has God already put in front of you?
Maybe there's somebody you need to talk to.
Maybe there's somebody you need to invite.

Maybe there's a ministry you need to step into.
Maybe there's someone God keeps putting on your heart.
Maybe there's an opportunity you've been postponing because you keep saying: I'm not ready yet....
Maybe you've been asking God for another sign when He's already shown you the next step.
Maybe the dust from your previous experience is keeping from going forward...

Go ANYWAY! Have the conversation. Make the call. Extend the invitation. Serve. Encourage. Tell somebody what Jesus has done for you.

And before you convince yourself that you're not ready, remember who is sending you!
The same Jesus who sends these disciples is the Jesus who commanded the storm!
He's the Jesus the demons obeyed
He's the Jesus who healed the woman nobody else could heal
He's the Jesus who walked into Jairus' house, took a dead little girl by the hand and told her to get up

THAT'S THE JESUS WHO SENDS YOU.

Our confidence isn't ultimately in our ability to go Our confidence is in the authority of the One who sends us! He calls us. He equips us. He sends us. He teaches us how to go.

And then there comes a moment when we have to decide what you're going to do with what He's done for you and what He calls you to do!

The disciples decided.

Luke 9:6: And they departed... They went!

Church, may that be true of us.
May we not simply know about Jesus.
May we not simply celebrate what Jesus has done.
May we not simply gather every Sunday and watch.

MAY WE BE A CHURCH THAT GOES.
 Into our neighborhoods.
 Into our workplaces.
 Into our families.
 Into our community.
 Into whatever place Jesus sends us.

And when He sends us... MAY WE GO!!!