

THE FIELDWORK TRAINING

Luke 9:1-9

Key Verse: 9:2

"...and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick."

Study Questions:

1. When Jesus sent the Twelve out for fieldwork training, what spiritual equipment did he give them? Why must gospel workers have the power and authority of Jesus? (Php 4:13)
2. What was the main point of their message? Why is the message of the kingdom of God important? (Mk 1:15; Lk 11:2) How is healing the sick related to the message of the kingdom of God?
3. Read verses 3-9. What did he tell them to take for the journey? (3) How did this teach them to depend on God alone? What are the timeless principles which Jesus' disciples must practice?
4. How did Jesus teach them to master the circumstances of the mission field? (4) How did he teach them not to compromise, but to have absolute faith in the gospel? (5; Mk 16:16) Why is it important to know that the gospel is absolute?
5. How did the apostles respond? (6) What was the great result of fieldwork training? How does Herod's response to the proclamation of the gospel typify the response of demon-possessed people?

Chapter 9:1-2 marks a transitional period from Jesus' public ministry to the discipleship training. Up until now, Jesus healed the sick and preached the good news of the kingdom of God. But from now on, Jesus pays more attention to his discipleship training, putting aside the demanding public. These days training is misunderstood as the violation of human rights. But God made men to be trained so that they might grow to be like Jesus. Still, we don't like training, do we? But school education is a kind of training. In other words, all of us

must receive training to become normal men. Let's see what kind of training Jesus gave his disciples. May God bless us abundantly when we study this passage.

First, Jesus gave his disciples the power and authority of God (1).

Look at verse 1. "When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases...." Until now, Jesus mainly taught and healed, and the Twelve participated in his work by observing what he was doing. When the disciples watched Jesus healing the paralytic and opening the eyes of the blind and touching the man with leprosy, they learned that Jesus is the Son of God Almighty. Every time Jesus did something supernatural, they were amazed every time and said many wows. The disciples were men of many wows. Especially, through common life together with him, the disciples could see the Almighty God in Jesus because Jesus' daily life was so beautiful and holy. When they believed in Jesus that he is the Almighty God, something great happened to his disciples. They could see and understand spiritual things. From then on, Jesus begins to train them as the great servants of God for the future. Jesus is the God of hope. Putting aside the crowd of people, Jesus began discipleship training.

What did Jesus do for them first? "...he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases..." (1b). At that time, the disciples' power of faith lagged far behind the demand of their calling; they thought that they were suffering enough just to hang around Jesus. The disciples were not yet mature enough to be shepherds for his suffering people. But Jesus believed that they could be raised as great servants of God if only they received discipleship training.

Why did Jesus give them the power and authority of God when they were just going out for mere fieldwork training? Jesus did so so that they might experience the power and authority of God. Great servants of God are those who experienced the power and authority of God. Great servants of God are those who worked God's work with the

power and authority of God, not with their smart minds. Here we learn that we can do a great work of God when we receive the power and authority of God.

When St. Paul went to Rome as a prisoner, he was old and tired (2Ti 2:9). But Paul, who had experienced the power and authority of God, testified, "I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Php 4:13). In actuality, Paul could not do much. But when he depended on the power and authority of God, God himself conquered first Rome, and next the whole world for the sake of Paul.

Why do we need the power and authority of God? It is because we have to fight against the power of demons. The power of demons is very strong. The demon-possessed man in chapter 8 had the strength to break heavy iron chains as if they were a piece of napkin. The demon has power to make people mental patients, unthankful and angry. But the demon has no power to make people better. May God help us to depend on the power and authority of God.

Second, preach the kingdom of God (2).

Look at verse 2. "...and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick." There are many things to do as Christians for our own generation. God uses each man of God according to the needs of his generation. God used Moses as the deliverer of his 600,000 Israelites. God used Samuel as a shepherd-like king-raiser. And he had never failed to pray for his people (1Sa 12:23). God used David as a shepherd for his people and as a valiant soldier in uniting the people of Israel into a theocratic kingdom. Each person must serve the purpose of God in his own generation (Ac 13:36). But the unassailable Biblical constant is that we must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God as of first importance.

When Jesus came to this world to save sinners from their sins, he said in Mark 1:15, "The time has come. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" The key point of Jesus' message

was the kingdom of God. Once, the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. Jesus said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come'" (Lk 11:2). The key point of Jesus' teaching how to pray is that the kingdom of God may come. But the disciples did not yet have the concept of the kingdom of God. Even the top disciple Peter hoped to see the earthly messianic kingdom, not the heavenly kingdom. After conversion, Peter realized that earthly things were temporal. But the kingdom of God is eternal and man's earthly life is a holy pilgrimage to the kingdom of God (1Pe 1:3,4).

