

# JESUS TEACHES HOW TO MINISTER

## LUKE 09:10–17

### *Introduction*

Jesus once said. “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve” (see Mt. 20:28; Mark 10:45). So it is with the Lord’s disciple. But how the disciple ministers is of vital concern, for how he ministers determines the eternal fate of men and the success or failure of the Lord’s mission. In this passage Jesus teaches His followers *how to minister*. He had called them to minister, to show people that He, the Messiah, was the answer to human helplessness. They were to meet the day-to-day needs of people, helping them through the trials and problems of life. He had to teach them a critical truth: they would never be able to do the job in their own strength. Their human resources were just too inadequate to meet the needs of the world. Humanism, man and his ability alone, could never get the job done. Man and his resources could only take care of some of the needs, and man and his resources would always end up having to send crowds away to fend for themselves (v. 12). Why is this true? Why is humanism such a futile failure?

Why can man himself not meet all the needs of the world? Because so few see the crowds in their need and even fewer experience compassion for them (Mt. 14:14). Most say, “Send the crowds away, that they can go...and buy themselves some food” (v. 12). But Jesus said, “You give them something to eat” (v. 13).

It is at this point that man fails and fails so miserably. He has his eye stuck to the earth, only on human resources. What Jesus said is profound: “Bring them [your human resources] here to me” (Mt. 14:14). What would happen if men would bring their human resources to Christ? The resources would become wonderfully multiplied, and the world’s needs would be met. (See Mt. 14:15-21; Mk. 6:30-44.)

- I. He demonstrated and taught the need for privacy and rest (v. 10).
- II. He allowed the needy to interrupt the much needed privacy and rest (v. 11).
- III. He met both spiritual and physical needs (v. 11).
- IV. He challenged the disciples to meet the people’s needs (vv. 12-13).
- V. He approached needs in an orderly fashion (vv. 14-15).
- VI. He looked to God in meeting needs (vv. 16-17).

### **I. *Luke 09:10 Need for Privacy and Rest***

Jesus demonstrated and taught the need for privacy. The twelve returned from their mission and reported what had happened. Jesus had never needed time with them as much as He did now, for He was closing out His Galilean ministry. In fact, there was to be little public ministry hereafter. From this point onward He was to concentrate primarily on His disciples, giving them intensive training (See Mt. 16:13-20; 16:21-28; 17:1-13; 17:22; 17:24-27; 20:17; 20:20-28 to see the emphasis upon this intensive training).

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1. Jesus needed to discuss their witnessing tour with them. As they reported, He needed to point out both the strengths and weaknesses of how they went about it. They must learn to minister in the most effective way possible. An evaluation session was needed.
2. The disciples needed to evaluate themselves; but they needed to do it in the presence of God alone so that they could restore both their spirits and bodies. They were physically exhausted and their spirits were drained.

What did Jesus do? “He took them with Him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida. Jesus had hoped to get some rest, some quietness, and privacy for Himself and His disciples. Note that they had apparently not entered the town, that they were in a *“remote place”* (v. 12).

The point was clearly demonstrated for the disciples. There is a time for ministry and for evaluating oneself and one’s ministry; there is also a time for renewing one’s spirit and body.

**Mat 11:28** *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”*

**Mark 6:31** *Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”*

**Exo 34:21** *“Six days you shall labour, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during the plowing season and harvest you must rest.” (See Exo. 23:12; 31:15; 35:2)*

**Lev 23:3** *“There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the Lord.”*

**Psa 55:6-7** *I said, “Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest — I would flee far away and stay in the desert.”*

**Exo 33:14** *The Lord replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”*

**Psa 116:7** *Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the LORD has been good to you.*

**Isa 28:12** *To whom he said, “This is the resting place, let the weary rest;” and, “This is the place of repose” — but they would not listen.*

**Isa 30:15** *This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: “In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it.”*

**1 Tim 4:15** *Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress.*

**Mat 11:29** *“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”*

*Psa 77:12 I will meditate on all your works and consider all your mighty deeds.*

