

The First Short-Term Mission Trip

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[0:00] Let's continue to see God's blessing through the preaching of His Word.

Take your Bibles this morning and open them to the Gospel of Luke chapter 9. Chapter 9, and I'm going to read verses 1 through 10. We're finally out of chapter 8.

Finished that last week. And now chapter 9, and chapter 9 does represent a bit of a transition in methodology. We'll get into that here in just a minute.

Let me read the passage, chapter 9, verses 1 through 10. Then He called His twelve disciples together, gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases.

Matthew, by the way, even adds, and raised the dead. He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

[1:07] And He said to them, Take nothing for the journey, neither staffs, nor bag, nor bread, nor money. Do not have two tunics apiece.

Which means they're just going for a short time. By the way, you may have noticed and titled the message this morning, the first short-term mission trip. And that's what this is.

And by the way, when we get finished with the text, you'll see it pretty clearly. They went on the short-term mission trip, then came back and reported about it, and then they had a rest time. So it's just like mission trips.

Okay. Thought I'd just add that in there. That's not part of Scripture. He said, Whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart.

And whoever will not receive you, When you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them. Let me insert this here also.

[2:11] The testimony, I think, is the serious consequence of rejecting the gospel. So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

Now, Herod the Tetrarch heard of all that was done by him, and he was perplexed. Because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead. That would be John the Baptist, of course.

And by some that Elijah had appeared. And by others that one of the old prophets had risen again. Herod said, John, I have beheaded. But who is this of whom I hear such things?

So he sought to see him. The apostles, when they had returned, told him all that they had done.

Then he took them and went aside privately into a deserted place belonging to the city called Bethsaida.

All right, now, let's begin this morning by putting some things into perspective. I think that would be a good place to start.

[3:17] You probably know, surely know, that Jesus' ministry was really very brief. In fact, it lasted only three years. Three-year ministry, very short ministry. And so you should know that when we get here to chapter 9, his ministry is already half over.

However, we've spent probably, could spend more time looking at these passages than he spent in all of his ministry. We really wanted to dig deeply. And so it's half over.

And he spent half of his ministry in one region of what was formerly called the land of Israel, the promised land. And that would be in the region of Galilee.

So he spent this time in one area in Galilee. And in chapter 9, verse 51, and we'll get to this possibly next week, the Bible says that he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.

So there's about to be a change here from the region of Galilee to the region of Judea. That would be the region where Jerusalem is located. All right, so there's going to be a change here.

[4:24] Now, you also probably know and certainly know that his ministry ended very abruptly. Not only a short period of time, but it ended very abruptly.

It ended with his death upon the cross. And so then we can understand that in approximately 18 months from now, from here, from this spot, he will be arrested, judged, and condemned and executed.

He will be crucified. Just 18 months from this point, all that's going to take place. And it's also important to note that during the first half of his ministry, here in the region of Galilee again, Jesus was the only preacher, the only teacher, the only healer, the only miracle worker during these 18 months, the only minister.

He did it all. And so then I would say to you that chapter 9 represents a major shift in methodology. Jesus, at this point, chose to multiply the exposure of the gospel by sending his apostles, his 12, on, again, a short-term mission project to the region of Galilee.

They went all around that area. And Jesus, by the way, is going to do this again in Luke chapter 10 with 70 of his disciples, not apostles, but 70 disciples.

[5:50] He's going to send them out. Again, as here, he's going to send them to the region of Galilee. Understand something, though, about these apostles.

Just as kind of a side note, and this is, I think, helpful to connect us in here because we're very much like the disciples, like the apostles.

Other than the fact that Jesus called them, chose them, they were really very ordinary men, right? Nothing very special about them.

As MacArthur, John MacArthur, noted in one of his famous books, popular books, they were just 12 ordinary men. And when you think about it, they were just a handful of uneducated fishermen, most of them.

And then there was a despised tax collector among their number and a political extremist by the name of Judas. And that made up the apostles, the first 12, the 12.

[6:49] And really, I think you would agree, not exactly the cream of the crop. But you know, that's the way God works. Has always done it.

As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1.26, For you see your calling, that not many wise according to the flesh, that is according to the world's perspective, world's standards, not many wise according to the world's standards, not many mighty, not many noble are called.

That's why he called me, you know. And that's why he's called all of us. That's God's method, God's way. He doesn't pick the cream of the crop, at least the cream of the crop from the world's perspective.

Then let me point out something else here from the passage that I think should help us discover the main point, the main idea. And it's this.

Other than at the time of Jesus' birth, this is the first time any representative of the Roman government has paid any attention to him.