The good news of the kingdom of God is a living hope for all mankind. Those who have a living hope in the kingdom of God obtain eternal life. Those who have a living hope in the kingdom of God will enjoy the glory and power of the kingdom of God when their pilgrimage is over. There are no tears in the kingdom of God (Rev 21:4). When we have a living hope in the kingdom of God, we can experience that our sinful desires decrease gradually. At the same time, we are filled with love, joy and peace in our hearts.

Jesus also sent them out to heal the sick. Healing is a warming-up exercise for preaching the kingdom of God. Also, from Luke's point of view, healing means both physical healing and spiritual healing (Jn 6:63). Spiritual healing is very necessary. For example, the tax collector Levi was very selfish. In his selfishness, he poisoned himself and others. His selfishness is likened to a leper who is dirty and harmful. But he was healed from his selfishness. James and John were worldly-minded young men. But after their conversion, John said, "The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever" (1Jn 2:17). Here we learn that we must first believe in the kingdom of God when we are going to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God.

The trend of today's Christianity is mostly inclined toward welfare messages or material blessing. These people are far away from the message of the kingdom of God. So those who deliver the message of the kingdom of God are regarded as old-fashioned people.

Young people are generally practical and they like the things of the world, such as a fancy car or girlfriend, not the kingdom of God. One young man went to a church where an old minister frequently and so frequently delivered the message of the kingdom of God. Then the young man said to himself, "That old man is too sentimental about his upcoming death." But that was not the case.

Third, Jesus' several instructions (3-9).

Here, Jesus gives his disciples several instructions. These instructions are principles rather than instructions. History proves time and again that great men and women were all men and women of principle.

First principle, depend on God only. Look at verse 3. "He told them: 'Take nothing for the journey--no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra tunic.'" In the time of Jesus, people had great joy in offering hospitality to strangers. But there is a great limitation in human hospitality. So Jesus' words, "Take nothing for the journey," are impossible to practice in the past as well as at the present. But spiritually speaking, Jesus' words, "Take nothing," definitely mean a principle for the servants of God to practice how to depend on the power and authority of Jesus only. If anyone depends on material things or their common sense, God cannot use them. A young man went out fishing sheep, depending on his good looks and gentle voice, but no one responded to his invitation, so he was surprised. In doing God's work, we must depend on God's power and authority only.

There was a father who had a demon-possessed son who had attempted suicide in many ways. The father came to Jesus and said, "If you can do anything, take pity on us and help us." Jesus rebuked the father, saying, "If you can?" Then Jesus said, "Everything is possible for him who believes." The boy's father exclaimed, "Help me overcome my unbelief!" In the midst of the crowd, Jesus rebuked the demon with the power and authority of God, "I command you, come out of him...."

Immediately the demon came out of him (Mk 9:14-27).

Second principle, gospel workers must master how to live in any circumstances of the mission field. Look at verse 4. "Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town." Gospel workers must learn to stay in any circumstances. They must be grateful in whatever house they stay in. They must be thankful even if menus are always peanut butter sandwiches and carrots. By doing so, the servants of God should be used to the customs of the people in the mission field. Also, they should be recognized as friends, not because of their big talk, but because of their respect for them. They have to make friends with the members of the family with whom they live in the hope of planting the word of God in them.

John F. Kennedy was elected President of the United States of America at the age of 43. He was a man of principle. He firmly believed that America should be a peace-maker nation for all nations of the world. For this, he sent many young American people as Peace Corps members. They lived in the houses of people in the respective countries. When they did so, God enabled them to enhance the international friendship of the United States of America with the peoples of most countries. There was a man of principle, Ho Chi Minh, in North Vietnam. He said to his people, "We must fight until no one is left. Truth will win in the end. Terrorism will perish sooner or later in great tragedy." May God bless us to be men and women of principle.

Third principle, the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is absolute. Look at verse 5. "If people do not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave their town, as a testimony against them." This verse does not teach that gospel workers should be arrogant, but gospel workers must believe that the gospel of Jesus is absolute. When people do not accept the gospel of Jesus, gospel workers should not compromise with them; rather, they should shake the dust off their feet when they leave their town, as a testimony against them, so that they are responsible for their own future destiny. Gospel workers must

remember that the gospel of Jesus is absolute. Mark 16:16 says, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." How did the disciples respond? They set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere (6). The result was remarkable.

Luke tells us how their fieldwork training shook the land. One example is Herod the tetrarch. He had not attended the disciples' evangelistic meeting. But when Herod heard about all that was going on, he was greatly disturbed because of his sins. When someone came and reported that John had been raised from the dead, his heart sank. When others said that Elijah had appeared, he was totally haunted by the demons and said, "I beheaded John. Who, then, is this I hear such things about?" Hoping that what he had heard was just another nightmare, he wanted to see Jesus (7-9). Herod's response was the very response of all people who were demon possessed.

As we know well, the weapon of democracy is compromise for the mutual benefit by any means. But our Lord Jesus Christ says don't compromise. May God bless us to depend on the power and authority of Jesus when we proclaim the kingdom of God.