

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**

Chapter 9- Luke 9:43-45

183- They Were Afraid to Ask Jesus

October 28, 2012

Luke 9:43-45

43 And they were all amazed at the greatness of God.

But while everyone was marveling at all that He was doing, He said to His disciples,

44 "Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men."

45 But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement.

To the Glory of God

Now we spent last time looking at the first part of verse 43 which says:

And they were all amazed at the greatness of God...

And it would be good if we could just stay right there and join in with these people as they were flabbergasted at God's Greatness. In fact I suggest to you that that is what Heaven is going to be all about- people who have been Sovereignly elected from before the foundation of the world; people who have literally been purchased by the shed Blood of the Lamb of God and forgiven for all their sins; people who have been Sovereignly drawn to Jesus by God the Holy Spirit and given eyes to see and ears to hear and a heart to believe; people who with that new Divine Nature have forsaken their sinful ways and have trusted in the finished Work of Jesus Christ; people who have become Justified through the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Jesus; people who have

been made Righteous through the imputation of Christ's Righteousness to them by the agency of faith alone; people who have been adopted into the Family of God; people who are being sanctified and changed from one realm of Glory to the next realm and shaped and molded into the very Image and Likeness of Jesus Christ by the Spirit of God; and people who are going to be given a new sinless and immortal body in Heaven- those people will stand before and gaze upon the glorified Jesus with eyes that have never seen sin and they will behold the very Shikinah Glory of God with no filters; with no barriers; with no obstacles; and with grateful and thankful hearts and with new sinless lips that have never uttered any carnal words- they will lift up their voices with the 24 Elders and with the host of Heaven and they will sing:

The Revelation 7:12b

"Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, *be* to our God forever and ever. Amen."

So it is Jesus that makes Heaven to be so wonderful and glorious and the streets of gold and the pearly gates and being re-united with loved ones who have gone on before us will be nice and will be wonderful- but it will be nothing more than window dressing compared to the magnificence of the Glory of God that is manifested on the Lamb of God- Jesus Christ.

And I told you last week that I so desire for God the Holy Spirit to cultivate here at The Covenant of Peace Church a unified, common understanding and conviction concerning three very important conditions of the human soul:

- ✓ What it really means to be lost
- ✓ What it really means to be to be saved and how God saves lost people
- ✓ What it really means for saved people to be faithful to the lost people they love

I long for all of us at Covenant to be bold and patient teachers of the unchangeable Truth about Christ to unbelievers who need more than a

lifestyle witness if they are going to understand the Gospel and believe and be saved.

And I pray that by the hearing of my voice in this message today- some of you who are *not* spiritually alive- you who do *not* have the Spirit of Christ abiding within you as a result of never having been born again- would be granted repentance and a knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ- so that we may all be what **Luke 9:43** says:

... amazed at the greatness of God.

And so last week- we examined five statements to that end:

1. The Highest, Best, and Final “Good” of the Good News is the Glory of Jesus Christ
2. We Have All Been Blind to this Glory
3. God Alone Can Take Away the Blindness and Cause Us to See Christ for Who He is
4. God Uses Messengers of the Word to Open the Eyes of the Blind
5. In the Mouth of These Messengers- God Makes Patient Teaching About Christ the Means of Seeing the Glory of Christ in the Gospel

So I will tell you that Salvation is God giving unworthy sinners the privilege and the honor to know God as God knows God and to love God as God loves God so that we might worship God in the manner in which God is entitled to be worshipped- to the end that God becomes more valuable and more beautiful and more important than anything or anybody in the universe so that God is glorified and our Joy is made full. That is what Salvation is. And Heaven contains only the people and creatures in whom God has done that work.

And since that is true- therefore Lostness- could be defined as:

To be lost; to be unsaved; to be unregenerate—to be perishing- as **2Corinthians 4:3** says—means to be unable (and unwilling) to see the Glory of Christ in the Gospel- or to be unable (and unwilling) to see the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ- displayed in the Gospel.

So lostness is being blind to God's Glory. Lostness is being blind to spiritual Light- the Light that really shines out *from* the Gospel of Jesus Christ- crucified and risen.

Now we all know people like this. Or some of you here today may be like this. And we who are saved- pour out our heart to those people to tell them about their sin and how Christ is the only Person in the world Who has died for sin and risen from the dead. We tell them about how beautiful and great His Love and Wisdom and Power and Justice and Meekness and Humility and Sovereignty is.

