

01.25.26

Luke

Chapter 9 - A Peculiar Kind of Calling
A Counter-Intuitive Mindset (vs. 46-56)

Luke 9:46-56: An argument started among them as to which of them might be the greatest. But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart, took a child and stood him by His side, and said to them, “Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great.” John answered and said, “Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow along with us.” But Jesus said to him, “Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you.” When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem; and He sent messengers on ahead of Him, and they went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make arrangements for Him. But they did not receive

Him, because He was traveling toward Jerusalem. When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” But He turned and rebuked them, [and said, “You do not know what kind of spirit you are of; for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.”] And they went on to another village.

I appreciate your text that actually added on that one part that's left out a lot of passages (verses 55-56). And of course, what we know is that originally it was not in the text, but it was added, but it was a good thing to add because it is true. As we come to the Gospel of Luke, I want to remind you of what Luke is doing.

So, if you just go back to Luke 1, Luke actually wants us to know how he wrote this letter. Of course, we know the power of the Spirit of God moving him to do so. But what was the Spirit of God moving him to do?

And he writes this, if you just read at the beginning of this,

(Luke 1:1) “Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us,

(Luke 1:2) just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word,

(Luke 1:3) it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus.”

The misunderstanding of this passage oftentimes reflects that people are thinking that God is really interested in just giving us kind of a historic setting of consecutive order of things. And so, what He's doing is He's arranging this order so that we can know when it happened, one thing right after another. And to some degree, I wouldn't totally rule that out. However, that's not the focus of the text. The focus of the text, and one of the words that he uses within the passage is “*anastassomi*,” which that particular word is making reference to arranging and

setting an order in a particular way that you would see a sequence of events tying together. So, as he writes this, he not only writes things that happened around the same time, which we won't go into the whole chronological aspects of it, which is not the focus of what he's doing, but what he's wanting us to know is that this happened at this time, so that this would happen after that, and this would happen after that; so that it would all confirm what he was doing in this setting. So, each setting then relates to the other setting, and it helps us understand, "Oh, I get it, he's taking us to this point." And so, it's that consecutive sequence that he wants us to see.

As we come to this passage, and in particular Chapter 9, what we see is a consecutive order dealing with, and specifically in Chapter 9, He's dealing with the work of the disciples. He's dealing with the ministry that He's called them to do. So, the consecutive sequence that you see coming one right after another is dealing with not only what they're called to do, but helping them focus on what is important, keeping their eyes off of their own ability. In

other words, it's kind of like a training session that's going on, and it's a peculiar kind of calling.

As we've been going through the Gospel of Luke, and if you just look with me at some of the titles that we've given you from Chapter 1 to Chapter 8, what you're going to see is that obviously Luke is telling us that things aren't the way that you would think they would be in the kingdom of God. And so, he begins by the whole inconceivable announcement that this old woman is going to have a child, that is Elizabeth, and how would that happen? And through that, John the Baptist would be born, and what an amazing event that would be. And then you have this woman that is a virgin, and she's going to be with child. Here again, the details of such, only Luke records. And you go, "Well, how is it that a virgin was going to have a child?" And you go, "These are inconceivable announcements that are being given." And he states that, and he kind of puts them all together. By the time you go to Chapter 2, you see a most unusual advent that takes place. I mean, who would think that the audience would be shepherds and that the child would be

lying in a manger? None of that makes any sense about the King of kings and Lord of lords, Emmanuel, God with us. It just doesn't make any sense. So, everything that he begins to display, whether it's that or the kind of authority that is being used within the text, is different than we would think.

Chapter 3- A Different Kind of Authority

Chapter 4- An Unorthodox Power

Chapter 5- An Unconventional Intent

Chapter 6- An Uncommon Perspective

Chapter 7- An Unbelievable Faith.

What is faith? What is He really looking for? What kind of faith is He looking for? And of course, you have this man that's not even a Jew. He's a Gentile that believes the way that he should. Jesus points this out, "This is what I'm looking for." And of course, then He goes into "groundbreaking attraction." It's kind of a play on words as He gives the parable of the soils. And you realize that the thing that causes one to be attracted to the Lord is breaking the ground. It's that soft soil. And soft soil

doesn't happen unless you've had some hard knocks. There's a lot of plowing. And you get rid of those rocks; you get rid of those boulders; you get rid of the hardness of the topsoil so that the softness of the heart can receive with sincerity and truth. And so, you see that in particular in Chapter 8.