[7:56] You might not have noticed that, but it's rather interesting. This is the first time that we have that happening. Now, he had had a number of run-ins with the Jewish hierarchy of the day, but he has gone virtually unnoticed by the real power of the day, the superpower of the day, and that would be the mighty Roman Empire.

Gone unnoticed by them until now, here in chapter 9. And it's interesting that King Herod the Great was the one who tried to snuff out Jesus' life soon after he was born.

It was Herod the Great who did that, and you remember that story. But now it's one of his sons, also named Herod, Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch, that is, one of four rulers in the area of the Jews.

And he was the ruler of Galilee, and he has now taken a, I would say, a wicked interest in Jesus, and the activity of Jesus and his disciples.

Now, I said that this might help us discover the main point of the passage because in this passage, we have the intersecting, for the first time, the intersecting of two kingdoms.

[9:12] Two kingdoms. We have the kingdom of the Romans, the superpower of the day. And we have, on the other hand, the kingdom of God.

In this passage, these two kingdoms are intersecting, beginning to intersect with one another. Or to put it another way, an earthly kingdom and a heavenly kingdom. A, therefore, temporary kingdom and an eternal kingdom.

And I would say, even more importantly, these two kingdoms represent, on the one hand, the kingdom whose real king is Satan, by the way, the prince of this world, according to John 12, verse 31.

And on the other side, the kingdom whose king, with a capital K, is none other than our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, according to Titus 2, verse 13.

These two kingdoms intersect one another here in this passage for the first time in Jesus' ministry. For the first time in the Gospels.

[10:15] The history of the Gospels. And so, you have Herod the Tetrarch taking notice of, quote, all that was done by Jesus.

And we could assume including his disciples. Because Jesus has sent out his twelve. And they're going out and they're proclaiming the Gospel. And they're healing the sick. And even raising the dead.

And all of this is happening. Whereas before there was just one man doing that. Now we have one plus twelve doing that. Multiplying the ministry. And so, Herod is taking notice.

And with him, the Roman Empire. But not only that, but we have also him fearing that possibly Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead. So he's taking notice of Jesus on a couple of different accounts here.

And he's also then asking a question, isn't he? In verse 9, Who is this of whom I have, I hear such things? And not only that, but he's seeking to see him.

[11:18] He wants to see him. Wants to see Jesus for himself. And I think we know why. I mean, he's already put John the Baptist to death. And if he's beginning to believe the rumors that Jesus is just simply John raised from the dead, then I would imagine that he wants to see Jesus so that he can do it again.

Get rid of this John the Baptist. Alright, but Jesus represents, that's the kingdom of Rome. Jesus, however, represents an entirely different kingdom.

It is, according to verse 2, what? The kingdom of God. Now, we've already seen this in the Gospels. Luke has already mentioned the kingdom of God and even the preaching of the kingdom of God. But this is the first time that we have in the same passage two kingdoms side by side and also intersecting with one another. The kingdom of Rome, the kingdom of man, really the kingdom of Satan, and the kingdom of God.

Now, the question for us this morning is, to which kingdom do you belong? You cannot belong to both.

[12:31] And so, to which kingdom have you given your allegiance? You cannot serve both kingdoms.

And so, to consider, or consider not only that question, but to answer that question, we must consider what this passage tells us about the kingdom of God.

And it tells us quite a lot, actually. First of all, we should consider from this passage the sovereign master of this kingdom.

The kingdom of God. The sovereign master of the kingdom of God. Who's the king of this kingdom? Well, verse 1 says, look at it again. Then he called his twelve disciples together. He gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases. He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

[13:33] So he sent them to preach the kingdom of God and the healing of the sick and the curing of diseases and the raising of the dead, the exercising of demons was all to validate the truth of the message of the kingdom of God.

All right, so here is, I think, a passage that tells us about the master, the sovereign master, of the kingdom of God.

And before we think about that, maybe we should talk a little bit about what the kingdom of God is. I mean, what is the Bible talking about when it talks about the kingdom of God?

A couple of different thoughts about that out there. Let me just give you my understanding in a general sense, in kind of the larger picture, the creator of all things, that would be Yahweh God, He is the King of the universe.

All right, so in the large perspective, in the bigger picture, God is the King of the universe. David wrote in Psalm 103, verse 19, He said, The Lord has prepared His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all.

[14:49] That's all conclusive. That is, God's kingdom in that larger sense, in the bigger picture, in the eternal sense, is the King that rules over all, including the Roman Empire.