And they listen, and they hear the facts. And they may even believe the facts of history. But they see no Glory and no Beauty and no Treasure. They see no value in all of this. And we must take heed to ourselves that we simply don't scoff when we understand their true lost condition. But rather we must weep and tremble and pray because all of us were like this at one time too. And it could be that the Glory of Christ would become dim again in our eyes and we could wander off into terrible sin- apart from the preserving Grace of God.

And so we faithfully preach and teach the foundational elements of the Gospel that is found in **1Corinthians 15:3-8** that the Apostle Paul puts forth the foundational events of the Gospel when he said:

3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;

7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;

8 and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

... because without these Truths- there is no Gospel at all. But what is it that we must see in those wonderful events that God did through Christ- if they are to be Gospel for us? And that is what **2Corinthians 4:4&6** tells us:

We must see "the Glory of Christ- Who is the Image of God." In other words- We

must see “the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ.”

... and the result will be that we too will be:

... amazed at the greatness of God.

Now why is that? Because that is what the Gospel is. The Gospel is not just a list of true historical events- Christ died and was buried and rose. The Gospel is “Good News”. But we do not see the decisive “Good” in the Good News if we do not see- in those true historical events- the Glory of Jesus Christ Who is the Image of God.

Now notice carefully the use of the word “Gospel” in verse 4. The Apostle Paul said it is:

...the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

So that is the Gospel. The Glory of Christ “seen” and “savored” and “enjoyed” in the Sovereign Work of Redemption *is* the Good News. That *is* the Gospel! And that Gospel will cause wonder and amazement and awe and respect to be in us and those things will bring forth a true and deep and abiding love for God in us which in turn will develop Biblical Holiness in us- which in turn will bring great Glory to God.

So that is the highest and the best and the final “Good” that makes all the other “good things” that are promised in the Gospel to be “good”. In other words- *Justification* is good news because it makes us stand accepted by the One Whose Glory we want to see and savor and enjoy above everything else. *Forgiveness* is good news because it cancels all the sins that keeps me from seeing and enjoying the Glory of Christ- Who is the Image of God. The *removal of God’s Wrath against me and the rescuing of my soul from eternal hell* is good news because now in my escape from eternal misery I find eternal pleasure beholding the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ. *Eternal life* is good news because this is eternal life, Jesus said, that they know Me and Him Who sent Me. And the ultimate *freedom from pain and sickness and conflict* in Heaven is good news because, in my freedom from pain, I am no longer distracted from the fullest enjoyment of the Glory of Christ Who is the Image of God.

And that is what those people saw that day at the base of that mountain and that is why Dr. Luke said that the result of this was that they were all:

... amazed at the greatness of God

In other words, **2Corinthians 4:4&6** tell us what the highest and the best and the ultimate “good” of the good news is:

- ✓ The Glory of Christ Who is the Image of God
- ✓ The Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ

That is a *real* Glory- a real spiritual Light that shines through the Gospel from Christ in His saving Work, and is seen- not with the physical eyes- but with the eyes of the heart.

And how I pray that this will become a unified common understanding of the Gospel here at this Church with you. That we will all be at home with this reality and therefore be at home with this language. So may God grant us to understand and to behold and to embrace the highest, best and final “good” of the Gospel—the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ.

And so we preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ so that

And so the first part of **Luke 9:43** says that they were all amazed at the greatness of God. You cannot look at Jesus and not be astonished. You can't possibly look at Him and not be amazed. And so they were all amazed at the greatness of God manifest in, by, and through Jesus because He was God in human flesh.

Jesus is God and He alone manifests the Deity of God- and these people saw it. And they were amazed at it. Now essentially the word here is the “majesty” of God or the “exaltedness” of God. Now let's look at the next part of verse 43:

... But while everyone was marveling at all that He was doing...

Well, what was Jesus doing? Well, He had just done one really amazing and astounding miracle in delivering a young boy from a very powerful and obstinate demon who was trying to kill the boy over many, many years and not only traumatizing the boy horribly but his father

and his family as well. And the nine Apostles who did not go up into the Mountain with Jesus were unable to deal with the demon- so Jesus Himself cast the demon out in a very dramatic encounter. And that was only emblematic of all that He was doing. That was only one of the realm of miracles that Jesus demonstrated. In fact, there were many miracles that Jesus did beyond the demonic world.

If you go back up to **Luke 7:21** it says,

At that very time He cured many *people* of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits; and He gave sight to many *who were* blind.

