

Luke 9:28-50 // See the Amazing Sonshine

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[0:00] The reading this morning is Luke chapter 9 verses 28 to 50 which can be found on page 1039 of the church Bibles. That's Luke chapter 9 verses 28 to 50.

About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.

Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendour talking with Jesus. They spoke about his exodus which he was about to bring to fulfilment at Jerusalem.

Peter and his companions were very sleepy but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, Master, it is good for us to be here.

Let us put up three shelters, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah. He did not know what he was saying. While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and covered them and they were afraid as they entered the cloud.

[1:18] A voice from the cloud came down saying, This is my son whom I have chosen, listen to him. When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone.

The disciples kept this to themselves and did not tell anyone at that time what they had seen. The next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met him.

A man in the crowd called out, Teacher, I beg you to look at my son for he is my only child. A spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams. It throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth.

It scarcely ever leaves him and is destroying him. I begged your disciples to drive it out but they could not. You unbelieving and perverse generation, Jesus replied.

How long shall I stay with you and put up with you? Bring your son here. Even while the boy was coming, the demon threw him to the ground in a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the impure spirit, healed the boy and gave him back to his father.

[2:22] And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. While everyone was marveling at all that Jesus did, he said to his disciples, Listen carefully to what I'm about to tell you.

The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. But they did not understand what this meant. It was hidden from him. So they did not grasp it and they were afraid to ask him about it.

An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. Then he said to them, Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me.

And whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For it is the one who is least among you who is the greatest. Master, said John, we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him because he's not one of us.

Do not stop him, Jesus said. For whoever is not against you is for you. So, this is the word of the Lord. Thank you so much, Ali.

- [3 : 35] For reading that. There's a lot going on in that passage, isn't there? My granny used to always say that you need to take your jacket off when you're indoors. So you get the benefit when you go out.
- But I think it's one of those days you can keep your jacket over your knees, aren't it? I see a lot of people doing that. You might just need to snuggle up with somebody during this. It's cold, isn't it? I'm Callum, one of the congregation here.
- And I've been coming here for a year. And this is my second last Sunday with you. This last Sunday morning preach that I'll be doing with you. Because I'm going to be going with the church plant out east.
- Now, Tim's not here so I can say this, right? If, truth be told, even though we're very excited about east, our family would just love to stay.
- Very comfortable here. Very at home here. But, as we heard last week, being a disciple is taking up your cross, not lounging about on your sofa.
- [4 : 40] Comfort is not the option. So let's pray together as you come to this word. Father, as you said to your disciples, This is my son.
- My chosen one. Listen to him. Help us to do just that this morning. Jesus, would you speak to us?
- Father, spirit, would you help us listen to him? We ask for your glory. And we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.
- Now, there should be a picture coming up now. Because my dad loves mountains, I'm named after a mountain. I know some of you here, because I spoke to you, they just love being up mountains.
- I've got mixed feelings about mountains. No bagging mentality. Let's walk up another one. But I know from experience, there's just something glorious next slide about a mountain like Ben Lomond or Cairngorm on a clear day where you see for miles in every direction.
- [6 : 02] As you marvel, you feel very alive. As you marvel, you feel very alive. And at the same time, very humble. Connected, but small.
- However, the view in our passage up the mountain is awesome because of the view we get of Jesus.
- And Luke describes this as Peter and James and John witness that Jesus is praying. The appearance of his face was changed.
- His clothing became like the brightness of lightning. Now, those of you who do go up mountains, imagine seeing the magnificence of the mountain creation and standing there and thinking, how great I am.
- Monroe number four today. Let me post a selfie. In a sense, that is what Peter, James, and John do as we progress through here.
- [7 : 08] As we do too. Seeing the Son of God in his state of glory, his face is shining so brightly you cannot really look. To hear the voice of God speak.
- To say, this is my Son. My chosen one. Listen to him. And later to think, you know, I am the greatest disciple. What a thing.
- After seeing the unification of God's two people from different eras, Moses, Elijah, John says to Mr. Someone at the end, you're no one of us.
- Stop setting people free. What is it with people like you and me? Even when the greatest revelation takes place, quite soon after, we still focus on ourselves.
- We fail, fail, fail. Jesus is transfigured. We take selfies. Jesus is transfigured.
- [8 : 15] We take selfies. Wretched people that we are. Who will deliver us from the state of death?

