

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. **Enjoy discovering more about Him!**

"JESUS > THAN OUR WORDS, BELIEFS AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS" | LUKE 9:28-9:45 | PASTOR ANDREW PAULSEN

WARM-UP QUESTION:

When are people most likely to say the wrong thing or have a misunderstanding?

"Jesus' Glory is Greater than Our Words" (Luke 9: 28-36)

Jesus takes Peter, James and John up a mountain to pray and his glory is revealed, giving a glimpse of the kingdom of God. **What is impressive about this image of the Kingdom of God? How can that impact Jesus' followers?**

"Jesus' Power is Greater than Our Beliefs" (Luke 9: 23)

Jesus is frustrated with the lack of faith of his disciples and the crowd yet heals the demon-possessed boy anyway. **What does this reveal about Jesus? What does that mean for his followers?**

"Jesus' Plan is Greater than Our Misunderstandings" (Luke 9: 24-27)

Jesus takes time to explain how He will be arrested and killed even though his disciples don't understand. **Have you ever struggled to admit to God you don't understand? What are ways to overcome our fear of misunderstanding God?**

REFLECTION QUESTION:

People struggle to say the right things, believe the right things and to understand God. Yet Jesus never leaves nor rejects people who are seeking Him despite their mistakes. His plan can't be stopped by those flaws. **Have you been focusing on God and not your flaws lately, or are you letting your mistakes limit your view of Jesus' greatness. Ask God to remind you of His glory and to show you ways to focus on Him this week.**

2022 July 3 Sunday Message: Jesus is Greater Than Our Words, Beliefs, and Misunderstanding.

Luke 9: 28-45

Intro

Good morning everyone! Thank you for being here on July 4th weekend. Hopefully you have tomorrow off to celebrate the freedoms and privileges our great country offers and that you get some extra rest. That's what Pastor Brian and the rest of his family are doing, enjoying a week off to be together.

This summer has been a little different because my oldest son is starting high school next month! It's crazy for my wife and me. We're in this weird tension of wanting to have special moments with our boys because we only have a handful of summers left with them, and yet recognize that they want to make their own plans with their own friends, which has its benefits when we get extra time alone together. You mean we can watch what we want to watch on the couch and not have to interrupt the video game marathon? But my oldest is doing summer league for high school basketball, which is really cool but at the same time tough because for some reasons many coaches are great at motivating and developing athletes but can't communicate clearly the practice and game schedules, and then there's changes, and suddenly there's two more games we've got to get too! So when I'm not working or doing ministry, I'm a complimentary uber driver for my teenage sons and their friends and teammates.

We're continuing in our journey through the series Lost and Found, our study of the gospel of Luke. This morning we're in Luke 9: 28-45. Last week, Pastor Brian explained how Jesus asked his followers, and us today, 4 important questions that force us to really think about who Jesus is. And if we believe Jesus is the savior of the world and lord of all, then how we act and think, our whole way of life should show that.

But our lives won't show it perfectly. We're flawed, messed up, in fact that's why Jesus had to come to save us. He is greater than our messed-up words, beliefs, and misunderstandings as we'll see today.

Let's Pray

Luke 9: 28-36

²⁸ Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹ And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. ³⁰ And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, ³¹ who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. ³² Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. ³³ And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one

for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said. ³⁴ As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. ³⁵ And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!” ³⁶ And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.”

So let's analyze the scene: Jesus takes only Peter, James and John up a mountain to pray. These 3 guys have been Jesus' closest helpers and most motivated leaders. Peter is all instinct, a jump first and think later kind of guy, which is both endearing and frustrating. James and John are nicknamed “Sons of Thunder” for their temper and passion to be great, which can be useful if harnessed but must be corrected. Like Brian said last week, Luke is purposeful in showing how Jesus intentionally sought time to have extended prayer. And during this prayer time, Jesus will reveal more of himself and the kingdom of God to these important leaders.

Jesus' whole appearance is transformed. It says his face changed, how we don't know. And his clothes were dazzling, bright as lightning. The glory of God, the shekinah glory that is part of his holy nature, was shining through, revealing in a powerful way that Jesus was God's son. And then two heroes for all Jews appear: Moses, representing the Jewish law, and Elijah, representing the Jewish prophets and prediction of end times, and they are talking with Jesus.

Brian said last week most scholars believe that when Jesus said some will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God, Jesus was referring to this moment. That in just a week, 3 disciples would see what the kingdom of God is like. And this vision of the kingdom is awesome.

Moses and Elijah, normal humans, are able to stand in the presence of Jesus in all his glory. They don't have to hide, run away or be ashamed. They talk to Him about what He is doing and His plans. This is what it was like in the garden of Eden before humans ruined it, unfiltered relationship with God.