So Jesus had this power over demons, He had this power over disease. The disciples of John the Baptist were told,

Luke 7:22b&23

22... "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: *the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.*

23 "Blessed is he who does not take offense at Me."

So Jesus had absolute Power and Authority over all diseases and over all demons and over all of Creation itself and even over death. And these people were amazed at that. This is the amazing Power of Jesus. There's nothing like it in all the Universe- and so everyone was marveling at it.

Now the word for "marvel" here is a very familiar New Testament verb *thaumazo*, it's used many, many times, several dozen times in the New Testament and it means: *to be filled with wonder*. It means: *to be taken outside the realm of explanation*. That's what it means. It's the idea of being astonished; it's going beyond any possible human explanation. It's to be left with incomprehensibility. There is no explanation for Jesus' total and absolute Authority- His amazing Sovereign Authority over all things created other than He was God Almighty in human flesh.

And early on in His ministry- Jesus began to demonstrate His absolute Authority in every realm and that Authority began to expand as He went through His Ministry. Early on Jesus' Teaching had greater

Authority than the official teachers of Israel because He Himself was the very Source of Truth. And then Jesus began to demonstrate authority over all diseases- and then Authority over all demons- and then authority over death. And then authority of all things to forgive sin. And then authority to delegate divine power to others- the Apostles and later the seventy.

And then Jesus manifested this absolute Authority to execute judgment on every living soul and determine whether they would enter into hell or heaven. And then He demonstrated absolute Authority to give up His Own Life. And then Authority to take it back.

So there was this ever expanding expression of *exousia*, authority, or literally power over everything in the created order. But all that Authority was only demonstrated on a limited basis. It was confined to Jesus and His physical Presence in the little land of Israel during His earthly Ministry. And so that limitless, endless, boundless, infinite authority which He possessed from all eternity as God before the Incarnation was then narrowed down and confined and limited to a very minimal expression after God took on human flesh. So it was absolutely the Power of God- but it was limited until Jesus comes to the Great Commission or the Grand Command.

So when Jesus comes to the end of His Gospel record and gives the last words for the Apostles to write- He gives them this Great Commission and to Matthew through the Holy Spirit He gives the final words Jesus gave and they are these- notice how they begin in **Matthew 28:18-20**:

18 ... "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

And so that is how Jesus began to give us the Grand Command or the Great Commission- by saying,

"All authority is given to Me in heaven and in earth."

And Jesus was in essence saying, *"My Incarnation is over, I'm*

going back to the Father. No more limited Authority here on earth- I now am being restored all my Authority everywhere in the universe."

So this Authority- which rightly belonged to Jesus- was demonstrated in all of the things He did while He was here. And there is just no way to explain it except to say it is the greatness of God.

And now I want you to notice something very important about the nature of fallen human beings. As we go through and study all these miracles- as the people were exposed to this massive Power all the time- we wonder how they could see all of this and then reject Him. How do you stand there and watch Jesus do what He did and not fall down and worship Him? And we would like to convince ourselves that had we been there- and seen what these people saw- we would have never done what they did and that is to reject Jesus.

But if you say that- you really don't believe what the Bible teaches about human depravity. One of the fallacies that I see in many of the modern Evangelistic efforts is that most of them assume that if only we can give people enough information- they will reason to themselves and repent and trust in Jesus. The notion that all we have to do is to give them some cute little slogan or some little catchy phrase or fill in the blanks in their minds and people will repent belies a terrible ignorance of what the Bible teaches about The Fall and the deadness of people's souls before they are saved.

Being Lost is not about a misunderstanding. Adam and Eve didn't misunderstand God in the Garden. Being fallen isn't about a lack of information. Being sinful is not about simply not understanding about a better way of life that America can give you. Being depraved is not something that living in a better neighborhood and having a better job can fix; it isn't a disease that can be fixed by medicine; it isn't an economic culture that can be corrected through Governmental action and it isn't an ignorance that can be alleviated through education.

No, being "lost" is a condition of the human soul; it is the status of the human DNA; it is the reality of being the children of Adam and you cannot educate yourself out of sin; you cannot vaccinate yourself out of being fallen; you cannot eradicate lostness with money and opportunity. And it takes the sinless life and the agonizing death and the glorious Resurrection of Jesus Christ to fix and without all of that He did and without trust in all that He did- you are yet in your sins.

