

Well take your Bibles with me again and turn back to Luke chapter 9 if you will. As we come to the end of this chapter, there are two reasons why I want to try to tackle the whole thing in one unit. The first reason is just to prove that I can...I know a number of you are doubting. There is a lot of material here, but I do want to show there is more than one gear. The second reason is really the most important because I think the content and the tone and just the purpose really tie all this together and compel us to keep it together.

What you have in this long unit from verse 37 all the way through verse 62 is a series of incidents, almost random, unrelated incidents really, that happen in rapid succession, that all have one common denominator, and what is that? Did you notice? *Failure*. Failure. The disciples failed to exorcise a demon, they failed to understand Jesus' passion, they fought over which of them was the greatest, they opposed other servants of Christ outside their circle, and they wanted to destroy people Jesus came to save. A little failure going on here...can you relate to that? I can. In each one of these incidents there's some kind of rebuke, some kind of correction. And really it's kind of a sad sequence of events. Particularly when you remember the disciples, after all, are the most committed followers of Christ up to this point. They have followed Jesus the longest and the closest. They're the ones who have been on the front road of everything Jesus has said and done. They have seen it all; they've heard it all...really of all men....they should be the most Christ-like. And they are not very Christ-like *at all* yet. And so the whole point, I think, is to *expose that*. To expose their need for continued instruction. We're not done yet guys. This is a transition point. The Galilean ministry has ended. Jesus is making his way now toward Jerusalem for the final act of his ministry. But, they have a long way to go.

There have been *fat men* - faithful, available, and teachable; they have followed Jesus, they have witnessed His miracles, they have listened intently to His teaching, they have observed His model ministry; and they have demonstrated a level of dedication superior to most. They have done the things Jesus has given them to do. But their training is far from over. *A disciple when fully trained will be like his master*, and they are in so many ways not yet anything like their master. And what I find interesting about this "reality check" is the timing of it. All this comes, as Mike mentioned, immediately after the high-points of the revelation of Christ and transfiguration of Christ. These disciples have just made the ultimate confession: Jesus, you are the Christ. Everybody else got that wrong, they got it right. And a few of them have just had the ultimate experience: they've seen Jesus in His unveiled glory and they've heard the voice of God speak. They have been, literally, to the mountain top. But as some of you know, the problem with mountain top experience is that you have to what.... come down. And that's how **vs.37** begins, *"On the next day, when they came down from the mountain..."* So mountain top is where you get a glimpse of glory....how things will be, should be and could be. When you come down is where you see how things really are.

And you know that that's how it works for us, too isn't it. On a prayer retreat we all feel pretty good about ourselves; it's when we get home that reality sets in. Or in a Sunday School class you know it's easy to belt out the right answer with confidence and boldness and, but in the public school class, those answers don't come quite so easily. And so I think it's just part of the Lord's way of training us, training all His disciples...Is to give us the occasional mountain-top experience because that gives us hope, but then also to very quickly bring us back down to sea level. Because that keeps us humble.

Whatever we may have learned up to this point; whatever we may have experienced; we have not arrived. Our knowledge is incomplete; our character is imperfect; our people-skills and ministry skills are inadequate. Even the apostle Paul, remember in **Phil.3**, whose passion was *"that I may know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death..."* even he confessed *"Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect. I have not laid hold of it yet! So this one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind I press on forward toward the goal..."* And so I mean....that's the attitude we all need as well.

So what we're looking at here in this passage are I think the common deficiencies among Christ's disciples. We are not competent as we think we are, we're actually impotent. We are not self-sufficient, we're actually deficient. We all know more than we do. We all preach better than we practice. We are not as Christ-like as we ought to be by now. We have failures to. So that's what I want us to see here.

These are the five most common deficiencies among Christ's disciples that expose our need for further instruction. Our training is not yet complete; how do we know....well, these 5 deficiencies.

1. We lack faith in the power of God.

Vs.37 "On the next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met Him. And a man from the crowd shouted saying, "Teacher, I beg You to look at my son, for he is my only boy, and a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly screams, and it throws him into a convulsion with foaming at the mouth; and only with difficulty does it leave him, mauling him as it leaves. I begged your disciples to cast it out, and they could not." And then vs.41, Jesus answered and said (and this is...this is rough, I mean this is a little insensitive) "You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you and put up with you?" Whoa....that's pretty intense. I mean do you detect a little bit of exasperation in that? It's there. Why is that? Why is Jesus so upset? His disciples weren't able to do it. That's all. He blasts them for being unbelieving. I think the reason he's so upset is because it's so upsetting to him. It's wearying to Him that people are so unbelieving and perverted. Perverted means "twisted, corrupt; literally it means to turn away, turn aside. That's what people do...they know the right way and they turn away from it. They twist things. They mess things up. They go the other way. In other words, they're sinful. It's just another word for sin. So Jesus was frustrated by their sin and unbelief. And who is this aimed at? Well, it was aimed at the disciples, the crowd, the man; I think everybody in that generation. Jesus came unto His own and His own received Him not. This rebuke is aimed at all of them; all the Jewish people as a whole. They were unbelieving and sinful and corrupt. And Jesus was furious. And He has every right to be furious. I mean what else can He do...to convince them that He's the Christ? And yet....here they are...still unbelieving, still unrepentant, still unchanged, still unsure....come on.