By the time we come to Chapter 9, you have this “peculiar calling,” and He calls these men that really a mix match of individuals. And He deems them to be His disciples. He sends them out with power to do magnificent things. And as He sends them out, you realize that they're out to do a work at proclaiming a message. They're not out there in any way for personal benefit. That's given as He goes into, “You're going to go to the city.” He says, “Don't worry about taking stuff with you. Don't worry about taking money from them. It's not for your personal benefit. It's not for recognition. It's not for affirmation. None of this is for you. And don't even worry about your security and safety.” Because He actually puts within the text the whole aspect of Herod in that particular region and how he had already killed John the Baptist. So, you would think

that, well, that wouldn't be advantageous. You know, you don't want to be too loud about Jesus that was being announced by John the Baptist if Herod's around. And He says, "Don't hold back. Just go for it." And so, it's a very unusual calling, the message; they're called to follow the paragon. And the paragon is, or the example is, Jesus.

Now, what's strange about that, if you look in Luke 9:22, Jesus tells them,

(Luke 9:22) "... "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed..."

"Okay, follow Me."

He then goes on and says,

(Luke 9:23) "... "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."

So, really there's nothing about this that says it's really a super duper wonderful calling. I mean, everything about this says that it's about self-denial, it's about sacrifice. And I'm going to be disapproved by those that seem to

matter the most. So, the disapproval and the disdain is by the chief priests, the elders, the scribes. These are the people that are looked up to. And He says, "These are the people that are going to look down on you," and "Come follow Me." So, everything about this is very peculiar, very strange, and as we're coming to the text, clearly counterintuitive.

Now, the reason why I'm so fond of passages like this is because it once again reveals the struggles of these disciples. Though Peter did walk on water, on the whole, they weren't people that walked on water. And only God could do that wonderful miracle. But the fact of the matter is, they were just fishermen. They were just common Joes that were called, and they believed. They believed in simplicity of spirit, and God began to use them. However, they're also common Joes in that they make mistakes. They feel things like we feel. I mean, they have certain ways of doing things. And when you consider that the intuitive nature that we have really is about human logic. It's about human reasoning. It's about the, I would say, typical inclinations that we have. There are

certain inclinations that just come natural. I mean, like protecting yourself if you see something flying in your face. You just naturally do that, you know. And some of you probably would not only do that, but you would yell at the person who threw it. And that would just be a knee-jerk reaction, but it would be clearly an intuition of sorts, intuitive. So, there is an intuitive mindset that's actually being described within this particular passage, and it's that mindset that Jesus begins to address. And it starts off with an argument, which once again, it's our nature to seek high positions. In fact, just take a moment and look with me in James 4, just to be reminded, if you're ever confused about "Where do arguments come from? Why do people get in arguments?" Well, James just puts it in a nutshell. So, in case you ever forget; sometimes you get in an argument, you go, "I wonder why we're in this," you know, maybe McCoys or whatever, but you go, "Why were we in this argument?" Well, James 4 says this,

(James 4:1) “What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?”

(James 4:2) You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.

(James 4:3) You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives...”

So, the whole point is that you're jealous, you're envious, you're fighting for your own. I mean, why are you arguing?

So, we go back and we find them arguing. I wonder what they're arguing about. Well, it actually says in the passage,

(Luke 9:46) “An argument started among them as to which of them might be the greatest.”