You see, people are not sinful because they sin- no people sin because they are already wicked sinners in their hearts. And people do not become sinful- they are born in sin and they are shapen in iniquity due to the Original Sin of Adam being passed down through the seed of the father.

Being lost is the condition that ever unsaved man, woman, and child on earth are in- of loving darkness rather than light; it is the condition of being separated from God and finding no joy and no pleasure in God or the things of God- but rather finding joy and pleasure and contentment in sin and in rebellion against God and in living contrary to what God has declared to be right.

And since being fallen is not about what we do but is about who we are- therefore- all the Divine Damnation that God has personally declared to be coming toward the ungodly will not change a single heart and all the Promises of eternal joys and blessings will not alter a single mind.

Our fallen condition is so pervasive and so all- encompassing and so complete and so total and so absolute- that absent a Sovereign move of God the Holy Spirit to open our eyes and unstop our deaf ears and to forcefully take out of us a stony heart and replace it with a heart of flesh- nobody on earth would ever repent; nobody on earth would ever trust in Jesus and nobody on earth would be saved.

So if we would ever think for one second that if we had lived back then and seen what these people saw that we would have immediately trusted in Christ and repented- that only proves that misunderstand the sinfulness of sin and the deadness of spiritual death and the blindness of spiritual blindness.

Here is how you know if you are truly saved or not. These people loved Jesus' Works. They adored what Jesus did. They admired and were absolutely fascinated by His Works. It was the Words that came out of Jesus' Mouth that they hated. What Jesus did- they all responded to. They flocked to watch Him heal and deliver and forgive and feed and care for the souls of the people. They followed Jesus everywhere he went to see Him do something marvelous. They stayed up all night and stood in line in the rain to watch Jesus perform a miracle or to cast out a demon or open blind eyes or raise the dead.

But when Jesus spoke- they tried to throw Him off a cliff. When He taught- they became angry. When Jesus proclaimed the Truth- they

despised Him. They were highly insulted and deeply offended at His diagnosis of their sinful condition. They didn't like His rejection of their self-righteousness and their legalism and their man-made religion. And the more Jesus talked- the more they hated Him.

You see, saved people do not simply follow Jesus because of what He does- but they actually love what He says. Saved people do not sit at Jesus' Feet to receive some new blessing from His Hand- they love to hear what pleases God from His Lips.

So even though Dr. Luke tells us here that they were astounded by His Power- these people proved that they were not saved and that they did not love God because they followed their perverted and faithless leaders in rejecting and finally murdering the Messiah- the Son of God. So while Sovereign Majesty dominated in Jesus' Ministry- His suffering Humiliation always lurked in the shadows nearby.

Now it's at a moment like this when Jesus is doing all these mighty deeds and He's just demonstrated power over this very strong demon in the case of this boy, and other miracles are happening- it's at this point that the disciples Messianic fervor is heightened again. And just when they think maybe we're on the brink, they wanted the Kingdom so badly they had along with all the rest of the people in Israel believe that the Messiah would come and He would come and set up the Kingdom when He came. And He would come and exalt Israel and they were on the inside trek and they would be exalted to the high places in the Kingdom and they had all these hopes and desires and they were deeply imbedded in their thinking.

They were very pervasive in their thinking. So pervasive, in fact, that when Jesus talked about His dying- it was completely beyond their ability to comprehend it and Peter pulled Him aside and said, *"No, that's not the way we have planned it out, Lord. That's not the plan."* And it is absolutely amazing how that Peter didn't mind rebuking Jesus because Jesus had the wrong plan.

You see, Peter knew what the plan was- they all knew what the plan was- it was laid down for centuries in their minds. When the Messiah finally came- they all knew what He would do. That's why even to this very day today- any orthodox Jew who looks at **Isaiah 53** has absolutely no idea that that relates to the Messiah. In fact, if you say that to an orthodox Jew- he will tell you that that is blasphemy. A crucified Messiah? A Messiah who becomes a sin offering? Impossible.

Preposterous! Why God would never do anything like that- especially for dirty filthy sinners.

So the Jew of today either rejects the Gospel outright by saying they don't know what it means or they explain **Isaiah 53** away by saying it is designed to portray the suffering nation of Israel.

So they had this idea the Messiah would come and all He would do is the miraculous and vanquish the pagan Romans and forcefully set up the Kingdom. But this amazing sovereign, this one with amazing power also gave an amazing sacrifice and **Luke 9:44** says,

Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men."