We're going to look at this passage today under two headings. Firstly, marvel at his majesty. And then marvel at his delivery for his disciples.

First of all, marvel at his majesty. Let me try to bring you up to speed to where we are. The gospel is written, of course, to give certainty to the reader who's called Theophilus.

And just before what we've already read, Peter has declared, Jesus is the chosen one. He's the Messiah. And Jesus turns around and tells Peter that Jesus himself would suffer many things.

He would be rejected. He would be killed. And in three days he would rise. And he told Peter and those disciples listening in, they in turn would need to take up their cross.

[9:21] In other words, being a disciple looks like losing your life. Remembering this, that this is all about discipleship.

And that Christians are disciples of Christ will help you in all that follows next. So the last words we read from last time's passage, verse 27.

Some are standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God. Well, surely Peter, James, and John are those about to see the kingdom of God as they head up the mountain.

And then verses 28 to 30. Eight days later, these three disciples see the glory of the Son of God. The brilliance of the light shining from him.

Not a light shining on him. A light shining from him. This comes along with God's voice.

[10:21] So it's his revelation of Jesus' divine identity. Verse 35 confirms his selection as Messiah. To see all of this is verse 32, glory.

Verse 31, glory. To see God's glory up a mountain. Hmm. That's been in the Bible before, hasn't it?

Two men, verse 30, are talking with him. Moses and Elijah, where have they come from? Moses and Elijah appear in glory and speak of his exodus that's about to be achieved at Jerusalem.

What is going on? Moses and Elijah, they live centuries apart from each other and from Jesus. Moses and Elijah have both been taken to be with the Lord years ago.

Yet here they are with Jesus discussing his salvation. His salvation bringing death and experiencing his glory up a mountain.

[11:31] It's an amazing sight. It shows Jesus unites his people over dimensions or time. But it's more than that. Because these two biblical characters have both been looking for the glory of God up a mountain before.

So let me take you back to those. Both of them were up what was called the mountain of God in their own times. Sinai or Horeb. And they were both desiring the glorious presence of the Lord.

Exodus. Moses at Mount Sinai. The beginning of the promised covenant with God. And there was thick clouds. Thunder. Lightning.

Fire. A quaking mountain. And then even after this revelation, Moses asks to see God's glory. And he's told from the shelter of the cave, he can see God's back.

But not his face. God's glory passes by Moses. And from the shelter of cleft of the rock, God reveals to him his glorious character.

[12:44] The Lord. The Lord. A God merciful and gracious. Slow to anger. Abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

Show me your glory. He reveals his character. First Kings 19. Much further on in the story of Israel.

An exhausted and frightened Elijah heads up the same mountain. And the Lord asks him, what are you doing here, Elijah? And Elijah explains Israel has repeatedly and willfully broken the Exodus covenant with the Lord.

He feels alone in staying faithful. He might as well say, this is a faithless and twisted generation. And from his cave, his shelter, the Lord passes by.

Just like when Moses is on Horeb. And there's mention of a 40 day, 40 nights period. There's wind. There's earthquake. There's fire. But we're told the Lord was not in the wind.

[13:58] Or the earthquake. Or the fire. Elijah does not hear the glorious name being pronounced. It's a massive anticlimax. He hears thin silence.

Because back then, time was up for Israel. God's judgment is coming. Not only does Elijah not see God's glory.

The Lord then announces who will be assassinated and who will do the deeds. The Lord had been slow to anger. But the anger was now.

And very soon in Elijah's time, all God's enemies are dead. These are the two men. It's not Abraham and David. These are the two men united in glory up the mountain with Jesus.

Elijah's finally on the mountain and seeing God's glory. The judgment time is over. As shown through the conversation with Jesus.

[15:07] About a new exodus. Because the judgment time is over in Jesus. Through his departure. His exodus. There is now a salvation in Jesus. Now you may be sitting in the cold and thinking, What? What is he talking about? What is this all about?

Well, let's think about what Peter thinks it's about. What does Peter think it's about? Verse 33. Peter said to Jesus, Master, it's good we're here.