*Psa 104:34 May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the Lord.*

*Psa 119:15 I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.*

*Psa 143:5 I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done.*

## **II. Luke 09:11 Ministry, Vision**

Jesus allowed the needy to interrupt the much needed privacy. The emphasis is on the words “the crowds learned about it and followed Him.” The scene was dramatic. The people saw where Jesus and the disciples were heading. They began to run by foot around the lake. As they ran, they passed through the cities shouting excitedly the news that Jesus was nearby. Throngs of people joined in the streaming mass of humanity making its way around the lake. By the time they reached the place where Jesus’ ship was to dock, the crowd had grown to five thousand men not counting women and children (Mk. 6:33). The people were disturbing and interrupting the disciples’ need for privacy, for rest and spiritual renewal. The disciples had been ministering, doing all they could, yet here the people were demanding more. Note the contrast between Jesus and the disciples. The disciples became irritated (v. 12; see the rude statement, “unless we go and buy food for all this crowd” of v. 13). Jesus, on the other hand, was filled with compassion for the people (see Mk. 6:34). The disciples had a much needed lesson to learn, and they needed to learn the lesson more than they needed rest. The lesson was simple dramatic: while one is resting the multitudes are still lost. They are as sheep without a shepherd (Mk. 6:34). A disciple must not rest unless it is *absolutely necessary*. Too many are lost and hurting.

*John 4:35 “Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.”*

*John 9:4 “As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.”*

*Acts 4:20 For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.*

*1 Cor 9:16 Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!*

*2 Tim 4:2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction.*

*2 Tim 1:6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.*

*Eccl 9:10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.*

*Isa 62:1 For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet, till her righteousness shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch.*

*Jer 20:9 But if I say, "I will not mention him or speak any more in his name," his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.*

### **III. Luke 09:11 *Spiritual and Physical Healing***

Jesus met both spiritual and physical needs. The people did not need preaching alone; they also needed help physically. Both body and soul needed to be saved and restored. So Jesus...

- spoke (preached) unto them the Kingdom of God.
- healed them that had need of healing.

Note two points.

1. Jesus preached the Kingdom of God — of which God is the ruler and man is the subject, of which the Word of God is Law and the obedience of man is demanded.
2. Jesus healed the people “who needed healing.” This is always true. A believer who really *needs healing* is blessed by God and healed. But note: *the need of healing is not always the greatest need of a person*. God sometimes uses the physical need to meet that which is far more important: the spiritual need and the glory of God. Therefore, not all believers are always healed. Sometimes the believer needs to learn love, joy, peace, endurance, prayer, trust, faith, and hope through his suffering. (See *Suffering and Healing*, Mt. 8:1-4)

However, there is and has been a problem with the truth of this down through the centuries. So many use the spiritual need as an excuse for not having the faith and godly power to be healed and to heal. As Jesus Himself said, it is much easier to tell a man his sins are forgiven than it is to tell him to take up his bed and walk. Jesus met both needs of a man, his spiritual needs and his physical needs: “[He] healed those who needed healing.” (See *Suffering and Healing*, Mt. 8:1-4)

The disciples needed to learn that both the spiritual and physical needs of men were to be met.

*Acts 10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.*

## MATHEW 08:01–04 SUFFERING AND HEALING

This leper was healed. In looking at miraculous healings, the question is often asked, why are all faithful believers not healed when they are sick and ask for healing? Some walk ever so faithfully before God, and they believe that God does heal; and they have as much faith, if not more faith, than some who are healed. Why then are they not also healed?

The reason is God. When God looks at our requests, He considers at least four things.

1. God's glory. Would granting the request bring the greatest glory to God's name?
2. Our good, not only physical, but spiritual. What particular spiritual grace or quality do we need to learn: endurance, self-control, trust, dependence?
  - a. Spiritually, within ourselves: will granting our request strengthen us more spiritually? Which way will our faith and trust in God grow more?
  - b. Spiritually, without ourselves: how does God now want to use us — as a constant prayer warrior? As an unbelievable testimony to His empowering spiritual strength, no matter the physical condition? Consider something else: What do the people need for whom God wants to use us? What is the best way for God to reach them — by demonstrating His strength in and through our trial? No matter what some may claim, the power of God is often more forcibly seen by manifesting itself through infirmities and weaknesses.

*2 Cor 12:8-9 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.*

3. God's wisdom. He knows what is needed by whom; when it is needed; for whom it is needed; where it is needed; how it is needed; why it is needed.
4. God's mercy. He wills above all else for men to know His mercy. He does whatever is needed to demonstrate His mercy to men. Sometimes walking through the trials of life reveals His mercy more; sometimes removing the trials reveals His mercy more. He chooses the best way for both the sufferer and those who surround him. □

### IV. *Luke 09:12–13 Attitudes Toward Needs, Resources and Ministering*

Jesus challenged the disciples to meet the people's needs. The people had been listening to Jesus for hours. Sundown was soon to come. There was danger the people would be caught out in the desert in the dark, unable to get food before the next day. Some had already gone most of the day without food. It was time for Jesus to stop and let the people

go; however, He gave no sign of stopping. So the disciples suggested He dismiss the crowd. Note the two attitudes toward meeting the needs of people.