So right at the point where the people are starting to feel the messianic surge again and the Kingdom surge and right about the time that they really think God is going to set it all up just as Jesus has demonstrated His absolute Authority and Power by casting out this demon from this boy- now he starts talking about dying again.

Now even though Jesus had already told them very specifically a couple of times already that this was going to happen- they really couldn't bring themselves to understand how Jesus dying was going to fulfill God's Plan to bring the Kingdom back to Israel.

And it really hasn't been all that long ago- back up at **Luke 9:22** Jesus said:

The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised up on the third day."

Jesus had said it several times to them- but they still did not believe it. It just didn't compute. They just sloughed it off their minds. And so in verse 44 Jesus emphasizes this to them by saying,

Let these words sink into your ears...

In Alabama English- this is the same thing as saying:

"Read my lips- I'm not kidding"

Actually the language here in the Greek is the idea of literally laying something in your ear. Let it just sort of lay in there until you've gotten an understanding of it. The focus of this crowd was very fickle. The praise that was being offered to Him, the wonder and the marveling at the greatness of God was very shallow and very trivial and only temporary and Jesus knew that. Just as soon as Jesus would begin to demand from them- these same people who were laying all this praise on Him would turn on Him in a heartbeat and reject Him and in just six short months from this moment right here- these same people would cry for the Romans to crucify Jesus.

And so Jesus didn't want the disciples to pursue false expectations and cultivate and nurture false hopes and so He says:

Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men."

And you can fill in the rest of it- the **"men"** here are the chief priests and scribes and the elders and they're going to be the ones to execute Jesus by the means of the Romans and then He's going to rise again the third day.

So Jesus wants His Apostles to understand this. They should not expect the Kingdom yet. There's a cross that's coming first. And what was happening is that the Apostles were simply responding to the popularity of Jesus and that just exacerbated their predisposition to these false untimely messianic hopes. So look at that phrase that Jesus uses here:

... the Son of Man is going to be delivered...

"Going to be"; "About to be". The Greek word here is *mello* and it literally means: "going to be". The English word, **"delivered"** comes from the Greek word, *paradidomi*. And it can be translated as "betrayed" but it's better to keep it in the general generic sense, "handed over". It's a technical term for a criminal being *handed over* for punishment or *handed over* for judgment or *handed over* for execution. And it's a familiar term in the record of Jesus. The Apostle Levi quoted Jesus in **Matthew 17:22:**

The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day."

Now who...who is doing this delivering? Who is the one doing this delivering? Well, was it Judas? It was Judas. **Matthew 26:24** says,

The Son of Man *is to go*, just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."

That is Judas. So those people who say that Jesus' Plans never materialized- that everything Jesus hoped for went wrong and Jesus was trying to bring in the Kingdom but somehow things went wrong and He was killed- those people are liars of the lowest order. Jesus said all along-

"I am going to be delivered over to them. I am going to be killed by them. And I am going to rise on the third day."

So that was God's Plan from the very beginning. There was never a "Plan B", there was no disruption of God's Original Plan. Nothing went wrong- everything went exactly as it was designed by God before He ever created the Universe and exactly as all the OT Prophets had declared hundreds of years before Jesus was ever born.

Even Judas was planned. Even Judas was prophesied in the Old Testament as the familiar friend who would lift up his heel against the Lord- the son of perdition who would break bread with and betray Messiah. And the great mystery of God's Sovereignty and human responsibility is that several things were absolutely true about this that boggles our minds:

- ✓ It was God's perfect Will for Judas to betray Jesus
- ✓ God did not force Judas to act against the Lord
- ✓ It was Judas' choice to commit this terrible sin
- ✓ God punished Judas with his own special place in hell

Judas was totally culpable and completely responsible for Jesus being delivered into the hands of evil men for execution. But what about

the Jews, was it them too? Listen to **The Acts 3:12-19**:

12 But when Peter saw *this*, he replied to the people, "Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk?"

13 "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, *the one* whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him.

14 "But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,

15 but put to death the Prince of life, *the one* whom God raised from the dead, *a fact* to which we are witnesses.

16 "And on the basis of faith in His name, *it is* the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the faith which *comes* through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all.

17 "And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also.

18 "But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.

