

Exegetical Notes - Luke 9:37-45

“They Could Not”

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Luke 9:37-45

Verse 37

The next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met him.

- Apparently, the events described in verses 27-36 in which Jesus was transformed into his Heavenly glory and spoke with Moses and Elijah lasted for one full day. On the day following that experience Jesus returned from them to find a large crowd of people waiting for him.

Verse 38-40

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.”

- There was a man in the crowd whose only child, a little boy, was seized by an evil spirit which caused him to convulse, foam at the mouth and scream. This spirit was destroying the boy. So the father of the child asked for Jesus’ help.
- While Jesus had been up on the mountain (see Luke 9:27-36) the boy’s father had asked the disciples to help his son, but the disciples had been unable to help.

Verse 41

“O unbelieving and perverse generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you and put up with you? Bring your son here.”

- This is a confusing moment in the Gospel of Luke. When Jesus sent the disciples out on their own to minister (see Luke 9:1-9), they had

been successful. They had been able to cast out demons. But here they are not able to do so.

- Jesus' response seems almost angry. Is it because the disciples should have been able to handle this but were not?
- Clearly, the disciples are ready sometimes but severely lacking at others. They appear to walk forward two steps and then to fall back one.
- Though Jesus may be disappointed in their inability, he does not despair. He takes charge of the situation with the intention of supplying that which his disciples lack.

Verse 42

Even while the boy was coming, the demon threw him to the ground in a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, healed the boy and gave him back to his father.

- In one last show of power, as the boy was being brought to Jesus, the spirit convulsed him and threw him down.
- But Jesus rebuked the spirit and healed the boy.

Verse 43-45

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 am about to tell you: The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men." But they did not understand what this meant. It was hidden from them, so that they did not grasp it, and they were afraid to ask him about it.

- The events of the end of Jesus' earthly ministry had commenced with his transfiguration (Luke 9:27-36). This was the reason that Jesus had come to earth. With that most important event clearly before him, Jesus was focused on the goal. Though everyone else marveled at the healing of the little boy, Jesus' mind was focused on what was before him. So he told his disciples that he would soon be betrayed and given into the hands of those who would kill him.
- But his disciples were wrapped up in the boy's healing like everyone else. What Jesus told them about the important events before him, went it one ear and out the other.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *They Could Not*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by Dr. Jensen and *Cornerstone Fellowship*.)