

**ST JOSEPH THE WORKER  
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**



**LUKE 9**

**The Cost of Discipleship**

**A Chapter of Transcendence and Teaching:**

Luke 9 provides a profound exploration of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. It serves as a clear reminder that the **walk of faith demands commitment, courage, humility, and self-denial.** The power of transformation and the miracles Jesus performed confirm His divine identity and mission. However, it's the teachings on the essence of discipleship that hold the key to aligning ourselves with the kingdom of God.

**Verses 1-6: The Sending of the Twelve**

Jesus imparts His authority on the Twelve, instructing them to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. They are to take no material possessions for their journey.

**Verses 7-9: Herod's Perplexity**

Tetrarch Herod hears about Jesus' activities, which puzzle him and stir rumors that John the Baptist has been raised from the dead.

**Verses 10-17: Feeding the Five Thousand**

Jesus miraculously feeds five thousand men (not counting women and children) with just five loaves of bread and two fish.

**Verses 18-20: Peter's Confession of Christ**

Upon Jesus' questioning, Peter recognizes Him as "God's Messiah."

**Verses 21-27: The Predictions of Jesus' Death and Lessons on Self-denial**

Jesus predicts His suffering and death, teaching about the cost of true discipleship, including self-denial and taking up one's cross daily.

**Verses 28-36: The Transfiguration**

Jesus is transfigured before Peter, James, and John, appearing with Moses and Elijah in glorious splendor, with a divine voice from heaven confirming Jesus' identity as God's chosen Son.

**Verses 37-45: Healing of a Demon-Possessed Boy**

After coming down from the mountain, Jesus heals a boy with an unclean spirit. He predicts His impending betrayal to His disciples, who struggle to understand His message.

**Verses 46-50: Lessons in Humility and Tolerance**

Jesus gives a lesson on humility, explaining that greatness in the kingdom of God comes from being like a child. He also teaches tolerance, suggesting that anyone not against them is for them.

**Verses 51-62:  
The Cost of Following Jesus**

Jesus begins His journey to Jerusalem and along the way, teaches about the challenges and sacrifices inherent in choosing to follow Him.

Luke 9 invites us into a remarkable journey of discipleship, miracles, revelation, and lessons in humility. The chapter opens with Jesus empowering the Twelve for ministry, and it culminates in lessons about the cost of following Him. Between these narratives, readers experience several important milestones in Jesus' ministry, including the miraculous feeding of five thousand, His transfiguration, and the healing of a demon-possessed boy.

**Themes**

Ministry and Mission  
Transformation and Transfiguration  
Discipleship and Faith  
Self-denial and Sacrifice  
True Greatness and Humility

**Topics**

Sending of the Twelve  
Feeding of the Five Thousand  
Peter's Confession of Christ  
The Transfiguration  
Healing of a Demon-Possessed Boy  
Predictions of Jesus' Death  
Lessons in Humility and Tolerance

**People**

Jesus  
Twelve Apostles  
Herod  
Peter  
Moses  
Elijah  
A demon-possessed boy and his father  
Other disciples of Jesus

**Locations**

Various towns and villages in Galilee  
Feeding site of the five thousand  
Place of Transfiguration  
Capernaum

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## Luke 9

### Jesus Sends Out the Twelve

- 1** When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases,  
**2** and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.  
**3** He told them:  
**“Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt.**  
**4 Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town.**  
**5 If people do not welcome you, leave their town and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.”**  
**6** So they set out and went from village to village, proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere.  
**7** Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was going on. And he was perplexed because some were saying that John had been raised from the dead,  
**8** others that Elijah had appeared, and still others that one of the prophets of long ago had come back to life.  
**9** But Herod said, “I beheaded John. Who, then, is this I hear such things about?” And he tried to see him.

