

The God who Provides

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[0 : 0 0] Well, please do have a seat. And it is wonderful to see you this morning, particularly if this is your first Sunday with us at Brunsfield. It is just great to have you with us. Can I encourage you at this point to make every effort to get Luke chapter 9 open in front of you?

It is crucial as we come to church at this point in our service that we have God's Word open in front of us. So make every effort to get the Scriptures open in front of you. Luke chapter 9. And let's pray together.

And ask for God's help as we come to his Word. Dear Heavenly Father, Lord, we still ourselves now, and we remember who you are and who we are.

We remember that you are God in heaven, and we are on earth. And we remember that your ways are so much higher than our ways. And we remember that in our world of change, in our lives of change, Lord, that you never change.

And what a joy it is that we can call you, because of Jesus, our Father. And we can hear from you as your children. So, Heavenly Father, we ask that you would speak to us now through your Word.

[1 : 1 0] Would you help us grasp something more of your amazing goodness, like we were just singing, and your greatness. And may that go from being praised on our lips, to knowledge in our head, to truth in our hearts.

And may that just drive a love for you. Help us to appreciate something more of who you are this morning, we ask. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Well, we've been journeying through Luke's Gospel over the past few months.

And I want to take you, at the outset of this sermon this morning, right back to Luke chapter 1. If you remember right at the start of his Gospel, you may want to turn there now, to chapter 1 and verse 4.

However, we saw Luke declare at the outset of his Gospel that he'd started out with a very clear purpose in mind. And he had set out to compile, and you'll see it there, an orderly account of Jesus' life.

And what he's done is, he's carefully researched the facts about Jesus Christ. And he's gathered those facts together, and he's put his account together in a way with the express purpose of providing his readers there with, and you'll see the word there, certainty.

[2 : 2 4] This is what he's all about, Luke. He's trying to provide certainty to his readers. Now, I find that a massive comfort. Because I look out in a world, and I see massive uncertainty.

I see political uncertainty. I see economic uncertainty. I look at my life, and I see uncertainty. And isn't it incredible that Luke writes for certainty?

So here he is. He's written for certainty. And because he's done that, I think it means that we should expect to see a progressive logic to his Gospel. And indeed, I think that's exactly what we see.

Here is the flow of Luke's Gospel so far. If you remember, at the start, he started by showing us Jesus' CV. So he started showing us, this is who Jesus is, and these are the things that he was doing.

This is who Jesus is. Then he progressed to tell us about Jesus' manifesto. This is what Jesus came to do. Then he proceeded to tell us about the mission of Jesus.

[3 : 26] Right at the heart of what Jesus came to do, we saw it last week, if you remember, right at the heart of it, Jesus came to bring salvation. To save people from their sin, to rescue them, to give them life, and to reconcile them to God.

And as we enter chapter 9 this morning, what we need to see is that progression, that flow has led us to a new theme in Luke's Gospel. Chapter 9, we enter a new section.

And the big question now for Luke is having shown us what Jesus came to do, and who Jesus is, he'll now go on to show us what it means to follow him.

So there's our big theme for this morning. What it means to follow Jesus. What does Jesus call his followers to a life of? And can I suggest straight off the bat, that is the most important question that we can ever ask with our lives.

What does it mean to follow Jesus? You know, one of my pet hates in life, I don't have many, but one of my pet hates in life is when people try to hide the small print from you.

[4 : 31] Don't know if you find that, you get stuff through your inbox, and it says super fast broadband, \$9.99 a month, and you think, ka-ching, we're in. Then you read the small print, what does it say?

Line rental, £16 a month. You know what it's like? You get flyers through your post, it says three free months at the gym. Again, you're thinking, great, I can get my Hasselhoff on.

Then what does it say? But only when you sign up for 18 months. We hate it. I hate it when people try to hide the small print from me. Here's the thing about Luke chapter 9. There's no hiding of the small print. Jesus is explicit in what it means to follow him.

Small print, Luke chapter 9, not small, it's big. And the disciples in our verses this morning, they're going to learn two massive lessons about what Jesus calls them to as they follow him.