Let us make three shelters. One for you. One for Moses. And one for Elijah. Not knowing what he said. And sometimes we take that as silly Peter.

He's got no idea what he's talking about. No, rather, Peter, steeped in Jewish thinking, is more on it than we are, even though he's not all the way.

[16:03] He's not realizing the fullness of what's happening. Shelters from God's glory were needed, but in Jesus, they aren't needed now.

Peter recognizes something is happening. He doesn't recognize that Jesus doesn't need a shelter, because in him, all the fullness of God's glory dwells.

He's the tabernacle, the shelter, the place of God's indwelling glory. Elijah and Moses don't need shelter because Jesus is the shelter.

Something big has changed, especially from Elijah's mountain experience. Because of Jesus' incarnation, humans can now dwell with God and in Jesus see his glory, even his shining face, because of his upcoming exodus.

Exodus. Exit. Departure. The salvation of God's people to come under his rule. This is what Jesus is to accomplish when he, verse 51, sets out to Jerusalem.

[17:27] See, his death for us is how we shelter from a glorious God. His death is no accident, no curious, unfortunate incident.

It's spoken about by Moses and Elijah from different centuries, united by Jesus in glory. There they are, discussing the divine plan and a heaven meets earth setting of a new covenant in him.

And we are supposed to go, marvel. We're supposed to come down the mountain like the three apostles in awestruck, reverent silence.

We're supposed to be increased in our certainty at the person of Christ and the purpose of God. For those who were unsure or are unsure, perhaps a little bit like the recipient of this gospel, Theophilus, who heard the mocking of the world about God nailed to a cross, who hears the constant deriding of the Jews, those hung in the tree are cursed.

For those who are unsure, this high up picture of Jesus, the Son of God transfigured and shining with brilliance beyond their imagination, speaking about his death, gives confidence.

[18:52] This was the plan. This is the plan. Especially as the two figures are two of the most revered and trusted in Israel's history. It's they who speak of his death, his resurrection, his ascension, his exodus.

This is the key formative story in Israel. Exodus, salvation, leading to covenant blessing. What a sight for them to behold.

What a thing to come to understand. And then, what an experience and sound to hear at verse 34. Those of you who are keen mountain walkers, you'll know this too well.

You're up there and the cloud rolls in and you go, oh no, Scottish rain. A drich mountain experience. You'll have noticed that this narrative's told from the point of view of the disciples.

The cloud came, it overshadowed them and they were afraid, reluctant to enter. Steeped in Hebrew teaching, they don't think it's rain, they know clouds up mountain equals God's presence.

[20:08] And 34, as the cloud overshadows them, the voice speaks and it speaks to them. This is my son, whom I chose.

Listen to him. The father speaks to the son's disciples. This is my son, my chosen one.

Listen to him. And if you didn't get any of the shelter stuff, don't worry, that's what you need to do. You need to go, this is my son, chosen one. Listen to him. I need to listen to him.

What a beyond words, privilege, revelation for these men. Know my son, my chosen one. Listen and do what he says. Listening to him is discipleship.

Listen to him and you are sheltered by him. What glory revealed to these three as it was to Moses. Wouldn't you just marvel at what you saw forever, being all forever?

[21:13] Five, ten, twenty years later, Peter and John must still be captivated by this picture of Jesus, the son, the chosen one, as they continue to listen to him and as great disciples that they become carry their own crosses.

They marvel at the amazing son, shine. They marvel at his majesty. But that's easy up the mountain.

You go up the mountains because down here it's a mess, don't you, those that go? Sure, Jesus is magnificent up the mountain, but is he lulled on the ground?

Because the next day, verse 37, a great crowd, another father, makes a completely contrasting statement about another son.

Teacher, I beg you, look at my son. my only child. A spirit seizes him. He cries out. He convulses. He foams at the mouth.

[22:18] It shatters him. Who will deliver this boy from his body of death? What a mental life to lead. Luke describes the violence of the unclean spirit in the body.

He's not simply ill. He's assaulted. Well, Jesus is majestic up the mountain. But on the ground, does Christ care?

Well, the father continues, I begged your disciples to drive it out, but they could not. Notice how down the mountain we see the disciples fail, fail, fail.

The first verse of Luke, chapter 9, he called the 12 together. He gave them power authority over all demons and to cure diseases.