**9:1–6** Throughout Luke 9:1–50—the third main subsection of Luke 4:14—9:50—the question of Jesus’ identity continues to be an important topic of discussion (9:9,18–20), though now with explicit reference to his suffering (vv. 22,44). Each episode in Luke 9:1–50 relates to what the Twelve think of Jesus. The limited understanding or failure of the disciples in each episode provides a transition toward a more concentrated teaching in the next major section of Luke’s Gospel (9:51—19:44), where Luke explains that the Twelve must follow a suffering... Savior.

The Twelve are sent out to proclaim the kingdom but are to bring nothing for the journey. Yet Jesus grants them power over demons and power to heal diseases. This gifting follows the display of Jesus’ power over creation, demons, disease, and death in Luke 8:22–56. Jesus tells the disciples to go from village to village, depending on the Lord’s provision for them through those who are receptive to their announcement of the kingdom of God. If people reject their message, they are to leave after shaking the dust off their feet. This action is symbolic. The disciples are showing that those who reject the message of the kingdom are not part of the people of God and will face judgment (cf. Ac 13:51).

**9:7–9** The activity of the Twelve, under the authority of Jesus, forms the backdrop for the reports that lead to Herod’s perplexity. Herod’s confusion is due to the varied perspectives on who Jesus might be. Herod hears three speculations as to Jesus’ identity. All three options consider Jesus to be a prophet of some kind who has returned from beyond the grave. All three options are inadequate considering Jesus’ display of power noted in Luke 8. The answer to Herod’s question concerning the identity of Jesus will be given to the disciples soon

### Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

**10** When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida,

**11** but the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing.

**12** Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, “Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here.”

**13** He replied, **“You give them something to eat.”**

They answered, “We have only five loaves of bread and two fish—unless we go and buy food for all this crowd.”

**14** (About five thousand men were there.)

But he said to his disciples,

**“Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each.”**

**15** The disciples did so, and everyone sat down.

**16** Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people.

**17** They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up **twelve basketfuls** of broken pieces that were left over.

### Peter Declares That Jesus Is the Messiah

**18** Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them,

**“Who do the crowds say I am?”**

**19** They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life.”

**20** **“But what about you?”** he asked.

**“Who do you say I am?”**

Peter answered, **“God’s Messiah.”**

### Jesus Predicts His Death

**21** Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone.

**22** And he said,

**“The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed**

(9:18–20).

**9:10–17** In the feeding of the 5,000, the Twelve are taught that Jesus provides. Jesus involves the disciples in his compassionate solution to the problem of providing food for the large crowds in a remote place. The actions of Jesus—giving thanks to the Father, instructing the Twelve, and distributing a miraculous amount of food from just five loaves and two fishes—demonstrate how Jesus, in intimate relationship with the Father, provides for the people and how the Twelve will mediate Jesus’ miraculous provision. The final statement (summarizing the fullness of the meal and the large amounts of leftovers) emphasizes the sufficiency and abundance of Jesus’ provision for the people of God.

**9:18–22** The questions concerning Jesus’ identity that were raised previously (7:49; 8:25; 9:9) are now addressed by Jesus himself. Though the view that Jesus is a prophet isn’t false, the following teaching from Jesus will show that it is inadequate. Jesus’ Davidic heritage and royal status have been made explicit, and he has also been declared to be the Messiah (1:27,32–33,69; 2:4,11,26; 4:41). Though Peter answers correctly that Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus’ warning (9:21) is directed to all the disciples. They still don’t grasp that, as Messiah, Jesus will suffer, be rejected, and rise from the dead. The declaration that Jesus is Messiah must be understood in terms of God’s sovereign purposes for the Messiah’s death and resurrection. Explicit references to Jesus’ suffering will soon become more regular on the journey to Jerusalem (v. 44; 17:25; 18:31–33). The title “Messiah” will be prominent in Jesus’ trial and crucifixion (22:67; 23:2,35,39; cf. 20:41). The disciples won’t truly understand what it means that Jesus is the Messiah until after his rejection, crucifixion, and resurrection. Luke’s Gospel concludes with Jesus’ explanations from Scripture about the suffering

**and on the third day be raised to life.”**

**23** Then he said to them all:

**“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.**

**24 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.**

**25 What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?**

**26 Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.**

**27 “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.”**

### The Transfiguration

**28** About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray.

**29** As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.

**30** Two men, **Moses and Elijah**, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus.

**31** They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.

**32** Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him.

**33** As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, “Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” (He did not know what he was saying.)