Any empire that exists today, isn't that fair? including our empire, called America. But in a particular sense, more specific sense, in the narrow sense, God is King over His chosen people Israel. Very clearly, and we can understand that all throughout the Old Testament, and even into the New. In the wilderness, after the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, remember that story, out of Exodus? After they were delivered out of the bond of Egypt, Israel then became a nation. They became a theocracy. That is, God was their King. They were the Kingdom of Yahweh God.

Later, Saul eventually became Israel's first King, and then after him, David, and many others. But they were not rulers in the absolute sense of Israel.

[16:04] Nor did any of Israel's kings who followed them. They were the Lord's anointed, and their sovereignty was granted them by the King of Heaven. The King over all, and certainly the King of His chosen people, Israel.

But you also know from the Old Testament that because of Israel's rebellion and their unrighteousness, their kingdom was removed. It was overthrown. Beginning with the Assyrians and the fall of the northern kingdom, Israel, and then later, very shortly after that, the Babylonians, the kingdom of Babylon, and the fall of the southern kingdom, Judah.

And God said through the prophet Ezekiel, in Ezekiel chapter 21 and verse 27, I will overturn, overturn, overturn, overturn. He says it three times.

Judah, I will overturn them, and it shall be no more until. I'm so glad he added that until. Until what? Well, he says, until he come, whose right it is, that is right it is to rule, and I will give it to him, the kingdom to him.

Now, who will come? And who's he talking about? Whose right is it to sit on David's throne? To whom will it be given? Well, the Messiah, the Christ, and we know him by the name of Jesus.

[17:28] Now, folks, this was the messianic hope of the Jews when Jesus came the first time. You need to understand that. It's very clear as you read the gospel accounts.

They expected the Messiah to come and to immediately reestablish the throne of their most favorite king, most beloved king, King David.

Even Jesus' own disciples had this understanding initially. They were expecting this very thing. And all Israel was expecting this. And you even remember when Jesus was born, shortly after he was born, and aged Simeon took him in his arms and he looked into the face of the Lord Jesus and he said, here is the consolation or the salvation of national Israel.

And indeed he is. But just not when Simeon thought he would be. And other Jews living in that day. And so what they failed to see was that the establishment, there was the establishment of a much larger kingdom than just Israel.

And also what they failed to see was the church age. The age in which we're living now between the two comings of Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[18:46] Paul called it the mystery of the Christ. In Ephesians chapter 3 verses 4 and 5 he says, Which in other ages, that is the Old Testament, was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs. Fellow heirs with whom? God's chosen people. The Jews. Fellow heirs and of the same body. And partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel, by the good news.

Now, don't misunderstand though. The church is not the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is not the church. They're not synonymous. The kingdom of God existed before the church age, before the church was established.

And the kingdom of God will continually be eternal after the church age is long over. But, we can know that the church is in one sense, or does in one sense represent the kingdom of God on this earth today.

And it's an internal kingdom. Even though the church, local churches are visible, the kingdom is internal. It's invisible. But the ultimate fulfillment of the kingdom of God will occur when Jesus comes the second time and establishes his external kingdom.

[20:12] And in my view, that is the visible, physical, physical, excuse me, physical kingdom on earth when he will rule for a thousand years.

And we shall rule with him. Praise the Lord. Now, Zachariah prophesied of that day. He said, It shall be in that day that living water shall go out from Jerusalem.

And the Lord shall be king over all the earth. And in that day shall there be one Lord and his name one. That's Zachariah chapter 12 and also chapter 14.

Daniel also, when he got to the feet and the toes of the image, remember, in Nebuchadnezzar's dream and he's interpreting those ten toes and he says here that in the days of these kings, those ten toes represented ten kings, in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom.

So it's a divine kingdom that will be one day established and its origin is God. But he goes on to say, which shall never be destroyed and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever.

[21 : 32] It's an eternal kingdom. Alright, now, that's all future still for us today. That hasn't happened yet. We're living between the two comings.

We're living in the church age. And so you see, upon Jesus' first coming, that's what we read about here in the Gospels, upon His first coming, His external kingdom, His visible kingdom has been postponed until His second coming.

And so, to understand that at His first coming, He established an internal kingdom. Invisible, spiritual kingdom.

And it is in the hearts of born-again believers that Jesus has established His throne. In your heart. In my heart.

And so today, this Jesus reigns in the hearts of His redeemed. And it is through our lives and through the testimony of His word that He expresses His will here on this earth.

[22 : 44] Do you know that? And so the blood-bought subjects of His kingdom are right here today. Look around you. We're right here.

Now, then, getting to our text, I mean, that's what the kingdom of God is. Getting to the text, what is God saying to us about His kingdom?

Well, we begin, really, by looking at the other kingdom that is referred to here in the passage. The Roman Empire. represented by who? Herod.