I begged your disciples to drive it out, but they could not. Fail number one. Does Christ care about this failure?

[23:21] Yeah. Look at 41. God the son says, how long am I to put up with you people?

Well, just the same as Israel back with Elijah, a faithless, twisted generation that God judged. How long have I to put up with you? The divine son with power over life and death, slow to anger, angered.

When Jesus sees his people fail, fail, fail, it's not a brush it under the carpet sort of response. And so as people of this glorious son that we are, where we repeatedly fail to heed the command, this is my son, listen to him.

When we see his glory, but we're captivated still by the world. When we say we're followers of Jesus, but our bank statement doesn't really say that, nor does our timesheet.

What do we do? When he who is slow to anger is angered at us, what to do? Take cover. Die for shelter.

[24:45] Verse 41. Bring your son here so I can release him from this body of death. The Lord, the Lord, merciful and gracious, we go to him for shelter, don't run away.

Verse 42, notice Satan fights back. The demon throws the boy to the floor, it gets worse, convulsing him. But look at Jesus, he effortlessly just binds up the strong man, the devil, and takes possession of what was his.

He enters the domain of the devil, ties him up, he delivers people from Satan's clutches. How does he do it? Just by speaking.

The only son of the heavenly father speaks and takes this tormented earthly son and hands him back to his father.

Does he care about your sin? Does he care about the effect of sin and for those bound by Satan? Absolutely.

[25:53] Beyond your understanding. Yet looking at our sin, instead of needing to shelter from the glorious son, we're called to come under the shelter he provides.

Bring your son to me. This would give Theophilus, this should give you certainty about the astonishing character of our Lord. If you've ever thought I'm beyond the Lord's kindness because I fail, fail, fail, the Lord, the Lord, merciful and gracious.

In verse 43, as he delivers the boy to his father, all are astonished at the majesty of God.

He's majestic up the mountain, he's majestic on the ground. In the face of human failure and satanic opposition, he delivers through his exodus.

And so we'll look at our second point about deliverance. Marvel at his deliverance for his disciples. Verse 43b, they were all marveling at everything he was doing.

[27:13] At times following Jesus, it just meant great excitement at everything that was happening. I wonder if you've ever been in a big crowd on a real high, a mountain top type experience and then been hit with reality shifting news.

Well, there should be a picture coming up now. It's June 2017 and Hamden's rocking. 93 minutes on the clock. Scotland finally beating England.

Here we go. Reality shifting news. If you're Scottish, here comes Harry Kane. There he is. That doesn't really work if you're English, does it?

Well, okay, just for you, just for the English, the World Cup quarterfinal 2022, penalty awarded to you. You're going to equalize against France, the penalty master, Harry Kane.

He steps up and he sends the ball into outer space. And they found the ball on Mars according to NASA. all very trivial.

[28 : 25] I wanted to make you laugh because there was joy at what was going on. But look how it goes now. It's more like this.

It's more like a newlywed finds out all is not as they thought with their spouse. It's more like you've been told your cancer's 90% chance of going away.

But you're the 10% when you go back and you get that news. It's the burst bubble. Whilst they were all marveling, they were all marveling at everything he was doing, literally Jesus says to them, you must put these words in your ears.

verse 45. The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of the sons of men. The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of the sons of men.

The divine Son that's shone is to be handed over. Verse 45, they don't understand the disciples. What's been said is hidden from them and they're afraid.

[29 : 33] They go from witnessing the glory and the marveling to fear. This is a reality-checking moment of what the cross will mean. Handed over, delivered.

To deliver his people, he will be delivered to the sons of men. Those of you that are parents, imagine I said to you, your child is going to be delivered into the hands of the sons of men.

It's a terrifying thought. This is the exodus route for Jesus. This is what he took for our salvation, handed into the hands of men by the Father.

Marvel at your Savior, how he delivers his disciples through his own delivery to evil. but they did not understand it.

It was hidden from them. So why say it? Is he bursting the bubble because he needs someone to sympathize for him?

[30 : 49] Or is he teaching them what real discipleship will look like that in a few weeks' time, they might remember and know what it means to take up the cross?

that it is self-sacrifice, not self-glory. Because don't these boys need some teaching on humility?