**34** While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and covered them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud.

**35** A voice came from the cloud, saying, **“This is my SON, whom I have chosen; listen to him.”**

**36** When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves and did not tell anyone at that time what they had seen.

### Jesus Heals a Demon-Possessed Boy

**37** The next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met him.

**38** A man in the crowd called out, “Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child.

**39** A spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams; it throws

Messiah (24:26,46).

**9:23–27** Following the clarification that Jesus is the suffering Messiah, Jesus further unpacks what it will mean to follow him. To deny oneself and take up one’s cross daily in following him means his followers must also be prepared to suffer even to the point of death in following their suffering, Savior. Nothing compares to following the SON and gaining life. One day, however, the Son of Man will return as judge. Jesus’ exaltation, enthronement, and pouring out of the Spirit indicate that the ascension and Pentecost may be in view in the promise that some standing there will see the kingdom of God (cf. 4:43; Ac 1:3–8; 2:33). This manifestation of Jesus’ glory provides both a preview as well as an assurance to the disciples of Jesus’ future glory.

**9:28–36** This account about the glory of the Son is complementary to the previous teaching about the suffering of the Son. References to Moses elsewhere in Luke associate him with the law (2:22; 5:14; 20:28,37) and distinguish him from the prophets (16:29,31; 24:27,44). References to Elijah in Luke 4:25–26 and in the immediate context (9:8,19) suggest that he may be a representative of the prophets here. When Jesus speaks of his “departure,” the term used can also mean “exodus” and indicates that the deliverance Jesus will carry out for God’s people through his death and resurrection in Jerusalem is a new exodus. The Father’s voice from the cloud directs their attention to the Son. With allusions to the servant of Isaiah as the chosen one (Isa 42:1) and the prophet to come as the one to listen to (Dt 18:15), the disappearance of Moses and Elijah serves to focus on Jesus’ glory and his unique relationship with the Father. Previous revelation is a precursor to Jesus, who is the suffering Messiah promised by the prophets

**9:37–45** Once again, a parent of an only child calls on Jesus for help (cf. 7:12; 8:42), and once again the destructive intent of demons is demonstrated (cf. 8:29–33). In striking contrast to Luke 9:1, however, the failure of the disciples is highlighted (v. 40). After Jesus rebukes the demon and heals the boy, the people respond with amazement at

him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It scarcely ever leaves him and is destroying him.

40 I begged your disciples to drive it out, but they could not.”

41 **“You unbelieving and perverse generation,”** Jesus replied, **“how long shall I stay with you and put up with you? Bring your son here.”**

42 Even while the boy was coming, the demon threw him to the ground in a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the impure spirit, healed the boy and gave him back to his father.

43 And they were all amazed at the greatness of God.

### Jesus Predicts His Death a Second Time

While everyone was marveling at all that Jesus did, he said to his disciples,

44 **“Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.”**

45 But they did not understand what this meant. It was hidden from them, so that they did not grasp it, and they were afraid to ask him about it.

46 An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest.

47 Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him.

48 Then he said to them,

**“Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest.”**

49 “Master,” said John, “we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him, because he is not one of us.”

50 **“Do not stop him,”** Jesus said, **“for whoever is not against you is for you.”**

### Samaritan Opposition

51 As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.

52 And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him;

Jesus’ power as the power of God. Luke states that the people were amazed at God’s majesty and marveled at what Jesus had done. There is a contrast, however, between the people’s amazement and the rejection Jesus will soon experience. A full grasp of Jesus’ identity must include the significance of the cross. Grasping this, however, requires God’s illuminating work in the heart (cf. 24:16,31,45).

