

Reading Luke in Lent



Gospel of Luke 9:1-27

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve Apostles

1 And he called the twelve together
and gave them power and authority over all demons
and to cure diseases,
2 and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.
3 And he said to them,
'Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money;
and do not have two tunics.
4 And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart.
5 And wherever they do not receive you,
when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them.'
6 And they departed and went through the villages,
preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

Herod Is Perplexed by Jesus

7 Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was happening, and he was perplexed,
because it was said by some that John had been raised from the dead,
8 by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen.
9 Herod said,
'John I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?'
And he sought to see him.

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

10 On their return the apostles told him all that they had done.
And he took them and withdrew apart to a town called Bethsaida.
11 When the crowds learned it, they followed him,
and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God
and cured those who had need of healing.
12 Now the day began to wear away, and the twelve came and said to him,
'Send the crowd away to go into the surrounding villages and countryside
to find lodging and get provisions, for we are here in a desolate place.'
13 But he said to them,
'You give them something to eat.'
They said,
'We have no more than five loaves and two fish—
unless we are to go and buy food for all these people.'
14 For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples,
'Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each.'
15 And they did so, and had them all sit down.
16 And taking the five loaves and the two fish,
he looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them.
Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd.

17 And they all ate and were satisfied.
And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ

18 Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him.
And he asked them,
'Who do the crowds say that I am?'
19 And they answered,
'John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen.'
20 Then he said to them,
'But who do you say that I am?'
And Peter answered,
'The Christ of God.'

Jesus Foretells His Death

21 And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one,
22 saying,
'The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests
and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.'

Take Up Your Cross and Follow Jesus

23 And he said to all,
'If anyone would come after me,
let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.
24 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.
25 For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?
26 For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words,
of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory
and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.
27 But I tell you truly,
there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.'

Reflection

These passages are part of the conclusion of Jesus' Galilean ministry before he sets off on the road to Jerusalem. The themes of proclaiming the kingdom and healing the sick are passed on to the twelve apostles. At the end of this section the themes of suffering death and resurrection have been introduced. At the heart is a simple structure where first Herod wonders who Jesus is, then Jesus feeds the Five Thousand, and then Jesus asks the disciples who do people say that he is. They reply in similar terms to Herod but when asked 'Who do you say that I am?' Peter replies 'The Christ of God', that is the Messiah. The feeding, where Jesus takes, blesses, breaks and gives, is an expression of the type of Messiah which Jesus is. Peter's response is followed by Jesus' first prophecy of his passion and then lays out the implication of what it means to follow him.

- Before asking the disciples the question Jesus prays.
 - How do you answer Jesus' question 'who do you say that I am?'

Prayer

O God,
whose Son, our Messiah and Lord,
did not turn aside from the path of suffering
nor spare his disciples the prospect of rejection,
pour out your Spirit upon the Church,
that we may abandon the security of the easy way
and follow in Christ's footsteps
toward the cross and true life.

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.

Amen.

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