1. The wrong attitude was illustrated by the disciples. They suggested that Jesus let the people go and take care of their own needs. Keep in mind that the crowd was not welcomed by the disciples, not this day. It was to have been a day of rest and spiritual renewal for them. The point is, the disciples had not sensed any personal responsibility for the *hunger* (physical or spiritual) of the crowd. They were willing, even wanting the crowd to go away, no matter the difficulty they would have in fending for themselves.
2. The right attitude was illustrated by Jesus. He emphatically said, “You give them something to eat.” The “you” is emphatic in the Greek. Jesus was stressing that it was the disciples’ responsibility. They were to take care of the people’s needs. They were to “feed” the people (physically and spiritually). The people were not to be left to themselves. They could not fend nor provide for themselves.

Note something else: it was more important for the people to be hearing the gospel and receiving ministry than to be out seeking bread. “Man does not live on bread alone” (Lk. 4:4). It is, of course, necessary to seek bread sometime in order to survive, but seeking spiritual food is absolutely essential. Seeking spiritual food must be interrupted only when necessary.

**Luke 10:41-42** *“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better [sitting at Jesus’ feet, learning], and it will not be taken away from her.”*

**John 6:35** *Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.”*

**John 6:51** *“I am the Living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”*

3. The problem was inadequate resources. The disciples readily confessed that they had too little to meet the need of the people. Just think about the enormity of the situation for a moment. The crowd was huge; the task was *impossible*. There was no possibility the disciples could meet the need of the people. But note: they did exactly what needed to be done:

=> They told Jesus exactly what they did have.

=> They did the best thinking they could, giving the best solution they could.

What the disciples had was inadequate, but they did lay what they had before Jesus and discussed the only solution they knew (to go and buy food).

**Deu 1:16-17** *And I charged your judges at that time: Hear the disputes between your brothers and judge fairly, whether the case is between brother Israelites or between*

*one of them and an alien. Do not show partiality in judging; hear both small and great alike. Do not be afraid of any man, for judgment belongs to God. Bring me any case too hard you, and I will hear it.*

**1 Cor 16:2** *On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.*

**Luke 6:38** *“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”*

**Mat 5:42** *“Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.”*

**Acts 20:35** *“In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”*

## **V. Luke 09:14–15 Organization**

Jesus approached needs in an orderly fashion. There were over five thousand men alone, not counting women and children. The need was so great, organization was necessary for the need to be met. The need was divided and spread about among the disciples by setting the people up in groups. Each group or company had fifty persons, or double rows of fifty each (Mk. 6:40).

**Thought 1.** The task is enormous. It can be met only by an orderly, organized approach.

## **VI. Luke 09:16–17 Ministering**

Jesus looked to God in meeting needs. Note exactly what Jesus did.

1. Jesus looked up to heaven, giving thanks to God for what He did have. This is what is meant by the *blessing*.
2. Jesus broke and gave what He had. Note a crucial point. Jesus was doing what He could: looking up to God, giving thanks and then giving what He had. He could do no more.

**Thought 1.** The lesson is clear for every believer. Once we do our part, God will multiply our resources.

3. Jesus utilized all. There was plenty to feed all, in fact more than enough.

**Thought 1.** There will always be enough to feed all — if we will only confess our inadequate resources, give thanks for what we have, and then give what we have.

**Mat 6:33** *“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*

**Mal 3:10** *“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.”*

**Psa 24:1** *The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.*

**Psa 41:1** *Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the LORD delivers him in times of trouble.*

**Psa 50:10** *For every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills.*

**Prov 11:25** *A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.*

**Prov 22:9** *A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.*

**Prov 28:27** *He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses.*

**Eccl 11:1** *Cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it again.*

**Isa 32:8** *But the noble man makes noble plans, and by noble deeds he stands.*

**Isa 58:10** *And if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.*

**Hag 2:8** *‘The silver is mine and the gold is mine,’ declares the Lord Almighty. ■*