**9:46–50** In this account the disciples are given a lesson on greatness. The scene illustrates the disciples’ lack of understanding concerning the cross. Their pride leads to rivalry and antagonism. The disciples need divine illumination so that they can grasp the significance of Jesus’ suffering. **They need humility** that prizes association with Jesus above self-promotion, and they need **humility** that prizes association with Jesus above rivalry.

**9:51–56** This fourth major section (9:51—19:44) in Luke’s Gospel begins with Luke describing Jesus’ determination to travel to Jerusalem (9:51) and concludes with Luke describing Jesus’ approach to Jerusalem (19:41–44). Along the way, numerous travel notes remind the reader of this journey (see



53 but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem.

54 When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?”

55 But Jesus turned and rebuked them.

56 Then he and his disciples went to another village.

**The Cost of Following Jesus**

57 As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.”

58 Jesus replied,

**“Foxes have dens and birds have nests,  
but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”**

59 He said to another man, **“Follow me.”**

But he replied, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.”

60 Jesus said to him,

**“Let the dead bury their own dead,  
but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.”**

61 Still another said, “I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family.”

62 Jesus replied,

**“No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back  
is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”**

references to Jerusalem in 9:53; 13:22,33; 17:11; 18:31; 19:28). This journey is also characterized by predictions of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus (12:50; 13:33; 17:25; 18:31–33). There is a notable shift in emphasis with fewer miracles (four) and more teaching (17 parables). Since it is not a straight-line journey (cf. 10:38–42; 17:11), the references to Jerusalem and the emphasis on teaching indicate that all of the material is to be understood in light of the backdrop provided by what Jesus will accomplish in Jerusalem.

9:57–62 Those who want to follow Jesus along the way to Jerusalem must acknowledge the priority of the Lord in the kingdom. To an unnamed man walking along the road, Jesus describes the kind of rejection he needs to expect (vv. 57–58). To the second man, “the dead” who do the burying (v. 60) may be symbolic of the spiritually dead or a rhetorical reference to those who are dead to truth that is eternally important. The man is to prioritize proclaiming the kingdom. The third individual is exhorted to have single-minded allegiance that doesn’t look back (v. 62).



**Bible Study Questions**

1. How does the empowerment of the Twelve in the beginning of the chapter reflect on our own calling as followers of Christ?
2. In what ways do you relate to Herod's confusion about who Jesus was? How can we find clarity?
3. How does the feeding of the five thousand demonstrate God's ability to provide in scarcity?
4. Peter's confession of Christ's messianic identity is a pivotal moment in Luke 9. How can this confession transform our personal faith journeys?
5. In what ways does the lesson on self-denial challenge modern conceptions of success and self-fulfillment?
6. What does the Transfiguration reveal about the nature of Jesus? How does this affect your understanding of Him?
7. How does Jesus' healing of the demon-possessed boy demonstrate His power and compassion?
8. How can we apply Jesus' teachings about humility in our daily interactions?
9. Jesus teaches about tolerance in verses 46-50. How can these teachings inform our understanding of religious diversity and cooperation in today's world?
10. How do the challenges and sacrifices of following Jesus, as mentioned in the last part of the chapter, resonate with your personal experiences?
11. How does the emphasis on childlike humility challenge societal norms of greatness?
12. How can we learn to trust in God's provision as demonstrated in the feeding of the five thousand in our own lives?
13. How can the prediction of Jesus' death help us understand His mission and purpose?
14. How does the lesson on humility help us to reevaluate our personal ambitions and pursuits?
15. In light of Jesus' teachings on discipleship, what aspects of your life may you need to reconsider or reevaluate?
16. How does Jesus' instruction to the apostles about depending on God's provision apply to us in our modern context?
17. How does the Transfiguration reinforce the concept of the Trinity?
18. How can Jesus' acceptance of His impending death inspire us to face our own trials and challenges?
19. In what ways does the healing of the demon-possessed boy demonstrate Jesus' authority over spiritual forces?
20. How do Jesus' teachings on the cost of discipleship resonate with contemporary understandings of commitment and sacrifice?