

## Luke 9:57-62 - Part 2

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Date: 07 January 2024

Preacher: Clay Naylor

[ 0 : 00 ] So not the tree's natural location, not where it once was, but by grace was rescued and moved and planted to where it can grow. It's a picture of what God has done for us by His grace and salvation.

He's transferred us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His beloved Son. By His grace moved us when we were dwindling and dying. Picked us up by His grace and moved us and planted us where we could live and grow.

So, it's a picture of studying God's Word and meditating on it day and night to remind ourselves of the truth and promises.

We become like a spiritual tree that's planted by streams of water. And we won't grow dry and we won't blow over if we plant ourselves in by that stream.

So, when we fail to realize that there are such rich treasures and found of God's Word, we tend to drift. We forget His promises. We forget His love. If you go to, I think it's Deuteronomy chapter 8.

[ 1 : 09 ] But in that chapter, I think God says almost six or seven times, remember, don't forget. Remember, don't forget. There's so many warnings.

Sin causes us to forget. And we think, there's no way I'll ever forget this. Yes, you will. Like sin pulls on you. Right? And we need to look at God's Word with fresh eyes.

It's almost to become dull and bored. Psalm 119, verse 18. Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of your law. That word wondrous means wonderful, far surpassing the ordinary, nearly unbelievable.

That's like what that word means. I open my eyes to see that in your Word. Things that are just mind-blowing. Unbelievable. We learn from the prophet Jeremiah that God both listens, cares, and responds to the prayers of His people.

And God calls out to him and He says, you know, call to me and I will answer you and I will show you great and unsearchable things that you do not know. And there's so much that God desires to give us if we would just come and drink from His Word and meditate on it day and night.

[ 2 : 29 ] Because some of you may have a desire, but you just lack the practicality of it. But you just need a time, a place, and a plan. And we can help you figure that out. Time and a place and a plan.

You've got to fight for it. So that's the first way we learn how to worship God is that we've got to be in His Word. Secondly, and obviously, through prayer.

Paul wrote in Colossians 4, Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. In our translation, it means be devoted to prayer.

And that language means like the way that you're devoted to eating. Be devoted the same way to prayer. Many of you will be devoted to eating in an hour.

In the same way. Fully devote yourselves to prayer. This kind of devotion reflects a soul that knows that it needs God's grace.

[ 3 : 28 ] And longs for God's presence to sit alone at the feet of Christ. Remember, He is a person. He is living. And the Holy Spirit has come to dwell in us.

And prayer is that medium through which we experience speak, connect to God, to speak to Him as a beloved Father, a gift that we have through prayer.

One of my favorite verses on prayer is Mark 1, verse 35. You get a glimpse into the life of Jesus, but it says in Mark 1, 35, early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up and left the house and went out to a secluded place of solitude and was praying there.

Like this desire to want to be with God. And many people would ask, like, why would Jesus pray? You know? I mean, He longs to be with the Father is one simple answer to that.

He wants to be with the one that He loves. And that He made Himself dependent on the Father when He was here. Needy.

[ 4 : 40 ] Going to the Father. And most of us don't pray because we just don't believe in prayer. We think that we have it figured out. And we're not aware of how dependent we truly are on God.

Paul Miller in his book, *Praying Life*, wrote, we tell ourselves strong Christians pray a lot. If I were a stronger Christian, I'd pray more.

Strong Christians don't pray more. But they pray more because they realize how weak they are. They don't try to hide it from themselves. Weakness is the channel that allows them to access grace.

In fact, God wanted me depressed about myself and encouraged me about His Son. The Gospel uses my weakness for God's grace.

And so, we pray sort of in proportion to the awareness of our need for God. And our longing to be with Him. When's the last time you prayed just because you wanted to be with God?

[ 5 : 46 ] And I'm not like, oh man, I've got this going on. Please help me. You know, I'll fix this problem. But a longing to actually just sit and be with Him.

And from our Bible reading comes prayer. Almost there's an overflow of that time in reading His Word. Better move on.

So that's number one. There's a lot here, sorry. Resolve to serve God's people. This is Ephesians chapter 2, verse 19 through 22.