This is what a life of following Jesus looks like. Now, what I want to suggest this morning is that although we are not the 12, and although we live in a different time from them, and although we won't go around doing exactly the things that they did, nor do I think we should expect to, actually, at the center of what Jesus calls them to do, is so true for us today.

[5 : 49] A big lesson for this morning is that the disciples, these followers and learners of Jesus, are called by him to a life of going and a life of knowing.

A life of going and a life of knowing. So here it is. If you've got verses 1 to 9 there, let's look at what going looks like. So we meet Jesus at verse 1.

What is he doing? He's calling a team meeting. That's what he's doing. Interesting. He calls the disciples to come to him before they can go out.

Now, it's interesting, because up until this point in Luke's gospel, Jesus has been the only one doing the preaching and the healing. I mean, this really has been a one-man show up until this point in Luke's gospel.

But now, do you see that Jesus calls the disciples to him and to join him in his kingdom work? He calls them to himself, he delegates authority to them, and he sends them out.

[6 : 52] This is what's going on. This is the pattern. I want us to notice a few things about what he is commissioning them to do here. Now, firstly, notice what they are to do.

Verse 2. They are to preach, and they are to heal. Jesus is calling them to go and to tell people about the kingdom of God, to go and make him known in their surrounding countryside.

Go and make Jesus known. Secondly, notice where they have to go. Verse 4. They have to go to people. This is a people business that Jesus is calling them to do. People right at the heart of this.

They will enter homes. Where did they go? Verse 6. They went from village to village. How far did they go? Notice the word at the end of verse 6. They went everywhere.

This is a going-to-people mission that Jesus is sending his people on. Now, presumably, that's why they are told not to take the essentials for their journey, if you think about it.

[7 : 53] It does seem a bit odd when we read it there, doesn't it? But if you think about it, it's going to sharpen in their minds the sense of urgency that they need to go, but it's also going to sharpen in their minds that they need people.

They need to have people serve them. They need to seek out people that are going to help them. People that are going to let them stay with them. People that are going to feed them.

Because if that doesn't happen, they're not going to get very far. Third thing to notice, notice how this will go down. I think this is where it gets really applicable for us. How will this go down?

What does Jesus envisage? Do you see it there? That some people will accept them. Some will accept them and their message about Jesus and they'll warmly welcome them.

But, verse 5, some will reject them and their message. I think we've got a great example of that rejection. Luke tells us about King Herod at verse 7.

[8 : 52] Seems likely that the mission of the twelve, what they are doing, and clearly the success of what they are doing, it reaches the palace. And Herod is perplexed and he's confused about Jesus' identity.

And what's the question that's on Herod's lips that Luke records for us there? Who is this man? Who is this Jesus? Who is this Jesus? It's been the big question of Luke's gospel so far as we've looked at the identity of this man.

Who is this Jesus? Now that might seem an innocent question at this point on the lips of Herod. But later on we learn that it would appear that he simply wants to see Jesus perform a sign.

Or at worst, to have him killed and he's choosing to respond negatively to who Jesus is. So let's bring a few of those threads together. What is Luke telling us? He's telling us, or Jesus is telling his disciples, that when they go, when they tell people about him, they'll be met with hunger and they'll be met with hostility.

Some people will accept their message and some people will reject their message. And what I want to suggest to us today is that as modern day disciples, Jesus calls us to the same pursuit.

[10 : 06] You know, Rico Tyson, his great little book, Honest Evangelism, I suggest you read it. It's a great little book, probably the best book I've read on this kind of stuff. He writes this, God is the great evangelist, the great seeker and finder of people.

And he's called his followers to the same pursuit and to the same emotion. So there we go. There is the gospel task of the disciples to go to people in their community, to their everyday circles and to make Jesus known.

And we think about it in our lives. We think about our circles. We think about our communities. Think about the people who are in your circles. Think about your colleagues at work.

Think about your peers at university. Think about your classmates at school. Think about your brothers and sisters. Think about your mums and dads. Think about your uncles and aunties. Think about your family.