19 "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;

So there's culpability for Judas who delivered Jesus to the Jews; and there's culpability for the Jews to deliver Jesus to Pilate. And **Matthew 27:26** says "**Pilate delivered Jesus to be crucified.**" So the way it works is that satan put it into Judas' willing, wicked heart to deliver Jesus to the Jews and the Jews willfully delivered Jesus to Pilate and Pilate voluntarily delivered Jesus to the Roman soldiers to be executed. So there's culpability at every point- but none of that gets to the real issue. Jesus say, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered" and in **John 10:17&18** Jesus says:

17 "**For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again.**

18 "**No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.**"

So the true deliverer was God Himself. **Isaiah 53** says that it pleased the Lord to bruise Jesus and so ultimately it was God the Father Who chose Jesus to be an offering for sin. That's why **The Acts 2:22-24** says this,

22 "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know —

23 this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death.

24 "But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

So Peter was preaching this to the Jewish people at Pentecost and he told them that they bore complete responsibility for what they did – but that ultimately it was God Himself Who delivered Jesus up by His Own predetermined Plan and foreknowledge. A more familiar passage would be **Romans 8:31&32** which says:

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us?

32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

So it was God Who delivered His Son. It's an amazing sacrifice, an amazing plan by God Who is pleased to deliver up His Own Son to be bruised for our iniquities, to be chastened for our peace, to be wounded for our transgressions, to be beaten, as it were, and executed for our spiritual healing. So here is Jesus saying to the disciples,

"Look, don't let the temporary euphoria of the crowd, don't let the temporary popularity give you false hopes- I am going to still be killed."

Now go to **Matthew 16:21** with me. There it says,

From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.

And it's the “**must**” here in this verse that interests me. So at this very point- just six months before His death- Jesus begins to focus less and less on the crowd and more and more on the disciples and He begins to show them what was coming. And it was a “must”. There wasn't any alternative. And there are four “musts” here in **Matthew 16:21**:

1. Jesus “must” go to Jerusalem
 2. Jesus “must” suffer many things from the religious hypocrites
 3. Jesus “must” be killed
 4. Jesus “must” rise from the dead on the third day
-
1. It “must” be Jerusalem because that's where the Passover lamb has to die. There can't be any other place. Jesus will be the final sacrifice and He will be the sacrifice in the very place where sacrifices are made to God. And so in **Luke 9:51** it says that Jesus resolutely set His Face to go to Jerusalem.
 2. Jesus “must” suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes. They are the Sanhedrin. He must suffer many things at their hand. He suffered a mock trial. He suffered horrific injustice. He suffered all of that at their hands as well as the terrible verbal lashings, the discrediting, the mockery, the blasphemy, the scorn that they heaped upon Him. And then it was them who turned them over, of course, to the Romans where He was beaten and scourged and crowned with thorns and all the rest. This was an indictment on the apostasy of religious Israel.
 3. Jesus “must” be murdered. Without the shedding of His blood there would be no forgiveness of sin.
 4. Jesus “must” be raised on the third day. That is what the Scriptures require.

So He said, *"Look, get it in your heads, lay it in your ears. Let it sink into your ears. I have to die. I was born to die. I came to the is earth*

this first time- not to be received as a King- but to die for the sins of all of God's elect". Now look back at **Luke 9:45**:

But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement.

Now Levi writes that the Apostles were deeply grieved when they heard it. John Mark says in **Mark 9** that they didn't understand and they were afraid to ask. And the reason they couldn't get it was because it was so contrary to all their understanding. That's why in 1Corinthians Paul says that the cross is a stumbling block to Israel. To this day- they can't comprehend of a crucified Messiah, that's just absolute nonsense. Anybody who hangs on a tree is cursed by God, the Old Testament says. God isn't going to curse His Messiah. How could God kill God on a cross? It's absolutely ridiculous. And the idea of a Messiah who comes to Israel and is executed by the leadership of Israel was impossible to comprehend. So alien to their personal affections, so alien to their messianic expectation, so disturbing to their faith and love for Jesus Christ, so opposite all their hopes for Israel, so sad with implications that embraced even them for they too were told they would take up a cross daily. It was just more than they could believe. It was like the first time you heard that someone you loved was dead in some accident and you just couldn't believe it. You see the amazing sacrifice reiterated again.

Now this is called shock. God has provided a means for your body to get into a mode where it just shuts off the pain sensors. And in many cases- this is a wonderful blessing. And the same thing is true in terms of your mind. The Lord knows there's only so much that you can handle and then there's a sort of melt down of your sensibilities because you couldn't take it anymore. And so verse 45 says they didn't understand Jesus' statement. And now look at the very next statement:

... it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it...