If you want to turn there. But Paul talking about the church. He says, So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God built on a foundation of the apostles and the prophets.

Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone in whom the whole structure being joined together grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In Him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

[ 6 : 55 ] So again, remember who you were before Christ. You were a stranger and outsider. You were not a part of God's people.

But through Christ, you have now become a fellow citizen with God's people and a partaker of His kingdom. You were once strangers. But now in Christ, you are a member of God's own household. Adopted as a child by His grace. With all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of being a child of God. We are a spiritual house. A temple.

Where God meets with us. Indwelt by the Holy Spirit. So much here in this passage. And God is now building us, not just me or you, but us, together as the church, as the new spiritual temple. God gives us so many beautiful metaphors in the Scripture. Pictures of what the church is. There are so many. And every one of them implies like a communal aspect. Right?

[ 8 : 04 ] Biblical metaphors. The body. That's 1 Corinthians 12. To be a part of a body means to belong to a living, functioning, serving community. The flock.

Means that. That's in Acts 20, verse 28. Means belonging to a community dependent on God for food, protection, and direction. And like we just said, there's the temple in Ephesians 2.

A stone in God's temple means to belong to a worshipping community. And likewise, a household.

To be a member of a family is to belong to the community bound by a common fatherhood.

There's so much here. Maybe going on. The bride of Christ. So many analogies that God gives us. It's a picture of the church. But they are corporate.

They're not just me and Jesus. I don't want to de-emphasize your personal relationship with Christ. That's vital. In fact, you can't be a part of the church unless that is actually there.

[ 9 : 05 ] But we need each other. Our ultimate need is for God. Period. The end. At the same time, for some reason, God has designed, ordained, that much of what we need in this life comes through the fellowship of being with the church.

That's just how He's ordained it. Much of what we need in everyday life comes from the body of Christ. And Christ has come to dwell in each one of us. So, if we want to know our Lord better, we must get to know each other better.

However, we need the Scripture. We need the church. And God designed it this way. That much of what I need in this life and what you need will come through the encouragement, the prayers, the service, the accountability, the counsel, the discipline, the love and service of other believers.

That's just what He's designed to do. God's children are the apple of His eye. And if we touch His children, we touch Him. As we draw near to them, we draw nearer to Him.

Right? So, Scripture says that Jesus didn't just die for you alone. He died for His people. It says in Acts 20, verse 18, that Jesus suffered and died for the church of God, which He obtained or He bought with His own blood.

[10:34] So, give your lives to your brothers and sisters. And two, practical applications with this is like, yeah, gather with the church. This is why online church doesn't work. Because there's a command to gather, to be together.

We need the physical presence of other believers to see them, to touch them, to hear them. And this Sunday gathering that we're here at now is a wonderful privilege we have to worship God together as those who have been redeemed.

Like, this is a sacred time. I know that noises and kids and snacks and all that can make it kind of just feel like an ordinary time.

But it's not. It is a sacred time. That we've come together to engage in the worship of God with other believers around the world today. All over, worshipping God today.

And then to join in with the voices that are also in heaven that never stop praising God. We come together to do that as a body through the preaching of God's Word, the singing of truthful songs to God and to each other.

[11:43] To worship God. Now, I'm not nitpicking on this, but we have this concept of like, music is worship. Preaching is not.

If you spoke that way to people of old, they'd be confused. Because worship actually just meant sort of a lifestyle of all that we do that magnifies the greatness and worth of God.

So all that we do today is geared towards that. But we are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession. A beautiful thing to be a part of the church.

That we were once not God's people, and now we are the people of God. Once we had not received mercy, but now we have received mercy. 1 Peter 2, 9-10.

And outside of this, we must fight. And I mean, it's work. You have to find it. Like, find times to gather with other believers. We've been talking about kind of pumping community groups again.

[12:45] Find one. Be involved. Come around. Men, gather with other men. Women, gather with other women. Be around the body.

Eat meals together. Go to the park. Whatever it is. Serve alongside each other. As Hebrews says, Consider how to stir up one another to love and good works. Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some.

