



NOTES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Supplemental Texts

Ex. 32:7-8, 15-23; Due. 32:4-5, 17-20; Matt. 17:14-23; Mark 9:14-32; Luke 7:11-17; 9:21-22, 33; 18:31-34; 24:44-49; Acts 13:10; Rom. 4:25; Phil. 2:6-11, 14-18

Study Summary

This text continues the theme of chapter 9 in transitioning from a focus on Jesus' identity, to a focus on His mission to come and die for sinners. When Jesus comes down from the mountaintop experience of the Transfiguration, He is immediately faced with the messiness of the valley; with unbelief, misunderstanding, and the failure of His disciples. Jesus shows how powerfully God works through one who is committed to His will and ways as Jesus brings freedom for the father and his boy. Jesus then immediately points the disciples back to what they failed to understand before, that He has come not to take power but to give it away on the cross (21-22). Sadly, the disciples again fail to understand and obey.

Historical & Theological Background

Mount Sini and the Golden Calf:

The scene of 9:37-45 has parallels to the story of Moses on Mount Sini and the Gold Calf incident. Read Exodus 32:7-8, 15-23, noting the similarities between the two scenes. In both cases God's Servant starts on a mountaintop, where God is displayed in all His glory. Yet, in both cases the Servant descends the mountain to come face to face with the unbelief of those who should know the truth, but refuse to hear it and obey. It is likely that Luke is intentionally drawing these parallels (especially since Jesus Himself quotes the words of Moses later in verse 41) to show how Israel is again rejecting the true God to instead follow the false promises of the fast-food gods of their time.

The Disciple's Confusion:

This is the second occasion of the disciples confusion revolving around Jesus' mission in the same chapter (verses 33 and 45). Their confusion most likely stems from the preconceived notions of the time about a warrior messiah who would come and defeat Israel's enemies by force. The people of Israel had no conception of a Messiah whose mission was to come and die. From the language of v. 45, it seems that the consistent misunderstanding of the disciples led to God keeping this knowledge from them. The reality of Jesus and His mission is not fully revealed to them until after the resurrection. (See Luke 24:45-47)

DISCUSSION PRIMER

Take some time this week to read Luke 9:37-45 slowly and prayerfully. Ask yourself these questions: What does it look like to obey God through all the ups and downs of life? When and how God often display His power throughout Scripture? What hard things might God be calling you to face? Come to group ready to share.

TEXTUAL INVESTIGATION

LUKE 9:37-45

Big Idea: God Works Powerfully When We Submit to His Will and Ways
Fallen Condition Focus: Escaping Obedience and Suffering

- How is this scene different from the mountaintop experience? (9:28-36)
- What does the father ask of Jesus (38-39)? Why has he come to Jesus (40)?
- Jesus' response (41) is a quote from Due. 32:5, which speaks of the faithlessness of the people of Israel in their desert wanderings. Read Due. 32:4-5, 17-20. What does this scene, and the people's response to Jesus' ministry as a whole, have in common with the Israel of the past?
- What does Jesus do for the boy (42-43)? How is this similar to other times Jesus showed tender compassion? (See Luke 7:11-17; 8:54-55)
- How does the crowd react to this miracle (43), and why does Jesus immediately speak to His disciples about His coming death (44)?
- Why do the disciples not understand Jesus' words (45)? How is this connected to the incident with the boy and his father? (See HTB)

Gospel Connection: Read Phil. 2:6-11. How did Jesus overcome sin and darkness?

TEXTUAL INTERSECTION: How does the text intersect with our lives?

- How does the world define power? How does the Bible define it? You?
- Why is it difficult to come down from "mountaintop" experiences? What can we learn from this text about Jesus' commitment to us even in the darkest valleys?
- Have you ever tried to escape the obedience that God calls for in His disciples? If yes, how did this impact your life and the lives of those around you?
- Why does obediently following after Jesus some times lead to suffering and hardship? (See Luke 9:23)
- Share a time that God worked powerfully in your life or in the life of someone close to you. How did this experience strength your faith? Your humility?
- Are there hard things in your life right now that you are trying to escape? What would it look like to let God work powerfully in the midst of the mess?

REPLICABLE QUESTIONS

Read Luke 9:37-45 and explore together what the passage reveals about:

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| 1) The character and purposes of God? | 4) Our identity in Christ? |
| 2) The fallen human condition? | 5) Our obedience to Christ? |
| 3) The gospel of Jesus Christ? | 6) Our relationship to others |

TEXTUAL APPLICATION: "So, what now?"

Have each participant identify a personal take-away in light of this study. Is there . . .

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| • a command to obey? | • a beauty to behold? | • a mission to fulfill? |
| • a promise to claim? | • a truth to believe? | • an example to follow? |
| • a sin to repent of? | • a service to render? | • a person to tell? |