

EXPOSITION

I. JESUS' CLEAR **TEACHING** – vv.31-33

- This is the 3rd time Luke informs us that He has this talk with them (9:21ff; 9:43ff)
- 1.) His destination – **Jerusalem**
- 2.) His destiny – **Def:** The inevitable or necessary fate to which a particular person or thing is destined; a predetermined course of events considered as something beyond human power or control. **to accomplish all things written by the prophets**
 - In a certain sense the above definition is true. In another it isn't, because He is indeed in control, it is on His terms
- 3.) His demise – **delivered to the Gentiles, mocked, insulted, spit upon, scourged, and killed** (by crucifixion)
- 4.) His deliverance – **on the 3rd day He will rise again**
 - Application: Jesus faces this with great confidence. Though the things coming on Him are horrible, He presses on in obedience and trust. What about us? What is the difference between what God had ordained for Him and what He ordains for us? The similarities are that that it was ordained for God's glory and the good of His people. The main difference is that for Him it was revealed in Scripture, for us it is revealed as providence unfolds. To grow in Christ-likeness is to embrace the reality of all of our steps being ordained of the Lord, and responding to them in confidence and trust. Proverbs 16:9 A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.

II. THE DISCIPLES' GREAT **PROBLEM** – v.34

- We are told that **they understood none of these things**. There was nothing lacking in Jesus' ability to teach the content. He said it as plainly as possible. There is nothing wrong with the teacher or the teaching, but something is wrong with them. Why didn't they understand?
- This raises a tension: did Jesus wish for them to understand these things?
- 1.) An expectation problem – They had certain presuppositions as to what Jesus came to do. As they read the Scripture, they read and studied with a certain slant. They had been taught a view of a Messiah that had certain features, of being a militaristic conqueror to overthrow the enemies and setup a temporal earthly kingdom. Even when Jesus pointed out what the prophets said about Him, they still didn't get it. They were not willing to let go of their preconceived notions.
 - This can also be a problem with us. We are raised in a certain religious culture in America, or particular denomination, and it is often the case that Jesus and Christianity takes on the traits and features of religious/cultural standards rather than solidly biblical standards. In asking such questions as "what would Jesus do" there is often a kind of picture of Jesus which is really just an extension of ourselves.
 - Therefore it is that people run into mistakes, because they read their Bibles by the halves, and are as partial in the prophets as they are in the law. They are only for the smooth things (Henry)*
- This can be a problem with reading only our favorite portions of the Bible, as we are attracted to those things which most give us what we want to hear and we avoid those things that are hard for us. We must read the whole of Scripture, and seek to have our belief and life continually be conformed to the Word.
- 2.) A spiritual problem - This is seen in the text, which tells us that **this saying was hidden from them**. Not only did they have incorrect expectations, but they also lacked something essential to understand what Jesus was saying to them. They lacked the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit.
 - Christianity is a supernatural religion. It isn't merely about learning facts and information, building a system of belief, and then living it. Rather, there is an interplay between the natural and the supernatural. The natural, by its very definition, can only be effected by the supernatural supernaturally. In other words, we cannot understand things that are above and beyond what we see/touch/taste/smell unless the supernatural breaks into our experience. Even this isn't enough, but we need the Holy Spirit to also work in our heart and mind to rightly understand those supernatural events.
 - This is seen later after Jesus' resurrection (Luke 24:44-45). Even in seeing Him they did not comprehend until He supernaturally opened their understanding to comprehend the Scriptures. One can be a Bible scholar, with an understanding of Hebrew and Greek, with massive portions of it memorized, and yet not understand.
 - Scripture is not a mere academic pursuit, but it is necessary that God grant us understanding. 2 Corinthians 3:14ff speaks of those who read the Old Testament with eyes blinded by a veil so that they don't understand. 1 Corinthians 2:11-12 says that no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God, and that we receive the Spirit of God that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.
- This lack of understanding of Jesus' word will seriously affect their behavior when the time comes for Him to be crucified. All of them will flee. Peter will deny Jesus in the presence of the servant girl. All of them will cower in the upper room for fear of the Jews. All of this changes after Jesus' resurrection, and His opening of their understanding. They will preach and live with boldness. They will understand that God has ordained all things, and can work even the apparently worst thing for good. They realize that they are immortal until God's appointed time for their death comes.
- The application for us that when we truly understand God's Word, it changes us, it changes how we live and think.

