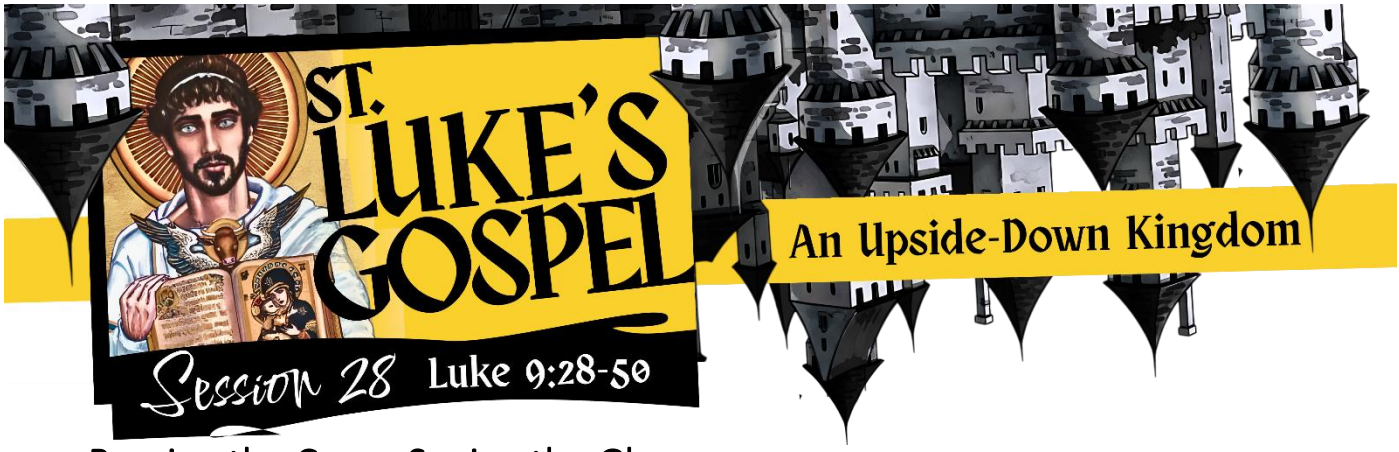


Bearing the Cross, Seeing the Glory

1. Read Luke 9:28-36. Peter, James, and John certainly were given a an incredible glimpse of Christ's majesty. There on the mountain, His divine glory shone before them in full force. They hear the profound affirmation that the Father speaks about Jesus, the beloved Son of God. Consider what did Peter later says about this in 2 Peter 1:17–18.

   † Out of all the events Peter could have written about, decades later, why do you think he refers back to the transfiguration rather than the resurrection or ascension?

   For Peter, this must have remained one of the most life-changing moments of his walk with Christ That vision of glory surely helped anchor Peter's faith and gave him confidence in Christ's promise to come again in power and majesty.

   The Resurrection and Ascension certainly stand as astonishing and indispensable testimonies to the identity and authority of Christ, His victory over death, His exaltation over all things, and the truth of His mission—He came to save us. Yet, neither, when considered by themselves, display with the same immediacy the full radiance of Jesus's divine nature. At least from the perspective of the disciples, even after His resurrection, Jesus still seems very much like He was before—so much so that they don't even always recognize Him (e.g. Mary Magdelene at the tomb, or the disciples when they are fishing). Not only this but Jesus raised several people back to life during His ministry. And at the ascension, consider how Scripture records that two others—Enoch and Elijah—though merely human, were also taken into heaven. Elijah literally "ascended" in fiery chariot. These acts, while extraordinary, do not in themselves uniquely disclose the inner glory of Christ's person.

   The Transfiguration, however, is of a different order altogether. There, the veil is drawn back, and Jesus is revealed not simply as a wonder-working prophet or exalted servant of God, but in the unveiled splendor of His full divine majesty. On the holy mountain, His glory shines and unmistakably testifies to His divine identity—a revelation of who He truly is. The Father's voice from heaven further confirms this, bearing witness that Jesus is the beloved Son, worthy not only of admiration, but of worship and obedience. In the Transfiguration, the disciples were granted a foretaste of the fullness of the kingdom of God and a glimpse of the eternal glory that belongs to Christ as true God, equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

   † How does Peter continue this thought in the verses that follow?