I mean, these are our circles, aren't they? What is Jesus calling people to, followers of him? He's calling them to embrace a lifestyle of speaking for him. I think at this point, I would say that's why I find it so massively encouraging to hear people like Struan really want to take their circles, speaking for Jesus in their circles, really seriously.

[11 : 22] I want to, this is what effectively he was saying, wasn't it, I think, that I want to speak for Jesus in my sports team. I want others to help me speak for Jesus in my sports team.

And I want to gather others together because I realise that I can't do it on my own and I'm so much more effective by others supporting me. I think that's great. It's absolutely brilliant. And it's so encouraging here to see, isn't it, that as people go and as God moves by his Holy Spirit and as the message is proclaimed, God moves and people are saved.

I don't know if you were aware at all that this week, we've got many students in this church, by the way. I love that we have such a diverse church family. It's brilliant. But the many students in this church, many students in this church involved with the Christian Union at their university.

And I don't know if you knew, but this week was the Edinburgh Christian Unions coming together and having a missions week on campus. So what they were trying to do, they were trying to come together, pull resources, help each other and go out and tell their classmates, their peers, about Jesus.

Now they called it something more. Is there something more to life? That was a big idea. I've been following it this week and something really cool, they set up a website and on the website was just testimonies of Christian students about how they came to know Jesus as the Lord, King and Saviour.

[12 : 44] It's brilliant. Let me read to you two stories that I found on this website. This is Megan. Megan's a fourth year student at Napier University and this is her story about how she came to faith.

She said, I wanted to get to know Jesus more so my friend Alice took me to church and there I found all the answers to my questions. It brought me so much joy to know that Jesus had wiped my slate clean, that he had sacrificed himself and taken the punishment for my sin.

This was to me the most incredible amount of love I'd ever heard of. I hadn't realized how much God loved me and I remember praying to Jesus one night and asking him to save me because I knew I simply had had too much.

It was right at that second I knew God had forgiven me and that God was truly real. That's cool, isn't it? Hunger for the gospel as the gospel goes.

Hunger. Here's David, a third year at Napier University talking about what life was like for him after he became a Christian. It was really hard and I ended up sticking out like a sore thumb at school.

[13 : 56] My friends constantly teased me and picked on me. It was humiliating and I kept asking myself have I made a mistake? I tried to hold on to Jesus and to trust in him knowing deep down that he was real and I was encouraged by friends at church and I was shown a verse from the gospel where Jesus says to his disciples you will be hated by everyone because of me but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved and I knew I had to keep going.

Hostility. What will happen when the gospel goes to our world to our friends to our circles we will be met with hunger and we will be met with hostility.

You see it's not our job to make people Christians it's not our job to make people respond to the gospel message that's the work of the Holy Spirit as he works in the lives of people but it is our job to be obedient to Jesus and out of a love for him speak of him and introduce people to him.

Now just think about it if you want an illustration just think of a witness in a courtroom. Why are they called into the court? Well they're simply called to present the truth.

Not their fault if the jury don't believe them they are simply called to speak the truth. Same with evangelism. We haven't failed in our task if people don't believe us but we think we have failed in our task if we simply don't try.

[15 : 25] To follow Jesus point number one what does he call his followers to? To a life of going. Now I don't know about you but I hear that and I'm massively daunted by it and I'm scared by it and I think to myself that is a big task and I think to myself somebody else nodded me right?

Massive task. Massive task. I think about my circles. I think about my football team. I think about my family. I think about my friends. And I think on a bigger level I think of our neighbourhood of Brunsfields.

I look out over here and I see all those flats five, six storeys high filled with people. Thousands of people living in this neighbourhood. And I look out here and I see maybe 150 of us or so and I think we haven't even scratched the surface of this area.

And I think of our nation of Scotland and I think of the statistics that would tell me that two or three percent of people in this country would claim the name of Jesus. That would know him as their Lord, King and Saviour.

And I think of the size of the task and I feel crushed under the weight. And I consider the scale of the task and I feel sometimes massively disheartened especially when I encounter that hostility.

[16 : 49] I bet you the disciples felt like that at times. The question for us as we look at this as we think about our own lives as modern day disciples is how do we keep going?