46, an argument started as to which of them would be the greatest. Fail number two, fail, fail. Imagine the thinking, sure, Jesus is number one, but I think I might be the best disciple.

I might be the best children's worker. I might be the best pastor, the best preacher, the best Bible study leader. I might just be God's gift to the church in the area of finance, evangelism, training.

It's pathetic. It's like that childish thing you might remember arguing about at primary school. I get to stay up to 10 o'clock. I get to stay up to 11.

[31 : 57] No, I get to stay up to 12. Pathetic. Competing to be the greatest disciple is to stand as Jesus is transfigured on the mountain and to take a selfie.

Thankfully, discipleship is not about our glory. Thank God for that. Verse 47, Jesus knows their thoughts and he takes a little child and he puts him by his side and he says to them, whoever welcomes or receives this little child in my name welcomes and receives me.

Whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For it is the one who is least among you who is greatest. Christ.

Now, you might think, oh, this is a how cute moment, but it's not. A child in that time, quite unlike our time, is the lowest of all, the least among you because they contribute nothing to society, they're of no worth.

And if discipleship is to be like Jesus, this is a call to welcome the least amongst us. How often are you kind to the least?

[33 : 28] How often do you receive people who cannot give back to you in any way? You're kind to them because Christ has been so kind to you. How as a church are we welcoming the least?

Notice please with me Jesus' extraordinary statement that when we receive the least, we receive him. And when we receive the least, we receive the father who sent him.

Push that verse a little further. If as a church, if as a Christian, you are not welcoming the least, not willing to leave your comfort, what might that suggest?

we see in the transfiguration that Jesus is the greatest. We see in the deliverance over to the hands of men, he makes himself least.

You know you've received him when lowliness is the shape of your life. For he who is least among you is the one who is great.

[34 : 38] That is discipleship. Want to be a great disciple? Be the least. Well, so far we've had disciples fail and fail, but surely not one of the Peter, James, and John triad.

Verse 49, John answered, Master, we saw someone driving out demons in your names, and we tried to stop him, because he does not follow with us.

Not one of us. Fail, number three, fail, fail, and fail again. I mean, what's going on here with John? Is he applying for the post of the most hypocritical fallacy?

Guilty of complaining about casting out demons, a thing they were marvelling about just a minute ago? Oh, but he gave us the authority, not Mr.

Someone Else. He doesn't follow with us. He's not one of us. And incidentally, he's given the twelve a showing up, because we couldn't. Thank Jesus for bearing with them, bearing with us, gracious and merciful.

[35 : 55] And Jesus said, discipleship is welcome in the least, and now he says, do not stop him, for the one who's not against you is for you.

He said, John, you know, discipleship is not about going about in a superior manner, picking fights with people. Some Christians love doing that. If that's you, stop it. It's not picking fights with people, especially those doing good in my name.

If he's not against you, he's for you. I wonder if you see the grace of Jesus in all this. Would you keep sharing your wisdom with these disciples?

Would you shelter them from judgment? Deliver them by your death? Not that you could, of course, because you're just as unworthy, failure prone, and proud.

Who will deliver us from this body of death? Because sinners like us, we won't defeat sin by just trying harder. So how not to fail, fail, fail?

[37 : 07] What is the message to the most ever image obsessed people in history?

It's stop looking at self. Keep looking and loving Christ. they failed and we fail at discipleship when we look away from the amazing sun and him shining.

And if you're a Christian, you are a disciple of Christ, know that. And so to be a great one, receiving Christ as you receive the least, how? Keep seeing the chosen divine sun majestic up the mountain.

Keep seeing the divine sun majestic on the earth. as you keep your eyes on him, you'll lower yourself. Keep marveling in the exodus route he took to deliver the children of men by being delivered into the hands of men.

As you do, you'll know discipleship is to shelter in Christ's protection, to hear his words and do. So St.

[38 : 26] Silas Church, keep seeing the amazing sun shine and wonder, wonder that from a faithless, twisted generation, he would release you from Satan's grip, handing you safely into the Father's arms.

Forbid it, Lord, that we should boast, save in the death of Christ our God. All the vain things that charm us most, we sacrifice them to his blood.

Lord Jesus, may all the glory now and evermore be yours. Amen.