Bible Study 66

February 15th, 2023

St Luke’s Gospel Chapter 9 (continued)

Chapter Nine of Luke’s Gospel has Jesus sending out the Apostles and disciples two by two to every village spreading the good news of the kingdom. He gives them power to drive out demons and to heal. When they return, they report everything to him.

At Bethsaida the Apostles ask Jesus to send the crowd away that they may shop and find something to eat. Jesus instructs them to feed the crowd themselves. But all they have are five loaves and two fish. Jesus multiplies the loaves, and all are fed.

Following on from the stories on faith, the Gospel seems to be saying that if we did believe in the personage of Jesus then we too would exhibit the powers that he manifested. It is that strange anomaly, that we today do know who Jesus is, but still lack the faith to conquer our fear in the battle between good and evil, faith and atheism.

This question of who Jesus truly is, is brought up by Herod earlier in the chapter but in verse 18, Jesus forces his disciples to face the question themselves. First, they oscillate between John the Baptist or one of the prophets. It is Peter who gives the definitive answer: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

This appears in other Gospels too and is often called: “The Confession of Peter.” Jesus then in verse21 outlines his mission and the mission of the disciple. It is the beginning of the theology of the Cross. He enters into a series of paradoxes: ‘if you want to save your life you must lose it; if you lose your life for my sake, you will save it.’

What follows sounds familiar in that it is a Christian message in a time of persecution. Luke then follows a chronology: “About eight days after this…” as if someone is relating the story to Luke.

“About eight days after this Jesus took Peter, James and John up a mountain to pray….” Lk : 9. 28.f. It seems like no coincidence that his transformation story would follow, revealing Jesus’ identity. Jesus is transfigured before his disciples and Moses and Elijah appear at his side as he prays.

The mention of building three tents or dwellings is interpreted several ways by many scholars. One it reflects the Feast of Weeks, when the Jews built temporary shelters around Jerusalem at the harvest time. Others that it reflects the wilderness experience in the Desert. Again, the voice from the cloud, repeating the words of Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan.

Read Chapter 9