How do we keep going? What is it that the disciples need to know here? Now Luke has deliberately put this together in a certain way. We've had the mission of Jesus and very next we get the identity of Jesus.

No coincidence. What follows next is a big reminder for the disciples. They need to grasp the identity of who Jesus really is.

They need to grasp his incomparable power and his sufficient and abundant provision for them. And this takes us to the second thing that Jesus is calling his disciples to embrace.

And that's to embrace a lifestyle verses 10 to 17. Embrace a lifestyle of knowing. So look at it there if you've got it there come back with me if you've lost me.

[17 : 48] Okay. Verse 10. The disciples what are we told there? They return from their mission. And they tell Jesus everything that they had seen and done.

Everything they've seen and done. And you can understand that they are absolutely shattered given everything that they've done. They have poured themselves out. They have walked around. They have spoken of him.

They are shattered. So what does Jesus do? He takes them away for a bit of R&R.; You can see it there. He tries to take them away but it seems that news spreads quickly of Jesus' whereabouts.

And as we've seen constantly throughout this gospel the crowds find out and they are really keen to follow him. Do you see that? They go towards him the crowds. And notice in passing and I found this beautiful this week.

Notice in passing how Jesus responds to them. Now our little girl Chloe one of her favourite books is called Five Minutes Peace.

[18 : 51] Put your hands up if you've heard of this book called Five Minutes Peace. Yep. What it is mummy elephant she's got three little children elephants I think that's the term three little children elephants and he just won't give her a minute's peace.

And this book is called Five Minutes Peace. I just want five minutes when you're not all up in my grill. Just give me five minutes peace. And she never gets the five minutes peace. Now if I were Jesus at this point I would be playing the five minutes peace card.

Just crowds just give me just give me a bit of time with my disciples. Can we have a bit of time just to us? But what does he do?

How does Jesus respond? Look at it second half of verse 11 it's great. Jesus welcomed them and he spoke to them and he healed them.

Now one of the big themes isn't it as we've been going through this Gospel of Luke one of the big things that we've seen is the beauty of Jesus Christ. His compassion his love for people his grace that he bestows on people his patience his kindness his tenderness we see them all here don't we?

[20 : 07] Patient kind concerned caring gracious this is the Jesus that we meet in the Gospels. but what happens the day progresses and it suddenly dawns on the disciples that there could be a crisis just around the corner do you see that?

They're heading for a crisis the day is drawing near and do you see that they identify two potential reasons for this crisis? Two massive reasons firstly because of where they are check it out verse 12 where are they?

They're in a desolate place they're out in the sticks now what does that mean? That means that there is no Tesco Express at the end of the road and that means there is no Starbucks on the corner that you could go to to get your caffeine hit to take you through the night they are in a desolate place that's where they are first problem second problem notice what they have they don't have a lot verse 13 no more than five loaves and two fish how many people are in front of them?

5,000 men 5,000 people now picture that 100 people in this room that is 50 times this amount of people that is a lot of people that's a lot of people and even that number of 5,000 do you notice that there may well not have accounted for women and children as well big number of people given that number of people what they have wouldn't have even made a dent in the hunger of the people there so what do they do and I love this little discourse here notice it there what does the disciples do they put the ball in Jesus' court what do they say what are we going to do send them away Jesus that's their answer to the problem send them away to get something to eat what does Jesus do the ball's in his court now he puts it well and truly back in theirs do you notice that what does they say you give them something to eat you in the

Greek there it's emphatic you give them something to eat verse 13 I love how they suggest they think they can go and buy food for all these people can you imagine that they go to the local store and they ask the guy behind the tail says what are you after or after some eggs how many eggs are you after 5,000 it's a lot of people they just don't know what to do we get that sense don't we they just don't know what they are going to do they are well and truly out of ideas and they are well and truly out of resources there's not a chance they can do this and here's where I find this really interesting if you think about it presumably Jesus could have just done this he could have just done this miracle couldn't he he didn't really need to have this conversation with the disciples he could have just done it and everyone would have been satisfied and fed but you see how Jesus helps them feel their utter helplessness that he allows them to be in that place of cluelessness now why is he doing that well surely reflecting on it this week is it not to show them one of the most fundamentally simple yet profoundly beautiful truths about the Christian life that we need