Herod the Tetrarch. And Herod was a pagan, right? Yes, he was. Herod was a wicked man. Herod had John the Baptist beheaded because he cared more about the wicked desires of his daughter than he cared about justice and what was right.

And so Herod represents the Roman Empire and yet, though he's a wicked man, a pagan, Herod asks the most relevant question that anyone could ever ask and should ask.

[23 : 53] And he does so there in verse 9. Speaking of Jesus, what did he say? He asked, who is this of whom I hear such things? That's an incredible question.

And I would say to you that the answer to that question is the difference between eternity in heaven or eternity in hell. You better get that question right. And other believers really have been asking that question all along.

And by the saving grace of God, some of them have come to the right answer and have been gloriously saved. But I would say that most of us in this building are not unbelievers. Maybe all of us are believers.

Born again believers by the grace of God. And yet we still must constantly revisit that question. We need to revisit that here today.

I mean, if a pagan king asks the question out of his own ignorance, then we should ask the question because of our forgetfulness. And we have forgotten this about Jesus, I think, and do nearly every day.

[24 : 56] Who is Jesus? Who is he? Merciful Savior of our souls? Absolutely. Praise the Lord that he is. Gracious provider of all of our needs, spiritual and otherwise?

Absolutely. Certainly he is that, but what else? He's king. He's king, Jesus. And he is king because he is God.

All right, understand that. He is God. He is the sovereign master of the kingdom of God. And therefore, he is your sovereign king and my sovereign king to whom belongs our allegiance in everything in our lives.

And I would say that verses 1 and 2 reveal this truth about Jesus. What is Jesus doing here? Well, just notice the verbs. And you'll find out what he's doing.

Verbs are what, you know, give action to things. And so, what are the verbs? Well, what's he doing? He's calling and giving and sending. Those three things. He called his twelve together, his disciples

together.

[26:08] He gave them power and authority. And he sent them to preach the kingdom, the kingdom of God. Now, who is it that does that?

Who does that? Who is it in the Bible that calls, gives, and sends? God does that. 1 Thessalonians 2, verse 12, walk worthy of God who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

And in the Old Testament, you look in the Old Testament, the pattern is there. God called his people, Israel, out of Egypt, separated them unto himself. He gave them his blessings, his promised land, and God sent them to evangelize the world of man.

Now, they failed miserably on that score. That's what they were sent to do. And then when we get into the New Testament, Jesus called his church out of the world.

That's what we are. We're called out ones. Ecclesia. We're called out. God called his church out from the world and Jesus gave us spiritual gifts and promises and privileges.

[27:22] The Bible says in Ephesians 4, He led captivity captive and gave gifts. And knowing that, we are sent. Jesus sent us to do what? To evangelize the world of man.

We are, Colossians 4, 11, fellow workers for the kingdom of God. God does this. You see, He is the sovereign master of the kingdom of God and therefore, this Jesus is your sovereign king if indeed He truly reigns in your heart.

Does He? I hope so. And if He does, then you should understand something else about the kingdom of God. Not only the sovereign master of the kingdom, but also the supreme mission of the kingdom.

The supreme mission of the kingdom. Jesus identified the supreme mission of the kingdom of God in verse 2 when He said that He sent them or the Bible says He sent them to do what?

Preach. Preach the kingdom of God. That's the supreme mission. You say, Pastor, we're all called to be preachers? Well, in this sense, you are.

[28:41] That's our supreme mission. You see, the word preach here is a very important word in the New Testament. I've shared this with you before or noted this a number of times.

It is the common Greek word keruso. Keruso, that's the word here. Keruso. You say, well, what is that? Well, in early biblical times when Luke was written, this would have been very familiar to his readers, very familiar because of its secular use.

It referred to the function of an official herald of the king. That's what this word keruso refers to.

The function of the herald. An official herald. Who, of course, would travel throughout the kingdom and the herald would proclaim the words of the king.

Some new law or edict. Some new, some special announcement perhaps. Some news about the kingdom and so forth.

[29:54] He was the official herald. And the official herald or the kerux was what he was. He did not create his own message when he went out to the kingdom.

He'd be put to death if he did that. He did not create his own message nor would he speak on his own authority. He would speak exactly what the king commissioned him to speak and he would do so in the king's name and he would also do it by the king's authority.

By the king's full authority. And so here's what we need to understand. Every one of us, every single one of us have been called, gifted, and sent by the sovereign king of the kingdom.

Every single one of us. Every one of us. We are heralds of the kingdom. Heralds. We announce it's coming. We announce it's true king.