   Peter goes on to connect this experience to the certainty of Christ's coming kingdom. He writes, "We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay

attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts" (verse 19). Peter points us to the Scriptures and reminds us that God's promises are sure. In a world that often feels dark, uncertain, and weary, the Word of God remains a steady light. The same Jesus whose glory was revealed on the mountain will come again, and because of that, we are called to live with hope, faith, and holy expectation. The day of the Lord will come, and with it the joy of His reward.

† The Transfiguration gave Peter a glimpse of Christ's glory that strengthened him for the future. What truths about Jesus help anchor your faith when life feels dark, ordinary, or uncertain?

2. Luke alone tells us that on the mountain Jesus, Moses, and Elijah spoke about the "exodus" he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem. That word immediately takes us back to a very important Old Testament story. What story is Luke referring to and what is the connection to Christ's work in His crucifixion, resurrection and Ascension? Israel's exodus from Egypt—the great Old Testament story of God rescuing His people from slavery is a crucifixion, resurrection and ascension story. God's people were in slavery and death. They were led through the Red Sea into new life with God in the wilderness. There God appears on the mountain. They later entered the Promised Land. Luke uses the Exodus to show that Jesus is about to lead a greater exodus: through his death, resurrection, and ascension, he will deliver his people not from Pharaoh, but from sin, death, and the power of evil. Moses is also present here at the Transfiguration. He was a type of Christ in the first Exodus.

3. Why is Peter's response on the mountain so odd and out of place? And what should His response have been?

Peter's response to the Transfiguration is so very human. Faced with the blazing glory of Jesus, standing with Moses and Elijah, Peter feels the need to say something, to do something, to contribute to the moment: "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents…" But before Peter can finish, God the Father interrupts him. The divine voice does not invite Peter to build, organize, or speak further. Instead, it directs his attention where it belongs: "This is my beloved Son… listen to Him."

You see, in the presence of Jesus' glory, all Peter's ideas, plans, and words are really pointless. Jesus should be the focus of Peter's attention, not some task or project.

How often our response is like Peter's. We want to manage holy moments, preserve spiritual highs, or insert ourselves into what God is doing. We may even imagine that when we stand before God in glory, we will finally ask all the questions we have stored up through the years. But scenes like this remind us that when we truly behold Christ as He is, our questions will likely fall away. We will not be preoccupied with our own thoughts. We will be captivated by Him.

And Peter never forgot it. As we read earlier, years later he reflected on this moment in 2 Peter 1:16–18, insisting that he was not following cleverly invented myths, but had been an eyewitness of Christ's

majesty. The glory he saw confirmed forever that Jesus is exactly who He claimed to be. That same vision should steady us too. When our faith feels weak, when Jesus seems ordinary to our distracted hearts, the Transfiguration calls us back to reality: He is the glorious Son of God, and He is worthy to be followed.

4. Peter wanted to "do" something on the mountain, but the Father told him simply, "Listen to Him." In your own life, when are you most tempted to stay busy for Jesus instead of slowing down to truly listen to Him through His Word?

5. Read Luke 9:37-45. This is not just another exorcism. It marks the start of a section in Luke where the disciples repeatedly fail to grasp who Jesus is and what He is doing. Their confusion has already surfaced at the Transfiguration, and it keeps unfolding here, at the bottom of the mountain, in their inability to heal the boy. This is why Jesus rebukes the "unbelieving and perverse generation," words that seem to include them. All of this especially pointed, because earlier, Jesus has already given them authority over demons, when He sent them out to preach. Yet, now they cannot cast this one out. Why? What has changed?

   Their failure is not about technique but faith.

   Why can't they cast out the demon?

   Even though authority was real, their faith was weak.

   What's changed?

   Jesus telling them about the cross and what it means for Him to be the Messiah and what it means for them to be His disciples—they too much take up a cross.