But without question this was particularly aimed at the disciples. It's their unbelief that provokes this scathing rebuke. *How long shall I be with you and put up with you?* You should know better! You should've handled this. This should have been for them I think a routine fly ball for them. No sweat. You guys can do this. How do we know that? Well, remember **9:1**. *"He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over [what?] all the demons."* So, they had the authority. They had the power. They couldn't say, "this one was too great, too strong, too powerful." No all the demons He gave them authority and

power over. So what's the problem here? Their unbelief. There lack of faith in the power Christ had given them, they're lack of faith in the power of God. Matt.17:19 this confirms that... later they asked Jesus privately, *"why couldn't we do it? Why couldn't we drive that demon out?"* And Jesus told them point blank, *"Because of the littleness of your faith."* They had the power. They lacked the faith. They had done it before. This time they didn't believe they could. They thought this one was too hard, too severe, beyond our capability. No it wasn't too big, their faith was too little. They lacked faith in the power of God. That was their deficiency.

You know it just makes me wonder, how much ministry goes undone because of unbelief? How much good, how many needs goes unmet because of the littleness of our faith? How many opportunities, how many open doors do we refuse to walk through because we see on the other side something that looks beyond our ability. I mean have you ever talk yourself out of sharing the gospel with somebody because you take one look at them and say "ohhh...they'd be too hard; they wouldn't be interested; they're pretty messed up...I don't think the gospel would ever penetrate them." Have you ever stop praying for somebody to be saved because you think it'll never happen. Or, you pass on a ministry opportunity because "I can't do that." J.Hudson Taylor, great missionary to China wrote, "How often do we attempt work for God to the limit of our incompetency rather than to the limit of God's omnipotency. (WC,106) Andrew Bonar said, "God's part is to put forth His power, our part is to put forth our faith." (WC, 107) So this is the first proof we still have a lot to learn: when we lack faith in the power of God even though we've seen His power work so many times before.

Jesus goes on to rebuke the demon and heal the boy and give him back to his father, and vs.43 says they were all amazed at the greatness of God. Then comes the 2nd incident. Vs.43 the middle there, "but while everyone was marveling at all that He was doing, He said to His disciples, 'Let these words sink into your ears (in other words...really get this...listen now); for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it; and they were afraid (even) to ask Him (to clarify what He meant by it)." So this exposes another common deficiency among Christ's disciples:

2. We lack understanding of the purposes of God.

"The Son of Man is going to be delivered (or betrayed) into the hands of men." How hard is that? What's complicated about that? How could they not get that? Jesus came to die. He was gonna go down to Jerusalem and be arrested, tried and crucified. He's the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Of course that's what He's gonna do. But it was hard for them to embrace that. They didn't get it. And you know before we criticize their hard headedness, their thick dullness or whatever, we just need to recognize that we only get it because we're on this side looking back; hindsight is always 20/20. We see how the plan of God has unfolded. We have more revelation..fill in the details of all of that.

But you know there are plenty of other things about the purposes of God that we don't understand, true? We lack understanding of the purpose of God. *What they didn't understand is why did Jesus have to go to the cross*. So often what we don't understand is why do we? *Why do I have to suffer?* Why do I have to go through this hardship, this difficulty. Why do I have to bare this cross. I thought Jesus did that. We read in **Rom.8:28** that *God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose*. And we all love that verse, favorite verse....but there's a few things we overlook in that verse. Like number **one**, it doesn't say all things will be good, but He works all things together for good. **Two**, it says He works all things together for good but it doesn't say how long it's gonna take. And it always takes too long, right? **Three**, it says according to *His* purpose, not our purpose. And what is His purpose? **Vs.29** *"that we might be conformed to the image of His Son."* Your purpose is "get through life with as little pain as possible." That's not His purpose. Your purpose is "live a normal, happy, healthy, trouble-free, comfortable life. His purpose is to make you like Christ. That's the "good" that all things work together for. And Christ endured the cross; so you tell me, how is God going to make you like Christ without a cross somewhere in the picture?

So we lack understanding of the purpose of God. And even when we think we understand the purpose of God, we may not understand how all the particular details fit together or why certain aspects of God's plan are concealed from us. And the short answer is Deut.29:29 *"The things revealed belong to us, the secret things don't."* And learning to accept that is part of our training, also.