We announce it's good news to all if they will believe it. And we announce it's requirement for citizenship also. And what is it? Repentance and faith in the true king, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[31:11] Now, I should add here that we have not been given the responsibility to bring the kingdom of God in. There's a lot of God's people who are a little confused about that.

bringing in the kingdom of God is God's business. That's what He does. It's not my kingdom, not your kingdom, it's not the Baptist kingdom, it's not the Highland Park kingdom.

Now, to be sure, we seek the kingdom, every one of us, don't we? We pray in the Lord's prayer, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. We're praying for something that hasn't yet happened.

And we seek it and we pray for it and we look for it and long for it and we serve the kingdom and we work in the kingdom and we may even be called upon to suffer for the kingdom.

But, clearly, we can inherit the kingdom but we cannot give the kingdom to anyone. It is God's gift alone to give. Our supreme mission is to herald its coming.

[32 : 21] and its king to herald its good news to everyone. And we're assured that some will believe.

Many will believe. And that leads to one final thing this morning. The saving message of the kingdom.

What's the message? We're just to go out and say, the kingdom's here, the kingdom's here. No, there's some substance to this. There's content to this message.

Verse 6 says, so they departed and went through the towns preaching the gospel. Do you see that there? Preaching the gospel and healing everywhere and again, healing everywhere to validate the divine truth of their message.

And so, what is the message? This gospel. Well, we have the word preaching here again in our English text.

[33 : 28] We have it twice now. Preach the kingdom of God and now preaching the gospel. And yet, it's a different word in the Greek text.

Different word entirely, though sometimes used interchangeably in the Bible. In fact, the phrase preaching the gospel, do you see that there?

That's just one word in the Greek text. And it is the Greek word euangelizo. You may have heard that word before, but you certainly have heard the word we have in the English that comes from that Greek word and it's evangelize.

That's what they were doing. They went everywhere evangelizing. They were called, gifted, and sent to evangelize. And that's exactly what we were called, gifted, and sent to do.

To evangelize. And the word euangelizo, from which we get our word evangelize, means good news. It means good news. That's why it's translated quite often gospel.

[34 : 37] But since it's a verb here, it's preaching the gospel, preaching the good news. All right, now I've got a question for you. Put on your thinking caps. What do you suppose was the content of this good news?

That the disciples went everywhere preaching. What was the content? What was the substance of it? The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ? Well, how could that be?

Because none of that had happened yet. Right? I mean, Jesus is still alive. And none of that, but though the disciples should have, by this point, been beginning to understand and see this, they did not understand this.

So what was the message of good news? It was what the cross would accomplish. Even though the cross had not come yet.

it's what it would accomplish and did accomplish. And what was that? Well, you see, in the Garden of Eden, now follow me here, this is very important, way back there in the Garden of Eden, Satan tempted Eve and also Adam.

[36 : 11] I believe Adam was standing there, by the way. though we can safely say he tempted Adam and Eve. And he tempted them into believing that there was a better kingdom than the one that God had created.

A better kingdom than the one God had established. The one they were the king and queen of. Satan tempted them into believing that.

And Satan tempted them into believing that they could make their own kingdom. They could be their own king and queen of it. And that they could decide their own destiny.

And that they could create their own joy, satisfaction, fulfillment. And that they could even be themselves their own hope.

That's what he tempted them into believing. And he tempted them into believing that all of this could be theirs apart from God. That in fact God was the one that was holding them back from it.

[37 : 36] That he wasn't being fair with them. they really deserved better. God was withholding them. That's what he tempted them into believing. And guess what?

They believed it. They believed it. And they were utterly ruined. And with them all of mankind. kind. That's what we understand about the origin of sin. And so they became really slaves to their own rebellion.

them. But here's the good news. It's the good news of the kingdom. The good news of the kingdom that Jesus had sent every one of his disciples not only then but also now.

The good news of the kingdom is, and listen to this very carefully, God in his grace and mercy has not left us to our own destruction. He's not left us to an eternity of separation from him.

[38:57] And so instead he himself has come in the flesh to rescue us from the dominion of darkness. From the kingdom of Satan.

From sin and condemnation. and the bondage that all that brings. God himself in the person of his son, Lord Jesus Christ, has come to welcome us into his kingdom by grace and through faith he welcomes sinners to have everlasting kingdom of life.

That's good news. And it is the cross that accomplished that. We're not just going out and saying, holding up crosses and saying, just believe in the cross.

We're believing in what that cross accomplished for us, for eternity. What God has done for us. Something that we could not do for ourselves.

That's good news. And that's some good news that should excite us in our evangelism. the saving message.

[40:32] That's the saving message. Adieu, God.