Surprise, surprise! Look, it's our nature to seek prominence. It's our nature to impress by somehow affecting within our status a greater importance. You know, “I'm more important.” We don't say that out loud,

but we just let people know the wonderful things that we've done. And we do it in a subtle way. That's really nice of us to do that. But it's not like we're braggadocious or anything. But after a while, it becomes adversarial, doesn't it? Because it's surprising, a lot of people just don't agree that I'm as wonderful as I think I am. And I can't quite grasp why that would be true. But as we come to the passage, He's reminding us that it is the proclivity of man to argue, to be divided. Actually, in verse 46, an argument is really rooted in the term division. And here again, the division that begins to occur is because each one is perceiving himself to be more great than the other. It is that desire for that prominence that I think psychologists say that it actually reveals deep-seated insecurities. I mean, that's the world actually coming to that conclusion with it. I think it's pretty interesting. So, self-prominence and self-aggrandizement really is revealing deep-seated insecurities over compensating for low self-esteem. That's what people are doing. So, what, the disciples had low self-esteem? Well, it looks that way. I think it's to be noted that within the beginning of this, of course, James and John and Peter were on the Mount of

Transfiguration, but other disciples, they had gone out and were working miracles. But one in particular, they couldn't cast out the demon. And the father comes and he goes, "Your guy's messed up." And I suppose they're kind of walking around like this (*heads down*). And then probably one guy goes, "We could have done it if we were there." And then they started arguing and that's probably what came up. But that was them feeling bad about the fact that they weren't performing. And once again, thinking in terms of it's about their performance, not about God's power. And Christ will make it clear, it's prayer and fasting, it's you turning to God and trusting in Him that your power is, not in you. Paul will even state in 2 Corinthians that "When I'm weak, then He's strong, and God's strength is made perfect in my weakness." Most of us wouldn't feel that we should boast in our weakness, but Paul says that's what you ought to boast. If you're going to boast, boast in your weakness. Look, I'm a firm believer in the pastor self-deprecating himself. That means that I should, almost every opportunity I get, share with you my humanness and the struggles that I have. Because the fact of the matter is, if God didn't empower

me, this is going to be a shocker, I think I'd be worse than most of you. It's the love of God that in any way saves any of us. And I'm acutely aware of that.

So, as we come to this, here again, they're arguing; there arose. There's a division over who's going to be the greatest.

(Luke 9:47) “But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart, took a child...”

Now, the name that he used, *“paidion,”* within the text makes reference to a picture of one that is little, and I would say more specifically is emphasizing the fact that the child is less advanced. And sometimes we think in a way that He put the child in His lap because the child is innocent. And that's not this particular text. He's putting this child in to show one that is perceived as little, less advanced, and really deficient in an ability to comprehend things. But Jesus' receptivity to that child; here again it's probably an epiphany, but all kids are not cooperative. In fact, most of them aren't. And they're deficient in the ability to sit down and reason with them. And because of that, it can get really frustrating. Now, you as an adult,

you should know better than to argue with them. You ever argued with a two-year-old? You're not going to win. So, don't even bother. You know that old phrase, "Because I said so"? That's a good one. You keep that one. I've oftentimes used, "I'm bigger than you." And the classic, "I was born first." So, you can use all of those if you want to. But the point is that somebody has to be the bigger one in the room. And there is a realization that this child is not able to handle certain things. And He says, "Why don't you think in terms of being the bigger one in the room?" It's a pretty interesting picture. And that would mean that you would be willing to receive, and that's the word He's going to use within the text, one that is deficient in his ability to understand.

Probably one of the best parallel passages to this is found in Romans 15, in which Paul writes, "You who are strong ought to bear the weakness of those without strength and not just please yourself." And in many respects, that's one of the great themes of 1 Corinthians 13, where Paul is saying to the church at Corinth, "You need to grow up." And that Chapter 13 begins to describe what "grow up"

looks like. And it's the picture of love. And so, as he ends that chapter, he says, "When I was a child, I used to think as a child. I used to act like a child. When I became a man, I put away childish things." So, as he describes love, "Love does not seek its own." Yeah, but a child does. And love does not brag, but a child does. You realize that there are going to be people that you're going to be ministering to that just aren't grown-ups. I mean, they may be old, but they're just not grown-ups. And who's going to be the man in the room? He's really calling His disciples to step up.

So, the passage reads this way,

"But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart, took a child and stood him by His side,

(Luke 9:48) and said to them, "Whoever receives...""

And once again, the emphasis of the text is, the receptivity or the embracing and not rejecting those who are deficient in their ability to have a relationship or to think right. There are going to be brothers that are going to be weaker, and they're going to be bragging. Why don't you not get into it with them? Why don't you just say

something like, “You know, brother, you are really good at that. I really appreciate that.” “I wasn't expecting that.” Take him by surprise.

