

Intro:

When was the last time you were disappointed with the results of something you cared about and worked hard at?
Something you were trying to accomplish?

Maybe it was a project at work.

Or a relationship.

Or something out of your control, like the Charger's football playoff record.

Why did it fail?

The resources were lacking. It was out of your control anyway. We just don't know.

Today, we want to talk about something that, if you're a follower of Jesus here today, I'm assume you are concerned about- accomplishing God's "plan" or "mission" for your life. And we're going to think about a simple reality with this, that accomplishing God's mission requires the supernatural, not just the natural.

Read Text: Luke 9:10-17

The mission of Jesus is worth all of who we are.

The mission we're on has been Jesus' mission all along.

Text:

The text starts off with a note that the apostles, the twelve, are coming back from something. If you were here last week, you know that they're coming back from a mission Jesus sent them out to do- to tell others about God's kingdom, and to heal people of their various ailments. They're done for a moment, and so they try to get away. But the crowds follow.

It's interesting to note the emphases of each gospel account of this story- this story is told in all four gospels. And each has a different emphasis. You can look in the extra study notes to see a general introduction to them. Our biographer, Luke, is the only one to note that, as the crowds come, Jesus specifically teaches them about the kingdom and heals- He does what He has just told the disciples to do. In other words, the mission Jesus sends us on is one that He himself is on as well. Luke wants to make a point of this in other ways- again, check out the extra notes.

It's important to really think about this, because I believe the general principle is true throughout the Bible and holds true today- Jesus is already doing what He asks us to do. We are joining Him in his plan, his mission, not the other way around.

Too often, as we begin to hear Jesus and hear His challenge walk with him and join Him, fear overcomes us. We start having all these excuses because we are afraid. But we need to remember- He is already there, doing what He's asking us to do. We're joining Him, not the other way around.

Of course, for many of us, the bigger question is: how do I know what He's doing? What's his plan, what's his mission? How do I know what He wants me to do? And we're not talking about just doing stuff in or through church, or the overt "Christian" things of life- we're talking about every aspect of our lives, from work, to friendships, to our free time, to our love lives, and so on. What does God want me to do in all of this? How do I know?

Let me introduce you to a process in discerning the answer to the "how" question. It is nothing new- it has been practiced by many of the journey, including Jesus himself. And it is something we never grow beyond- it is for both the new and the veteran of the Jesus way.

Scripture- change our minds

Surrender- change our wills

Spirit - through the above, we then begin to discern His purpose and mission.

On a more practical note, there are two places where we are trying to learn this in terms of real life work and mission:

CGs- work and God

Leadership Development- Calling/Drivenness.

All that to say the purpose or mission we have with God is one that He is already on. This leads naturally to the second point:

Accomplishing Jesus' mission requires the supernatural, not just the natural.

Text:

The twelve's concern for the crowd's need for food and lodging as the day winds down leads them to tell Jesus to send them away. The disciples do well in coming to him, but perhaps their jumping the gun a little – what if Jesus wants to do something else?

Well, in fact he does! Jesus tells the twelve to meet the provision of food- you give them something to eat.

The twelve look at only what they have in an attempt to try and do it on their own, and it's clear they can't- their plans are clearly limited. Note that in the other accounts, the disciples are either stuck (Matt), or hopeless (John), or need extra instruction from Jesus to see what is available (Mark). Here in Luke, the way the story is told makes it seem like the disciples are genuinely trying to come up with a plan. But of course, they can't- the crowd is simply too large. 5000 men. Many note that, if you add in the women and children, we're talking about potentially more than 10000 people. The "natural" has some limitations here.

Jesus, of course, sets up for the supernatural to happen, inviting the disciples to be a part. Telling the disciples to seat people down in groups of 50, Jesus takes the 5 loaves of bread and the couple of fish, and the supernatural happens- the resources multiply, and the whole crowd is fed. Each disciple gets a basket afterward, inevitably forced to think about the contrast between Jesus' possibility and their limitations, between the supernatural and the natural.

Our Context:

We see a lot of limitations to accomplishing what God wants:

- Ourselves: I can't change. I can't do that.
- Others: they won't change. They can't do that.
- Circumstances: there aren't enough resources.

Or we try to do a lot simply on our own strength.

Again, how to we tap into the supernatural?

Scripture, Surrender, Spirit.

Story: how Chuck became an applicant at Ethnos.

Conclusion:

Individually: engage the process

Corporately: join in at our times of prayer.