Real quick, for some reason when I was younger, I always thought Moses and Elijah were encouraging Jesus and giving him wisdom, mainly because they were old men and had lived before Jesus, which was ignorant of me. Jesus is the source of wisdom; he doesn't need any from these guys. It just says they were talking about Jesus' upcoming “departure” which is literally “exodus” in the original language, meaning his death on the cross. Maybe Moses and Elijah are asking Jesus questions: “So wait, you're going to do what? That's what all of what we said and did was leading to?” “Oh... now I think I get it.”

Some Bible scholars get poetic about how Moses finally gets to the promised land with this moment, that even though he died before crossing the Jordan, he got there, and

maybe that's true. But maybe God gave him a private tour before this, we don't know. We don't know exactly how it all works after we die and get to heaven, but I know that it's a place of joy, where every tear is wiped away and there is no more pain. Which to me means people in heaven aren't experiencing regret or FOMO. I don't think Moses said "Finally, I've been wishing to get to the promised land this whole time in heaven. About time God!" When we get to heaven, we won't be lacking anything. When people ask me if my dad in heaven is missing me and the rest of my family, I say I don't think so. He's not sad, he's not longing for more. He is completely satisfied, full of joy, and doing what Moses and Elijah are doing right here, talking to Jesus face to face. Now, I don't have any hard evidence of this, but I like to think that Jesus asks my dad to help prepare the place my mom and the rest of us will have when we join him. Why do we assume that when Jesus said he would go to prepare a place for us that he's doing it by himself? Adam helped in the garden; he was still a servant of God before there was sin. People, especially guys, bond over playing and working together. It's how we build and maintain relationships. I like to think of my dad and Jesus joking around while designing and building a place for my mom, excited over their reunion one day. You can disagree with me, but I think it's very possible. What we do know is God is WITH us, building relationship in indescribable ways in His kingdom.

(Click)

This vision of the kingdom of God, up on the mountain away from all the junk of the world, of walking and talking with Jesus in all His glory, was almost missed by Peter, James and John. They were struggling to stay awake, just like they will later when Jesus asked them to pray as he was in distress over dying on the cross. Isn't that how it is: we humans will miss both the glory of God and the opportunity to serve Him in our weakness and selfishness. But thankfully they get a glimpse of the kingdom of God, and it is awesome! But it's ending, Moses and Elijah are leaving, and like all of us, Peter wants it to last and just blurts out, let's make tents, literally tabernacles, for all 3 of you. Let's go camping! But Luke points out Peter didn't know what he was saying, in Mark's account it says he didn't know what to say because he was afraid. The point is, Peter is just blurting out stuff because he's afraid: afraid of losing out, missing the point, of the kingdom leaving. But his thoughtless words can't overshadow Jesus' glory.

We all want to escape the world, to stay on the mountain and enjoy those spiritual highs. The mystic loves the awe and wonder of this moment. The aesthetic loves the image and vibe of this moment. The scholar loves the dialogue and learning in this moment. All find joy and comfort in this moment, but there's still work to do. Jesus has to still go to the cross. Peter, James and John have to serve and lead the church.

Moses wanted to stay with God on Mount Sinai. Elijah wanted to escape all the stress of serving others as God's prophet. But God encouraged and sent them back to the people and the world, appearing as a cloud.

Clouds are a big deal to Jews. We Californians, we make a big deal over clouds lately, because we're desperate for rain. And then of course we freak out over rain and stay

home, as if driving in the rain is like going on a special ops mission. But Jews, they freak out over a cloud on a mountain because that's how God appeared so many times in all the stories about leaving slavery in Egypt: the cloud protected them from Pharaoh's army, the cloud guided them in the desert, it covered the mountain and thundered when the ten commandments appeared. Clouds coming down are a big deal!

God, represented by the cloud, covers them, and takes Elijah and Moses away, confirming again Jesus is His Son, and adds: Listen to Him. Little did Peter, James and John know how that was going to be so hard to do when they will see their beloved teacher arrested, tortured and killed. In some ways, this moment is going to make the crucifixion so much harder to take: how could Jesus, now that they've seen his glorified body, die? Shouldn't he be the conquering hero, not the convicted criminal? Jesus will be carefully teaching and sharing with his followers important lessons to prepare them as their faith is tested by his death, his exodus, especially Peter. They need to listen to him carefully.

So, what do we do with this scene? Remember, prayer is important. Jesus models it for us here and God reveals awesome things about himself through prayer. And even if we say messed up words like Peter does, it doesn't overshadow God's glory.

But as long as we're here on this side of heaven, there is still work to be done as part of God's plan. We don't pray on the mountain to escape suffering, but to prepare for suffering. However, those mountaintop moments can help carry us, that vision of God's greatness can light our way and defend us from attacks and despair. Years later Peter will write in 2 Peter 1: 16-18 "We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory... we ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain."

Peter chose to remember God's glory over his own messed up words. That's what we should focus on, especially as we serve others.

Luke 9: 37-43

³⁷ On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. ³⁸ And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. ³⁹ And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and shatters him, and will hardly leave him. ⁴⁰ And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." ⁴¹ Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." ⁴² While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father.

