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Fit for the Kingdom - Luke 9:37-62

Introduction - Jesus continues His message to His disciples of total allegiance to Him. The words of Jesus continue to shock even His followers as their understanding of this new King and new kingdom are rattled one way and then another. And so it is with us.

Coming Down from the Mountain - Up on the mountain, the glory of the Son of Man was revealed. Coming down from the mountain, in the warp and woof of life, it is revealed how far the disciples are from that glory.

Defective Faith (vv37-42) - The heavenly Father had revealed the glory of His only Son, and now this earthly father brings his only son to Jesus. This son is demon-possessed and the disciples are unable to cast it out (but what had Jesus told them in v1?). Jesus rebukes the disciples and the unbelieving crowd with words reminiscent of Deut 32:5, 20. Moses had recalled in that song the plight of unbelieving Israel, and Jesus sings as well to this generation who will deliver Him up to the cross. Neither group trusts God for deliverance and their lack of faith leaves them hopeless. But Jesus turns to this child, the next generation, heals him and gives him back to his father. Their faith was defective.

Defective Understanding (vv43-45) - Like a broken record, or like a preacher with just one point, Jesus seems to put a damper on their marveling of Him by again declaring His impending betrayal. It was as though they didn't want to hear that ücross-talký again (remember vv23-26). Their understanding was defective.

Pricked Pride - Who's the Greatest? (vv46-48) - What an embarrassing portion of the gospel! The disciples of Jesus Christ are arguing about who is the greatest. Jesus answers their childishness by taking a child (in a day where a child had no prestige or status) and taught them that in receiving such little ones they would be receiving Jesus. Do we have time for the insignificant ones in our midst?

Pricked Pride - Are They a Part of Us? (vv49-50) - They were not following with the disciples and were still casting out demons in Jesus' name. John sees a problem with their works (maybe their theology wasn't just quite right), but Jesus sees jealousy and envy and rebukes the disciples' spirit of sectarianism.

Pricked Pride - When We're Rejected (vv51-56) - The Samaritans were half-breeds and did not get along with the Jews. When they hear that Jesus is passing through on His way to Jerusalem they want nothing to do with him. But the racial/ethnic jealousy and strife cuts both ways. James and John want to call down fire upon these enemies - like Elijah (they are recalling 2 Kings 1). But Elijah was not out for personal vengeance or protecting his own reputation.

Faithless and Perverse - What does this phrase really mean and is it being displayed in all of these anecdotes? To be üfaithlessý is to be unbelieving, or to fall in and out of belief. To be üperverseý is to confuse or mix that which is right with that which is not.

In Mark's account of the man with the demon-possessed son, this man cries out, "Lord I believe, help my unbelief!" Could we also describe these other situations as mixed, polluted, or perverse understandings about the nature of the kingdom of God? Luke combines these stories to tell us who is fit for the kingdom of God.

I Will Follow You - The disciples, like us, are learning what it costs to be a follower of Jesus; and their mixed motivations are being revealed in story after story. Jesus now speaks in hyperbole in order to drive the point home.

Three "Followers" - One needs to learn that you can't follow Jesus if you are expecting a life of comfort and leisure. This will be a life of sacrifice. The other two need to learn that you can't follow Jesus with "but first!" Even with lawful duties, discipleship to Jesus Christ takes precedence over every other commitment, every other activity, every other desire or pleasure. If what we are doing right now is not in some way following Jesus, we are like the man with his hand on a plow turning to look back.

Who Is Fit For the Kingdom? - Jesus has been granting his disciples much authority (v1-2) as He prepares to send His church into the world in His name. But as He does, He demands that they be made in His image, and image of humility, sacrifice, and service - an image that leads to glory. Paul, an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, also called himself a bond-slave of Jesus (Phil 1:1). A slave has only one master; a disciple has only one teacher. An apostle, a sent-one, is to bear the image, character, and message of the one who has sent him.

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