[23 : 41] Jesus we need Jesus what do the disciples need to learn at this point surely that it's not all about them that they need Jesus and so what does he do he gets them to get the crowds to sit in the 50s these groups and Jesus performs the miracle it's written there isn't it of course he could have performed that miracle food for everyone and more than that do you notice that what does Luke tell us that all the people ate and they were what satisfied satisfied in fact so satisfied were they do you notice that there are 12 baskets left over this is a big feed reading the Jesus storybook bible with my little girl the other night commenting on this section I love this it was the most natural thing in the world it's what God had been doing ever since the beginning of course taking nothing and making it everything taking emptiness and filling it up here is the glory of Jesus

Christ and he's calling his disciples to behold it lesson for the disciples they need Jesus and the wonderful truth for the disciples to know that they need Jesus but he is willing and he is able to provide for all their needs all their needs so there it is the second truth for the disciples to grasp that to follow Jesus is to sign up for a life of going and it's to sign up for a life of knowing and if you look carefully there the information that Luke gives us you see that there's actually something else going on behind the scenes as well and you begin to see the massive exodus imagery that Luke employs here and indeed it's not just in these verses actually it's a mega theme that runs throughout chapter 9 the exodus story God's people in the wilderness God's people at the end of themselves in the need of food God miraculously feeds them provides food for them in the wilderness lesson for that generation you need

God and your God is one who can provide all your needs and he will lead you and he will provide for you you need God lesson for this generation surely it's the same disciples you need God your God is willing and he's able to provide all of your needs so keep trusting and following him and trust him when things happen that he knows where he's leading you he can provide for you here are people in a desolate place here are people with no idea where they will find food and here is God miraculously once again providing for his people isn't that just a wonderful truth for us to meditate on this morning as God's people that our God he will never run out of resources that our God will never run us dry that our

God will provide for every single need of his people it's a big incentive is it not for the disciples to keep going if they know who this God is whose name they go on behalf of what do they need to know what do we need to know we need to know that when the task seems big our God is bigger when the task seems giant our God is gianter our God is a big God that is the truth here our God is one who provides for all of our needs and I was thinking on it this week how often is my view of God my God is too small he is too small just need to think about his greatness and I need to stop trying to rate my ability to navigate my way through life the lesson here is to look to him look to him as the all sufficient one look to him as the one who is able to provide everything stop projecting your human limitations on

God stop pretending like he is one who has limited energy stop looking on him who is one who has got limited resources like we do I think J.I.

[28 : 20] Parker he nails this one in the head he says we think of God as being too much like what we are let's put that mistake right and let's learn to acknowledge the full majesty of our incomparable God and saviour we need to have a big view of Jesus that's what this is telling us we need to have a big view of who he is the mission is big but our God is big I think that's a great place for us to finish for this morning as we think about the greatness of our gods what do the disciples need to know that as they go in the name of their saviour they need to know the incomparable power and provision of their saviour what does it mean to follow Jesus what does he call his disciples to what does he call his followers to well here it is at the beginning of chapter 9 two aspects of it to follow him is to sign up to a life of going and to follow him is to sign up to a life of knowing now we're going to one of the songs that we're going to finish with is guide me oh thou great jehovah let me just read this verse to you as we finish

I think it just picks up on a lot of the themes that we've been looking at this morning guide me oh thou great jehovah pilgrim through this barren land I am weak but you are mighty hold me with thy powerful hand bread of heaven bread of heaven feed me till I want no more feed me till I want no more let's pray together oh dear father we ask that you would help us this week we ask that you help us this week to be in tune with your incomparable greatness would you help us to be those people who follow you and who live not by sight but who live by faith and we do so because we know that you are the gods who is able to provide for all of our needs and I ask dear father that in our own times this week of reading your words would you feed us up would you build us up would you strengthen us and would you send us to a lost world to proclaim the greatness of your son Jesus

Christ and so we thank you for our time this morning and we pray you'll be with us now in the rest of our service in Jesus name Amen