Story of July 4th mess with Misha.

Right away, back from the amazing experience in the mountains, Jesus finds drama. A father is desperate to find a solution for his son who is demon-possessed, having terrible seizures self-destructive episodes. And Jesus shows his frustration, it seems to be at the whole audience. Why does Jesus do that? Remember, Jesus is the great teacher, the master communicator. And He knows people don't just pay attention to words or stories; they also are impacted by emotion. God created us to be emotional beings, we're not robots or Spock for trek fans out there. And Jesus expresses his frustration at their lack of faith. But isn't the father showing faith by bringing his son to Jesus' followers? Maybe, but remember the disciples just a little while ago had been sent out in pairs to heal and cast demons out. And they had seen miracles done! But for some reason, this time they're not having success. Why? Mark's gospel gives a more detailed account of this story, and Jesus explains this demon could only be cast out by prayer, which leads me to assume the disciples didn't really pray, nor did the father or others in the crowd. Maybe they thought just saying the right words would work, or using water, or just showing up and placing a hand. Maybe their past success had led them to a false confidence they could do this miracle on their own. We all struggle with relying on past experiences, relationships, sermons, memorized prayers, etc in our spirituality instead of seeking God today. God is not a formula; we can't expect what worked in the past will work again tomorrow. But also, I want to be sensitive to many of you who have sincerely prayed and begged God for healing, for help, for relief, and didn't get the answer you wanted. That may not be due to a lack of faith, but God choosing to grow your faith through tough times. You may be doing exactly what you're supposed to be doing, and God is not frustrated with you but proud of you. The main thing to remember either way, God is with you and loves you.

The crowd and the disciples had misplaced faith, and Jesus lets them know it. And I love Mark's version of this story because of the conversation between the father and Jesus. The father says if you can help, please show compassion. Jesus challenges him, what do you mean if I can, all things are possible for those who believe. And the father, worried he's messed it up, says, I believe, help my unbelief! That is exactly how I've felt and prayed many times. God, please don't hold back a healing for my son, my wife, my mom because of my unbelief. Help me. I know my faith is weak, please overlook it, please help it!

Jesus heals this boy, showing the family compassion. Be honest with Jesus, go to him with your problems and doubts. He may heal, he may choose to help in a different way, but He is with you. Your faith may be weak, have flaws, but that doesn't stop his love.

Luke 9: 44-45

⁴³ And all were astonished at the majesty of God. But while they were all marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, ⁴⁴ "Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men." ⁴⁵ But they did not

understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

There was this man complaining to his friend how he had been hired and fired in just one week.

“Where you were working again?” “The bank”

“What happened?” “This man with a cane came in and asked me to check his balance, so I pushed him and he fell over!”

Terrible, I know. But it highlights something we’ve all experienced: that we were punished for misunderstanding something. Maybe it was in math class and you were made fun of, maybe it was on the job like this guy and it cost you money, maybe it was in a romantic relationship and it led to an argument or a break up. And from those experiences we’ve wrongly learned to hide when we don’t understand something. And we fear being rejected for misunderstanding something. That’s what the disciples are doing here.

I feel bad for Jesus here: he literally says let these words sink into your ears. Don’t miss this guys! But then when Luke and the other gospel writers talked to them years later, they said we didn’t get it. After messing up with the demon-possessed boy, they don’t want to admit it. And Jesus knows, He’s God remember, but he’s going to keep telling them and prepping them for his death and resurrection. It’s like how some parts of a movie make more sense once you get to the end. You go back and say, now I get it! Sixth Sense, that old movie from the last 90s, is the ultimate example of that for me. You mean he was dead the whole time? And that’s what is impactful about the movie, if we could predict everything than we wouldn’t be impressed. The fact that God’s plan doesn’t always makes sense or is only clear at the end shows He is beyond and above us, that Jesus is greater.

Here’s something that we see in all 3 of these stories: people struggle to say, believe and understand. Peter blurts out something that doesn’t make sense. The father and the disciples don’t pray and can’t heal the boy. And the disciples don’t get why Jesus keeps talking about being arrested and killed. Yet Jesus never rejects them. Even in his frustration, he doesn’t leave them.

Because Jesus is God and God is all powerful, all knowing, and everywhere, he is sovereign. He is in control. So our messed up words, messed up beliefs, messed up understanding, can't stop His plan. Yet many of us act like the disciples and are afraid; fearing that God will reject us and leave us out because we didn't get it or do it right. The disciples experience show us the opposite; that Jesus still heals, still keeps teaching and sharing and stays with them. He even reveals his heavenly glory to them. Jesus is faithful!

So as the music team comes out, I want to pray for your fears that keep you distant from God, for your lack of faith and understanding that causes you to seem Him as small or limited. The more we see Jesus as Greater, the more our relationship with Him will bring us joy and peace.