

## What Are You Thinking?

Luke 9:43-50 (09-01-19)  
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Has this happened to you? You thought you knew what you were doing, but you were dead wrong. It happened to me just the other day. I was headed down the Lloyd out of Newburgh and came face to face with a billion orange traffic cones and an arrow flashing left and right. You had to take one lane or the other, not the center land. The right lane was backed way up and only a few cars in the left lane. "What's wrong with these right laners?" I thought. "I'm taking the left lane." Seemed like a good idea at the time. My pride led me to the arrogance of thinking I knew better than all those other right laners. One problem, though. Once you commit to that left lane, you're stuck in that lane, even if you want to exit onto the I-69 ramp. So I had to stay in the left lane and humbly drive up Burkhardt, which, of course, took hours longer than I-69. How often God has used my pride to humble my thinking.

It's one thing to think wrongly in our pride on the highway. But it's another thing for pride to drive us about spiritual things. Pride is the fundamental driving sin in our hearts. Every believer struggles with proud thinking and needs to be corrected. And that's exactly the problem we have before us this morning. Jesus is going after the wrong, prideful thinking of the disciples and at the same time He's going after our minds, your mind. There's not a person in this room who doesn't struggle with pride and self-importance.

Last week Bryce brought us down from Glory Mountain into this world of sin and hurt. That son in Luke 9:42 was so gripped by a demon no one could help him. Not even the disciples. The demon slammed him to the ground and threw him into convulsions. All human help was exhausted. There was no hope for this boy and his exasperated father. Just then, in verse 42, Jesus steps forward and before all the people He casts out the demon, heals the boy, and gives him back to his daddy in perfect health. The crowd is blown away! Verse 43 – *And they were all amazed at the greatness of God....* They are absolutely ecstatic over Jesus. "We have just seen the greatness, the magnificence, the mighty power of God. What a great, great Man. He is glorious!" The disciples' agreed. They've seen enough to know He is Israel's Messiah. He just came down from Glory Mountain and now we're headed up Glory Highway to Jerusalem to bring in the glorious kingdom of God! These are heady days! The disciples are clueless, though, as to what's really going on. They don't see their own pride and need of humility. Jesus is going to teach them, and us.

Now, notice in verse 43, *But while everyone was marveling at all that He was doing, He said to His disciples....* While everyone is going on about how great He is, Jesus pulls them aside for some personal discipleship. He knows their thinking is wrong and it's time for some correcting. Jesus is going to teach them, and us, three lessons on humility vs. pride in this passage.

### **Humility means you are willing to learn and ask questions, even if it shows you are wrong – pride doesn't admit ignorance – vv. 43-44**

Luke 9:44 *Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.*

They're all standing around Him when He looks at them with intense seriousness and says, "Sink these words into your ears." I'm going to give you some words, and I want you to drill them deeply down into your ears, all the way to your heart. Don't brush them off. Don't ignore them. Your thinking is wrong. God gave us ears to receive His words, and there are no more important words than words about redemption through the cross that Jesus is giving them.

So listen up, men. You think we're on Glory Highway, but the fact is, no matter how glorious it looks right now, we're going to Jerusalem, not to set up the earthly kingdom, but for Me to be delivered into the

hands of men. What is coming is exactly the opposite of what you are thinking. Suffering is up ahead. Betrayal is coming. But this is God's plan of redemption. And this is God's way of bringing salvation. Did they get it? No.

Luke 9:45, *But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement.*

It is hard to believe God's plan includes suffering and hardship and trials. We want glory! Give us good things, nice things, pleasant things. They didn't want to hear any more about Jesus suffering and being killed. That wasn't in their theology of the Messiah. They didn't even want to ask about it. Their minds were blinded by their own preconceived ideas. They couldn't imagine the crowd turning from praising their Master to crying, "Crucify Him." They were blind to their blindness because they thought they already knew. They needed the humility of a teachable, learner's spirit, willing to receive even hard things.