“... “Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great.””

He's not saying you need to be like the child. He's saying you need to be least in rank. In other words, put yourself in a lowly position. Humble yourself so that you might serve. And really, if you think about it, parenting is a humbling position when you think about parenting. Just put it in that particular context. And you become the servant and you become least. The child becomes predominant in the sense that the child will have demands and needs that you begin to serve. So, He's fundamentally saying, stop seeking the position of prominence, which once again is fundamentally our nature.

There's a passage in Romans 12, if you look at that with me, and you can't help but see how God is keeping us

from being insane. So, God's going to keep you sane, basically.

So, it reads this way,

(Romans 12:1) “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”

We go, “Well, that sounds like a lot of work.”

And then he states this in verse 2,

(Romans 12:2) “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed...”

It's actually where we get the word “metamorphosis”. Which, to me, the interesting thing about it is that metamorphosis, you think about a butterfly, a worm, you know, basically the worm becomes covered up and then it comes out a butterfly, right? So, the old nature becomes hidden. The way that it's put in Romans 6 is, we die and now we're raised through Christ. So, you have this kind of metamorphosis that takes place.

Watch the phrase here,

“... transformed by the renewing of your mind...”

That's a complete renovation that begins to happen within your life.

“... so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

(Romans 12:3) For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think...”

Of course, we're talking about renewing of the mind, right? Renewing of the mind.

“... not to think more highly of himself...”

Now, the phrase that is being used in the Greek is dealing with somebody that has exaggerated their image of themselves. We talked about narcissism, but there are all kinds of exaggerations. I mean, you could run into histrionics who are basically show-offs. So, show-offs always want to be on stage. You ever met anybody that always wants to be on stage? It almost seems like everything they do is on stage, which is an exaggerated image of yourself. Now, you say, “Well, what's wrong with an exaggerated image of myself?” And Paul would say,

“That's insanity.” And if you think about it, this is where people have their emotional problems. Fundamentally, all emotional problems begin with pride. And that's where you start going crazy. You not only see yourself in a distorted way, inappropriate way, and I would say a blown up, imaginative way; but you begin to wonder why people don't see the same picture, and then you get hurt about it, and then you begin to get depressed about it. You're just thinking about yourself. And that's what pride does. It makes you think about yourself, and the misery comes out of this. We can talk about all the emotional deprivations that come from that. So, his point is, you don't want to exaggerate your image of yourself but think as you ought to think.

And then he goes on and says,

“... but to think so as to have sound judgment...”

“*Sōphroneō*,” which means to be in your right mind.

The wording is very interesting to me. You need to be in your right mind. Now, what he begins to state within the text is that as you begin to serve others and are of lowly mind, in fact, it says,

(Romans 12:15) “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

(Romans 12:16) Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.”

And once again, we're talking about a lunatic. We're talking about somebody that doesn't have his marbles. And this is where problems come.

And let me just say this, when you think the right way, that is to say you're thinking lowly mind, then you don't feel like you have to take your own revenge. You see where a lot of anger, a lot of hostility comes from? People start saying, “They did that to me? They can't do that to me.” And they start going after them. And as they go after them, things just don't get better, do they?

So, it says in verse 17,

(Romans 12:17) “Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

(Romans 12:18) If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

(Romans 12:19) Never take your own revenge...

Well, that would probably take half the people out of the funny farm. Just that one phrase, right there. Because that evil is going to overcome you. Bitterness is going to overcome you.

And so, that's why he says in verse 21,

(Romans 12:21) “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Well, that's good thinking.

So, as we come to this beginning part, we realize that they're not thinking right. And let me just say this, even though they're not thinking right, they are thinking naturally. It is the normal way to think. It is the intuitive mindset that we have. But God is calling His people to think counterintuitively, and “You can't be thinking about the way that everybody else thinks because that's not what I've called you to do.” Everything about Luke is telling us that we're called to a different life than the world. Everything is different, and that's the word repentance. So, then as you come to the next setting, and

once again, Luke is purposely bringing in a sequence of events that tie to each other. And that's his purpose of the sequence of events, to tie to a point.