   Consider how pointedly Jesus addresses them at the end. "Let these words sink into your ears." Then He once again emphasizes the cross. And it's as if this is all the disciples hear. It's as if once they hear of his passion, they can't receive anything else Jesus has to say or understand. Jesus' passion is a stumbling block to them and to all people.

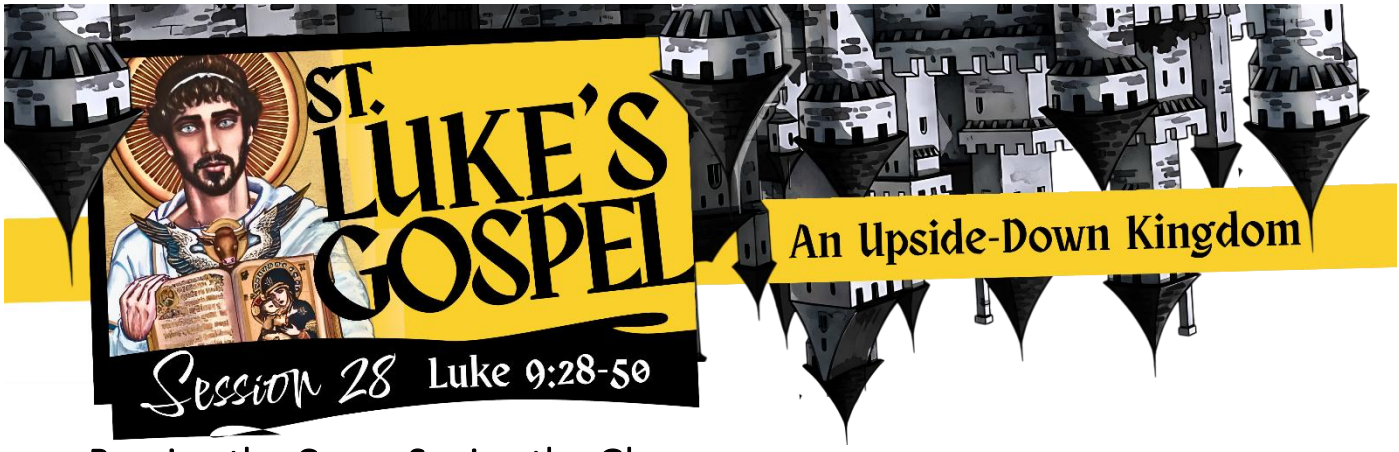
6. Read Luke 9:46-50. Based on the immediate context, what do you think may have prompted the disciples to start arguing about who was the greatest?

   Its possible that this had something to do with the fact that only Peter, James, and John were allowed to go with Jesus up on the mountain. It's also possible that it had something to do with the fact that the nine disciples that didn't go up on the mountain couldn't drive out the demon. Maybe the three had said that they could have driven it out. Of course this is all just speculation, the text does not tell us.

7. In Luke 9:48, Jesus places a child beside Him to redefine greatness. If a child represented weakness, dependence, and low status in that culture, what does Jesus' action reveal about how God measures greatness—and in what ways do we, like the disciples, still struggle to accept that definition today?
By saying that welcoming a child in His name is the same as welcoming Him, Jesus teaches that true greatness is not about being noticed or admired, but about identifying with the lowly and serving those who cannot advance your reputation. God values humility over pride, service over status, and love over self-promotion.

We still struggle with this today because, like the disciples, we often measure greatness by success, influence, recognition, wealth, or leadership position. Even in the church, we can admire giftedness more than godliness, platform more than servanthood, and outward results more than quiet faithfulness. We may overlook children, the needy, the powerless, or anyone who seems unable to offer us something in return. Jesus challenges us to repent of that mindset and to see that greatness in His kingdom looks like humble love, receiving others with compassion, and becoming small enough to depend fully on God.

Even faith itself is defined in the gospels as being like a little child. Children are by nature needy. They cannot care for themselves. They are utterly dependent. That is faith. It's not trust in our efforts or choices. It's trust in God's mercy and grace.



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