Religious preconceived ideas can blind people to the truth. It did for Paul, until God stripped away his blindness. Explain to a religious person right out of Romans with crystal clear clarity how we are saved by grace alone, no works, by faith alone, no religious performances or sacraments, through Christ alone, not the church. "Understand?" "Yes I do." "So, on what basis will you get into heaven?" "Well, I'm trying really hard. I was baptized as a baby. I sure hope I'll make it." There you go. A veil of blindness lies over the heart. Only God can remove it. Thank God, He does.

Even believers can be blind to what God is saying. You may try to show straight from the Bible about God's sovereignty and especially how He chose us before we chose Him, but they don't see it because they don't want to see it. It's not in their theology, just as suffering wasn't in the disciple's theology book.

We all need a good dose of Holy Spirit humility to help us be teachable and willing to admit our ignorance and change the way we think and behave. What about you? Has the gospel message sunk deeply into your ears so that it reached your heart? Do you understand your desperate need of Christ and His work on the cross for your eternal life with God? Are you teachable about your wrong ways of thinking about your self and your habits?

**Humility means you are willing to be least and unnoticed – pride is always concerned about self-importance - vv. 46-48.**

Luke 9:46, *An argument started among them as to which of them might be the greatest.*

Can you believe this? Jesus has just talked about His coming suffering and they are having this heated discussion about who's the greatest! We have rocks in our heads, like the song says. This is pure unadulterated pride. But this is how we are. Sinners want to be noticed, recognized, promoted, thought highly of, sit right next to the president.

And notice it's who's going to be the greatest, not just great. Pride thrives on comparison. Pride would pretty much shrivel up if it wasn't about being greater. It is one thing for all of us to have thrones to sit on, but our chief concern is, who's sitting on the highest throne, the biggest throne, the brightest throne! There was a boxer from Louisville who brazenly sang his own praises, "I am the greatest!" Of course, the crowd loved it. This is the world. It thrives on pride of position and status. Lee Iacocca, famous former auto executive, tells about a work place where the real status symbol was to get a golden key to the executive bathroom. You were top dog when you got that golden key to the bathroom. Our pride often makes us look ridiculous.

This isn't unusual though, even in the church. Pride and one-upmanship are common and bring the fall of many. Back in 1300's Pope Boniface VIII thought way too highly of himself. He had a crown with 72 sapphires, 45 emeralds, and 66 large pearls. He declared himself Caesar and the Emperor. About a year

before he died he issued the Unam Sanctam, which declared that every human being was to be subject to the Roman Pontiff. "I am the greatest."

Celebrity pastors often lose their humility if they ever had any. I have several of James McDonald's books, and they are really good. But he fell into the trap of thinking too highly of himself. He was beyond correction and used the church to bolster his swollen ego, as well as his bank account. So there they are, following Jesus who is telling them about His coming ordeal in Jerusalem, and these guys are arguing about who's the greatest.

*Luke 9:47-48, But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart, took a child and stood him by His side, 48 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."*

Jesus turns all the world's values upside down. The first are last, blessed are the poor, and here, who is the greatest? The one who is least. He uses a young boy. Mark says He takes him in his arms. Some believe this was Peter's son. Little children aren't concerned about status and big thrones. They aren't impressed by money and possessions and titles. They really hardly had any status at all in the ancient world. But Jesus says how you think about this child shows what kind of heart you have. The measure of your greatness depends on how unimportant and unnoticed you're willing to be. This doesn't mean God doesn't want you to do your best and excel where you can. But what is your motive? To be noticed and recognized? Or simply for God's glory?

Heaven will be an eye opener. Main Street in heaven will be occupied by people the world and even the church never heard of. People who didn't try to impress others and didn't blow trumpets when they served others. People who never were honored at a banquet for their great works. People who weren't proud of their humility and tried to display it. This is thinking biblically, thinking with the humility of Christ in Philippians 2:3-5 (NLT).