So, the very next one is in verse 49,

(Luke 9:49) “John answered and said, “Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow along with us.””

I thought we were following Jesus, but obviously we're not.

There's an interesting story that was penned by Irenaeus. Irenaeus was Polycarp's student. Polycarp was John's student. So, Polycarp had passed this on to Irenaeus. And the story goes that John, this particular John (of Peter, James, and John) was in the bathhouse. And he was very much against heresy. And there was this guy by the name of Cerinthus that was a heretic. He's actually proclaiming Gnosticism. And as you read 1 John, you can see that he's clearly against that as well. And so, they say that John comes running out, screaming, “Everybody leave the bathhouse. It's going to cave in. A heretic's in the

bathhouse.” And obviously, it was a memorable moment for Polycarp as well as it was passed on down. But what it shows is the fervor that John had. And there's nothing wrong with fervor. In fact, one of the reasons I'm sure God chose the men that He did was that they had a great desire to do, like the Levites. But once again, our own fervor is only going to be destructive and it's going to isolate the very work that God has called us to do. In this passage, he just doesn't like the fact that people are doing things and not doing it under the auspice of Jesus or the other disciples. And saying, “They should have asked us, if they wanted to cast out demons.” Forget about the person that had a demon in them. It's sort of like, “You need to get a ticket if you don't stand in line.”

“John answered and said, “Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to prevent him...”

“We tried to stop him. We tried to forbid him. We actually told him, ‘You can't do this.’” That particular word, “hinder,” is always used in the context of a lesser forbidding a superior.

I can give you an example of it. You don't need to turn there. 2 Peter 2:16, Peter's giving the example of Balaam, and he uses the phrase that he was rebuked or hindered by a dumb donkey. So, that would be a lesser, rebuking a higher. So, in this respect, obviously, it's not an authority that has been given to him, but he takes it anyway. And I think that a lot of us in ministry, not only are we trying to figure out who's the greatest, but I think we're trying to, in some way, through hubris, to police the world. I mean, "People are doing this." "O-kaay?"

I think one of the most encouraging things about the Book of Philippians, and if you're familiar with the way that it opens up, is Paul is basically telling the Philippians, "I'm in prison, and this is what's going on." Now, he shares the fact that some are coming to the gospel, even some of the Praetorian Guard, but there are some that are preaching the gospel out of spite. Now, with most of us, we would say something like, "Well, we need to correct them." And let me just let you in on a little secret. You can spend your whole life correcting people. And one, they will never get better, and two, you will never produce any

benefit. God has not called us to be policemen. He's called us to be firemen. We're there to rescue. So, the focus needs to be on proclaiming that gospel rather than putting out all of the problems that we perceive out there.

“John answered and said, “Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow along with us.”

(Luke 9:50) But Jesus said to him, “Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you.””

Now, I just want to emphasize what Jesus is not saying. Jesus is not saying, “I affirm of what they're doing.” He doesn't say that. He doesn't plan on saying that. But He's not going to condemn, nor is He once again going to condone, because why? Because He wants them to focus on what they should be doing. And this is a key point in the text that it's sort of like if you're familiar with the Book of Acts, Chapter 5, you have Gamaliel, and of course everybody's worried that these disciples are going to be proclaiming a cult. And he says, “Look, if it's of God, nobody can stop them.” And the point is that it's not our

job to stop. It is our job to preach. It's our job to preach truth. And we believe the truth changes things. But I don't believe I... I mean, quite frankly, if I went around to all the churches in Jacksonville and started rebuking them, I'd not only make enemies, but I'd probably be arrested before long. I wouldn't be arrested if I was in Minnesota, but I would be... But anyway.

“But Jesus said to him, “Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you.””

And really, when you consider there's a lot of hubris, bombastic pomposity in this, that you begin to see the disciples with these inflated egos going, “I've put myself in the position of being over all these people and telling them what they can do.” And with imperious superiority, what we try to do is we try to tell people they need to fall in line with our way of thinking. And Christ is saying, “It's none of your business. Let them go.” What is it, God can't handle this? “What you need to do is focus on what I've called you to.”