- So what is the solution to their problem? What is the solution to our problem of overcoming our wrong presuppositions and spiritual darkness as we seek to understand God's Word? I think we see it illustrated in the next account.

III. THE SOLUTION ILLUSTRATED – vv.35-43

- As Jesus and His disciples, together with a multitude of people come near to **Jericho**, a **blind man sat by the road begging**. He hears the commotion of the crowd passing by. When he is told that **Jesus of Nazareth was passing by**, he cries out **Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!** This man has obviously heard things about Jesus and His ability to heal. This man knows he is blind, and believes Jesus can help him.
- There is an unexpected response by Jesus' entourage, and we see another instance of a person not considered worthy of Jesus' time being marginalized. They think that this man won't be of any benefit to the kind of kingdom Jesus is in the process of building, and so tell him to keep quiet. But the man isn't interested in helping the Lord Jesus, but is desperate to receive help from Him. So he continues to cry out for mercy.
- The Lord stops and tells them to bring the blind man to Him. Jesus asks him plainly **What do you want Me to do for you?**, and the blind man responds **Lord, that I may receive my sight**. Jesus simply says **Receive your sight; your faith has made you well**. It was not the man's faith absent from the Lord's working (for that had not healed him), but his faith which moved him to go to the only source of real help.
- And so, **immediately** and without a show or ostentation, the man becomes fully sighted. He follows the Lord Jesus, giving glory to God. And in this case the people who were standing around also gave praise to God, which would have been verbal and exuberant.
- Let me say that this is a real account in time/space history. This isn't just a myth illustrating some spiritual truth. Jesus really healed a man who was really blind. He did so in response to this man's faith-filled and unstoppable passion to have Jesus heal him. His faith, as it moved him to Christ, made Him well. In this account we see the power of Christ to do all things, His sovereignty over sickness, His willingness to hear prayer.
- Having said that, it seems that it is particularly related to what we have considered about the disciples not understanding the Word of Jesus concerning the upcoming events in Jerusalem. How I think it is related is this: this man was physically blind, the disciples were spiritually blind.
- One of the differences between physical and spiritual blindness is that the physically blind know they cannot see, while he spiritually blind don't always. You don't have to tell a blind man he is blind, he is fully aware. But with spiritual blindness, part of the blindness itself is not knowing you are blind. This is where the Word of God is so important.
- All unbiblical views of man have this in common: they have too high a view of fallen man. But the Scriptures tell us we don't see as we should. We are lacking understanding. We need, even as believers, ongoing spiritual light to enlighten our understanding of God's truth. And this is not granted by a one time prayer saying "from now on show me everything I know" so that we never need to ask again. Rather, God has ordained that in dependence on Him we continually cry out with the Psalmist in Psalm 119:18 *Open my eyes that I may see wondrous things from Your law*.

APPLICATION

- Like the blind man, we need to continually and earnestly cry out to the Lord Jesus to give us sight. We need to recognize our great blindness, with incessant prayer seek the Lord Jesus for help. To not pray is to cut off our only means for understanding and applying the Word of God in our lives.
- It is good and necessary to hear sermons, read the Scriptures and books filled with truth, but it isn't enough. Being exposed to good teaching isn't guaranteed that we will "get it." We need the blessing of the Holy Spirit to give us light and understanding, and this doesn't come without asking. We have a desperate need for the help of the Holy Spirit to enlighten our understanding – Ephesians 1:17-18.
- One reason we (like the disciples) live in fear, anxiety, disobedience, lack power in witnessing, anemic and spiritually dead lives instead of faith-filled, courageous, God-magnifying lives is just this – the truth of God's Word doesn't come to our heart and mind with the power of the Holy Spirit. What then do we do? It will NEVER change as long as we neglect secret prayer.
- A question which is becoming almost a mantra with me when people are struggling with sin, having difficulties in their marriage, feeling spiritual cold and dead "what is your devotional life like...are you reading and praying daily for God's help." The Word of God is true: whatever we sow we reap. If we sow to the flesh and neglect the Word and prayer, we will reap corruption. But if we sow to the Spirit, we will reap life and joy in God's presence. He will open our eyes to the truth and the "weight" of things greater to us, and help us live the particular of our lives as framed by the transcendent truth of God's Word.
- When walk by physical sight and not by faith, then we are doomed to the same mistakes tied to this world. When we walk by spiritual sight, then we truly see.
- This we should pray for one another (Eph 1:17-18), for our children, for the lost. That God would make known...
- And what happens when we do? We follow Christ, glorify God, and those who know what has happened also praise God (v.43)