- *Don't be selfish;*
- *Don't try to impress others.*
- *Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves.*
- *Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.*
- *You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.*

**Humility means you rejoice in other people's successes. Pride is quick to criticize and exclude others – vv. 49-50**

*Luke 9:49-50, 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." 50 But Jesus said to him, "Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you."*

John may have wanted to change the subject. Out of nowhere he asks this question. Now you've got to admire his zeal here. Truth is important and we do not rejoice in false teaching. We don't want to compromise. But here's the problem. We get so gripped and impressed with what we've learned, how we've grown, how important God's truth is, and how much false teaching there is out there that we criticize everyone who is not tightly in our circle. This guy was casting out demons. That's good. And he did so in Christ's name. That's good. He wasn't a false teacher. He wasn't disobeying God's Word. He wasn't a prosperity huckster. Jesus must have known he was a true believer because He corrects John's thinking. He says if the fellow isn't against you he's for you. Don't forbid him. He's doing My work. Jesus would have never said that about a false teacher.

The same thing happened out in the wilderness in Numbers 11:27-29. A young zealot ran to Moses and

yelled, "Eldad and Medad (cool names, aye?) are prophesying in the camp." Even Joshua piped up, "Moses, restrain them!" Moses replies, "Would that all the Lord's people would be Spirit-filled prophets."

We need discernment here. There are core truths that people have to hold to in order to be with Jesus. But there are secondary and tertiary matters that are not hills to die on. We die on the hill of the trinity, the Scriptures, the hypostatic union of Christ's deity and humanity, virgin birth, salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. They are core dividing line teachings. And there are core obedience issues that the Bible is clear about: marriage, gender issues, female preachers are some. But good men differ on secondary and tertiary matters. That guy loves the Lord but may not have settled on the doctrines of grace yet. My understanding of limited atonement of Christ took a while. I was in my first church when I finally came to see that Jesus paid for the sins of all whom God had chosen to be saved. I read J. I. Packer's introduction to John Owen's *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* and it convinced me of limited atonement. Some people believe you can lose your salvation. That doesn't mean they aren't saved. We just encourage those people to keep reading their Bibles and listening. Soon they'll see the preciousness of the sovereignty of God and the security of the believer in Jesus who He keeps His sheep and nothing will separate us from the love of God.

Here are some examples in the church. Jay Adams and pastor Bill Goode of Faith Church in Lafayette were best of friends and brothers in the Lord. Bill Goode was a full-blooded Baptist. Jay Adams was a dyed in the wool Presbyterian. When Jay preached at Goode's church, he didn't preach on his amillennialism or infant baptism. R. C. Sproul and John MacArthur were good friends and agreed on many things, except baptism and the millennium. John would say, "R. C.'s not against us. He's for Jesus and the Word of God, so we work with him." Charles Spurgeon the Baptist spoke highly of J. C Ryle, "one of the bravest and best of men," even though Ryle was an Anglican and baptized babies.

So Jesus corrects John's misguided zeal. If someone is doing the Lord's work, they aren't false teachers, they aren't disobeying Scripture, they are for Me. So rejoice in how God is using him for the gospel's sake.

## **SO WHAT?**

It's one thing to think wrongly about which lane to take on the Lloyd. How much more important to think humbly in spiritual matters. May God help us to nurture a spirit of humility that is willing to learn hard things and ask questions when we don't understand. Humility that is willing to serve unnoticed and be least. And humility that rejoices when God uses other people in the gospel who aren't in our circle.

Humility ultimately comes from the cross of Christ and God's grace in your life. You didn't earn your salvation. You were totally depraved of any righteousness. God chose you to be His, purely by His grace and goodness. He sent Christ to live a perfect life and bear the wrath of God you deserved on that cross. Then God drew you to Himself to see your need and trust in Christ. And now God is keeping you as His child from here to all eternity. You have to ask, "Why me? What do I have that I have not received by the pure grace of God?" That's humility. And at the heart of all this is the cross, the very truth Jesus told the disciples to "sink into their ears."