So the reason they didn't understand what Jesus meant by what He was saying is because God didn't reveal it to them. So from this- we can get two important facts:

- A. No one can understand the things of God unless God reveals them
- B. God doesn't always reveal to us His Plans- even when they are written in the Scriptures.

It says here, "**it was concealed**," and we can debate all day long about this- but the living Word of God says two things here:

- 1. it was concealed from them**
- 2. so that they would not perceive it**

And the phrase, "**so that**" means that the *reason* it was concealed; the purpose behind the concealment was so that these men would not perceive it or understand what Jesus had just said- even though he clearly and plainly spoke this to them.

Now the mystery behind this is the very same mystery as to why the people could not recognize Jesus when He stood on the bank of the Sea of Galilee. Why didn't they know Who Jesus was? Why didn't Mary know Who Jesus was at the tombs until He spoke to her? It was not revealed to them at that time. Why did God not want these Apostles to understand what Jesus was saying here? The Bible says it was concealed- which is the opposite of being revealed- so that they would not perceive it.

So from this we must always be humble about anything that we do know- because the only reason why we know anything about God or the things of God is not because we are so smart and not because we have spent so much time studying- even though we are told to do that- and it is isn't even because we are saved- it is only because in His Wisdom and in His absolute Sovereignty- God has chosen to graciously and mercifully reveal it to us and it is no longer concealed from us and therefore- we need to give God the Glory for our understanding of God and the Scriptures and the Ways of God and make sure that we do not take any glory for ourselves.

Knowing God is a gift from God. Loving God is a gift from God. And so the only reason why we know and the only reason why we love and know is because God chose to allow us and to grant to us that precious gift of knowing and loving God. We humans do not normally or naturally possess love for or knowledge of God on our own. We do not have some internal source of hunger for God- all of that is a gracious

and merciful gift from God to unworthy sinners and we always need to marvel at it and never take it for granted or allow it to become common. And this Truth should force us to our knees and break our arrogance and make us all very, very humble. Now quickly look at the end of verse 45:

... and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement.

So the end of not knowing; the result of something not being revealed to them was that they feared- and they were afraid to even ask Jesus. Now this is very curious and it is something that I pray you will ponder on for the rest of today and perhaps even into this coming week too.

And Dr. Luke doesn't give us very much to go on here and so we are left to wonder about this. But what we can say is that their ignorance of the future brought about a fear to even ask Jesus about it. That much we know to be true.

And it very well could have been that God did not reveal this to them out of mercy because He knew that they couldn't handle it and because He knew that they were not ready for it yet. And several of the commentators that I studied this past week think that is the answer. That is what John Calvin thought.

And so perhaps out of this reverential respect that God has developed in these men- they were afraid to ask Jesus about something that He had so clearly told them.

But it could also be that they simply could not believe and comprehend that Jesus was really going to be captured and killed and then rise from the dead three days later. That all this was so far-fetched- even as it is today with the average Jew. It could have been that they simply could not understand how Jesus being caught and tortured and then killed was going to help their cause. How do you kill God anyway? Why would this be God's Will? How is Jesus dying and rising from the dead going to help bring the kingdom of David back to Israel and destroy the pagan Romans? After all- Jesus just showed that he as God by casting out this terrible demon- why would Jesus then allow men to kill Him? They just didn't understand this and God didn't choose to reveal it to them at this time.

But within six short months- God did reveal it to them and they watched Jesus be caught and as they fled for their lives- these men saw Jesus die in a horribly painful death. But in one of the greatest acts of mercy toward Man- God would forgive their cowardice of the Apostles and God would draw these men back to Himself again after the Resurrection and they ran away no more after that and they were not ignorant after that and they understand everything after that and they stood- O how they stood- very strong against all enemies both within and without the church and these men were used by God to establish Christianity on the earth and God used these men who were so ignorant and so weak just six months before the Crucifixion to do one of the most amazing acts that a human being has ever done and that is to receive the final full and completed Revelation of God and these men wrote it down and as we read the 27 Books of the New Testament today- we marvel at their knowledge and we marvel at their insight and we marvel at the depth and height and breadth of the Revelation that God gave to them.

So we need to take heart today as we stumble through life that these bumbling, weak, and ineffectual men who were even afraid to ask Jesus a question became men that God used mightily to set the Church of Jesus upon the earth and to forever become part of the foundation of the Church that we are a part of today.

Let's pray