

CONVERSATION GUIDE

1. Take 5-10 minutes to discuss last week's sermon, **Equipped for a Purpose**, covering Ephesians 4:11-13.
2. Having now heard the sermon last Sunday, what do you think "equipped for a purpose" means?

READ Luke 9:1-6

DISCUSS and REFLECT Jesus finally calls upon his disciples to act rather than watch. Up until now they have been primarily watching and hearing. Jesus has been teaching and healing before hundreds of people. The Twelve have heard and observed His message and methods until they know them by heart. Now it is time to send them out to experience how to minister. Jesus equips, coaches and sends out the twelve disciples...but He does it with specific rules that bear our scrutiny.

Gathering, Power, Authority, Sending (9:1-2)

As Jesus moves closer to His departure, the need to hasten and expand the spread of the Gospel has increased. In Luke 8 Jesus was very busy spreading that Gospel and healing. But now it is the time to empower His closest trainees, the Twelve, to gain experience while they spread the Word.

"When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority...and he sent them out..." (9:1-2)

Why did Jesus need to call them together if they were always with Him? Recalling that they were in Galilee, what circumstances could have separated them?

For now it is the Twelve, but later Jesus increases those in training when He sends out the Seventy (Luke 10:1-24). But He never sends out the 'crowds.'

How does Jesus not sending out the crowds relate to our notion that everyone is a disciple, a learner, willing to be equipped and sent out?

Jesus called the Twelve together and gave them both power and authority.

Discuss the distinctions between power and authority.

Compare the power of the Twelve with Jesus' power? From where did their new strength come?

First power and authority, then the commission to preach and heal. Until now the disciples had seen Jesus exercise power over demons. Now he delegates that power and authority to them. This is a limited mission with specific powers.

But it does mean that when one of the Twelve meets a demon, he can operate with full authority over that demon. It isn't the disciples' authority, but a delegated authority from Jesus. It works like a spiritual power of attorney. There had been one light shining in the darkness (John 1:5), now there were twelve.

What are some ways we are called to be the 'light in the darkness' in our lives?

Preaching and Healing Mission (9:1-2) The disciples are also given the power and authority to heal...'serve, care for, wait upon, treat medically, restore, cure.' Also, the disciples are given a mission to preach...'announce, proclaim, make known by a herald.' John the Baptist had this message, proclaiming the good news of God: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matthew 3:2). Jesus took up the same message, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matthew 4:17). Now the Twelve declare the same message.

What are the pitfalls that could alter the message we send today from that which the Twelve declared?

Meaning? This message is not an act of chronology...'the kingdom of God is at hand, today'...but more an act of opportunity...'the kingdom of God is at hand...within your reach!'

The Twelve were sent out to preach and to heal. Today, some preach and leave the healing to others. But Jesus' message comes with action and demonstration. Words and deeds in combination.

How have current community values made healing a function that is not spoken of and disappearing from church rhetoric and action?

Equipment for the Journey (9:3)

"He told them: 'Take nothing for the journey -- no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra tunic.' " (9:3)

When preparing to take a trip, we normally pack as many extras as we can. Why does Jesus tell them to take nothing? Just before Jesus' crucifixion, he gives them different instructions (see Luke 22:35-38). But at this time, Jesus

wants the Twelve to learn how to trust him to provide for them. This is one of the most important lessons we can learn -- that God will provide our needs. "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33).

Why do you think Jesus gave the instructions to take nothing for the journey?

Jesus' instructions are given so as to teach and train the Twelve. Without money you learn to rely on the Lord to fund what he desires. With money you check the extent of your own resources. With a bag you depend upon the resources you've packed. For this mission they aren't even to take a walking stick for protection or comfort. They are to utterly rely on the Lord.

How tempted are you decline to 'go on a mission' because you believe you don't already have everything you need?

Contentment with God's Provision (9:4)

"Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town." (9:4)

The disciples are to be content with the accommodations in whatever home they are invited into, and then they are to get on with their mission of preaching and healing.

How is Luke 9:4 relevant to your selection of mission opportunities? Have you refused a call because the accommodations were not favorable? Are there specific examples you can recall?

We've all had to deal with some kind or measure of suffering. But can we get to where Paul was led: "...I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation...I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:11-13).

Jesus wanted to bring the Twelve and us to that place described in Paul's words.

Judgment on Unreceptive Villages (9:5)

"If people do not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave their town, as a testimony against them." (9:5)

In the first century it was normal for Jews to shake off the dust of a Gentile city from their feet to remove what was ceremonially unclean so as not to contaminate their own land when

they returned. So when the message of the Kingdom is rejected by Jewish villages, the Twelve are to show God's judgment.

What might be Jesus' strategy in making the Twelve not spend time in unreceptive villages?

Preaching and Healing Everywhere (9:6)

"So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere." (9:6)

The Twelve went out in pairs visiting people and preaching the good news that the kingdom of God is at hand. While they were among the people, they healed them.

How ready do you feel to 'go on a mission'? Discuss the 'preparations' you have already made to go out in mission.

APPLY

Discuss the following...Some disciples never seem to get past hearing. They come to church to receive, not to be equipped and sent out on a mission.

Characterize the events of Luke 9:1-6 as a model for spreading the Gospel.

MEMORIZE Luke 9:1-2

What is your call to 'go out in mission?'

New Oxford Annotated Bible, Oxford University Press, 1994; Rev. Dr. Ralph F. Wilson/Joyful Heart Renewal Ministries; Coffman Commentaries on the Bible/StudyLight.org