But encouraging one another all the more as you see the day drawing near. And pray for one another. It talks about how in Acts 2, verse 42, that they came together continually and faithfully, devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers. Praying for holiness. Praying for the mission of God. So, resolve to meet with the church regularly. Fight to be here on time.

Fight to spend time with them. When I know the temptation is just to want to check out. Right? And then thirdly, just for five or six minutes here, resolve to adopt God's mission.

[14:02] You don't need to turn here, but just be reminded in Matthew 28, verse 19, that we are told to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

And I've heard people explain this away by saying, that was just for the apostles. I'm like, well, did the world get reached to the apostles? It did not. Most of them didn't even make it out of that area. So, that's the very clear intended idea that it was meant to be carried on by future disciples to the ends of the earth. In another place, Acts 1, verse 8, Jesus says, you will be my witnesses.

In Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. Not really sure any disciple made it to the ends of the earth. Right? So, we know this command to make disciples and be witnesses for Christ wasn't just for them, but for every believer and disciple.

And I know that most of us have different capacities. You have responsibilities. God ordained responsibilities to work for your family, to take care of your kids, to be at home.

[15:11] You have different capacities. Moms, like talk to other moms at the park. Talk to your neighbors, coworkers, whatever it may be. They're all around us.

But most of us, it's our homes, our neighborhoods, our places of work that God has sovereignly placed us to go and be witnesses for Christ.

To talk of Him. To weave Him into our conversation. And to give Him the glory for things. And the opportunities are all around us. Like, I just, I humbly just don't understand when people will say, well, I just don't know who to talk to.

I'm like, they're all around you. Like, they're all around you. Just open your eyes. Like, going about your daily business.

We can just grow dull to this. It's your neighbor down the street who's just going through the normal rat race trying to keep up with things. It's your coworker who complains about life and complains about his marriage and his kids and looking for the new rainbow to chase.

[16:17] It's a friend who's killing herself at the gym because she wants to find her value and what people think about her body. It's that outspoken mom that's hard to get along with sometimes.

And we need to love them and bring them into the fold. It's that person who tries to find their joy and acceptance in the party scene. Someone who seeks to find their value in the dating and sex world all around us.

College students. It's your roommate or your friend in the dorm or in your hall. It's that guy who never leaves his room and just plays video games because he's really depressed and hides from the reality of the world that's around him.

A command in Proverbs 24, verse 11, rescue those who are being taken away to death. Hold back those who are stumbling to slaughter.

So application, like just ask God to give you fresh eyes to see those people who are around you. Write their names down and begin praying that you'd be able to show them the love of Christ through service, acts of kindness, that you'd be able to speak the words of the gospel.

[17:34] I hate to tell you like that old saying, you know, preach the gospel and use words as necessary. It's nonsense. Like the gospel is a verbal message. It's not gestures.

It's not just doing good things. It is a message that must be proclaimed. So share that with them. It doesn't mean just sit down and walk through five or six points.

It just means talk about the gospel where there may be multiple conversations. Pray about those specific individuals that He would give you the heart to reach out and rescue them from being taken away to death.

With all these things, all these resolutions for to worship God alone, to serve the church, to adopt God's mission, all these things, we're going to fail at them many ways over this coming year.

And it's okay because we're not striving to earn God's love. We're striving in the midst. We need His help. I mean, I know some pretty strong, disciplined people like me.

[18:36] And they can almost do anything, I think. And I've seen them just brought low and humbled by different trials and circumstances in their life. We need God's help dependent on Him.

And so, in a moment, the band's going to come up and we're going to sing a song that's based on a tune, a rendition of the old Scotsman Robert Burns.

1788, he wrote a song called Odd La Insane. And it's traditionally sung around New Year's to like, welcome in the new year. And at the stroke of midnight, people typically sing it, but the words have been rewritten to focus on the glory of Christ with the tune is from that of the 1780s.

But it's written for the glory of Christ. So, may you declare when we sing that song in a moment a fresh resolve, a fresh desire to live this new year one day at a time, one week, one month at a time for the glory of Christ to take up your cross and follow Him.

May you pray for us when the band comes up.