Matthew 15:14 is another example of that, where the disciples come up and they go, “You offended the

Pharisees.” He goes, “Leave them alone.” Now, once again, you would think that you need to go argue with them and tell them what they need to do, but that's not our job. It is not my job to convince everybody that they're wrong. It is my job to proclaim the gospel. It is my job to live that gospel out, but I don't change people, and I don't please people. I bet a lot of you are probably relieved about that. “It means the pastor's not coming over to my house, nor does he have cameras.” That's what it means.

So, Luke 9:51 is actually another event at another time, but Luke is putting it together. Why? Because he wants you to see the message of sequence of events. He wants these events to be in a particular order, so you might see that there are different things that come into play that cause us to misperceive how we're to minister. I mean, ministry is not about you being the greatest; it's not about you policing, and it's not about, above all else, you condemning.

And so, the way the passage reads is this,

(Luke 9:51) “When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined (resolutely set His face) to go to Jerusalem.”

Now, I just want to emphasize the reason why He's resolutely setting His face towards Jerusalem, is to save. It's to suffer, and it's to save.

(Luke 9:52) “and He sent messengers on ahead of Him, and they went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make arrangements for Him.

(Luke 9:53) But they did not receive Him...”

Of course, they believe that the place is not in Jerusalem, but in Gerizim where Abraham has a connection and Joshua had a connection.

“But they did not receive Him, because He was traveling toward Jerusalem.

(Luke 9:54) When His disciples James and John saw this...”

Once again, John kind of gets in this almost every time because this guy is fervent.

“When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us...”

And I don't even know how they have power over the things of heaven,

“... “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?””

Once again, all of this really leads to this presumptuous mentality that “I'm here and I'm in control and I'm exceeding the proper boundaries that God has given me to not only point out problems, but now to punish problems.” And let me just emphasize this. This is the problem that really is revealed in Revelation. You remember the apocalyptic horses? And I know, here again, people will disagree with me on this, but the first apocalyptic horse is the white horse. And it says that it goes in conquering and to conquer. I said that's the perfect picture of the Crusades. Because under the guise of religion, of good coming on a white horse, they're killing everybody. And fundamentally, this is where it leads. This is where it begins, and this is ultimately where it leads. And Revelation is saying you don't want to go that route, because there's only one white horse and Christ is on it. And so, as you see this, there's a sharp

admonishing, "Don't destroy. We're here to save. This is why I set My face..." And that's why the added text is highly appropriate. I can understand them feeling the way they do, because they just finished seeing Elijah on the mountaintop on the Mount of Transfiguration. I

understand it. Of course, that was his *modus operandi*, but that was the Old Testament, too, and that was the Law. But God has now turned us into the realm of saving and grace, and of course, one of the things the law could not do, weak as it was, is it couldn't save. And that's the one thing that we want to do. So, God has called us to do things. So, as you see all these things, what He's actually done for us is He's given us a sequence of events that says, "You don't want to seek for prominence. You don't want to try to control people. You don't want to condemn people. I've called you to just keep your face set to save." And you begin to proclaim that gospel. And that gospel, according to Romans 1, is the power of God. It changes lives. You just keep preaching the gospel. And souls will be saved.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your word, and just the reality of these men working through their own emotions and their problems. They're just so much like us. We've all felt what they're feeling. We've all done the things that they've done. But we can hear Your voice in all these, "Don't hinder them. Receive them. Quit arguing. The least will be the greatest." I mean, we can hear what You're saying. And You didn't come to condemn; You came to save. So, Lord, get our minds thinking right as we come before You and repent. We realize that there is power in the proclamation of the gospel, living that faith, that You've called us to be lights in the world, and oftentimes that means that we don't even have to say anything. But it's through the process of being like You that men are drawn to the truth. And so, Lord, may we live this in reality.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed. Perhaps there's something in one of these three things, maybe all three, that have told you that you might have been pursuing the wrong thing. Might have been in the name

of Jesus. It might have been in the name of His ministry. It might have been in the name of doing good. But the fact of the matter is that you've hindered His ministry because you've chosen to go according to intuition. There's nothing about Scripture that follows our inclinations. It goes against our fleshly inclinations. God is calling upon you to think differently.