You read the story of the suffering of Job, just as an example. Think about that whole story. A part, just with human knowledge human understanding, human resources, human wisdom alone, you would never figure out why all that happened. Right? It just would not make sense. None of it would....on a human level, apart from divine revelation. And that's how it is...with human suffering much of the time.

Or you read the story of Joseph another example. I think about that story just from a parenting standpoint. You know we want to protect our children and keep bad things from happening to our children. And we can spend a lot of time worrying about things that probably will never happen. But what if something bad did happen to one of your children? I mean think that through. What if your worst nightmare came true and some wicked person kidnapped your child and carted them off to a foreign country and sold them into slavery? It could happen. It does happen. That's what happened to Joseph. So how would you handle that as a Christian? Certainly you'd spare no expense, you'd do everything you could, use every resource available to try and find them and bring them back. But, would you be able to say, "I can't see *how* yet, but I know what men intend for evil, God intends for good, and even though I can't....that's not how I feel right now and I can't see how that's going to work out. I believe it because that's what God's word says..."

Few of us have that kind of faith, right? Honestly, few of us have that depth of understanding of God's purposes. And that's the proof we still have much to learn.

Here's a third common deficiency among us.

3. We lack humility in the service of God.

This is really shocking. We come to vs.46. This is really a jolt. I mean even for us who have been studying Luke this whole time and are familiar with the disciples and their interaction with Jesus. Even for us, this is.... "I can't believe that just happened....right!" Verse 46, an argument started and that's a good way to say it by the way...it started....cause it continued a long time after this. *An argument started among them as to which of them might be the greatest.* Can you imagine that? After everything they've seen after everything they've heard, they are arguing among themselves....which of them might be the greatest! Wow.....I'm just trying to picture what that must have been like for Jesus to hear that. This is embarrassing. Jesus is

about to go to the cross and die for sinners, the ultimate act of lowly service and humility, and on the way, they're having this dispute. These men, grown men, redeemed men, chosen servants and stewards of the gospel, comparing themselves, ranking themselves arguing.

So what did Jesus do? Verse 47 *But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart, took a child and stood him by His side, and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in my name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great."* What's He saying there? He's saying, "Look, you guys are all jockeying for position in the kingdom....let me tell you; here's how it works in the kingdom: whoever is *least* is great. Whoever is least...He doesn't even say greatest. There's no comparative. It's just least are the great. Greatness in the kingdom is not like earthly greatness; in fact it's the opposite. It's not the one who rules but the one who serves. Lower is higher; higher is lower. He was teaching and He taught them again and again. Humility is the prized virtue. Humility. And notice how humility is measured: *"whoever receives this child in My name..."* What you do with those who are the least, is what you do to Me is what you do to the Father. So how do you treat the least? That's the measure of your humility.

Elsewhere Jesus said this. Actually, you should take the journey with me:

Mark 10:32 *They were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking on ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were fearful. And again He took the twelve aside and began to tell them what was going to happen to Him, saying, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles. They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill Him, and three days later He will rise again."* So this is the context in verse 35, James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, came up to Jesus saying, *"Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask of You."* Wow....so He plays along. *And He said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" They said to Him, "Grant that we may sit, one on Your right and one on Your left, in Your glory."* Wow....I mean what would you do if you were Jesus? Start over? I'm blasting you to kingdom come. *But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. (You don't have any idea what you're asking.) Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism which I am baptized?" They said to Him, "(oh yeah) We are able."* And Jesus said to them, *"The cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized. But to sit on My right or on My left, this is not Mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."* And hearing this, the other then began to feel indignant with James and John. *Calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not this way among you, shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many."*

Well, it's actually worse than that. Look at Matt.20. Matthew 20 verse 17. Again these are all parallel accounts. Verse 17 they're going up to Jerusalem. He explains that He's going to be handed over, delivered to the chief priests and scribes and they were going to condemn Him. So this time notice what happens, verse 20. *Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons, bowing down and making a request of Him.* Yeah, mom, maybe if you put in a good word. This is unbelievable isn't it.

And this squabble, this bantering back and forth disputing, jockeying continued all the way to the end. You go all the way to the end of the gospel. Luke 22, on the night before He was betrayed, they're in the upper room. Jesus said one of you is going to betray me, and they're all saying, "who me, is it me, is it I?" And that conversation turned into this conversation again. The night He was betrayed they're still arguing about this. So I don't know if that's an encouragement to us. If we struggle with pride, we know we're not alone, right, we come by it honest. Common problem. But it's still a horrible, horrible sin. And so diametrically opposite the spirit of Christ. That's the point. For them to be with Christ all this time and for them to be this far from the Spirit of Christ is kind of sad. How much we know is not the measure of maturity. How many Bible questions we can answer is not the measure. How much experience we have in ministry is not the measure. Humility is the measure. That's the essence of Christ-likeness. J.C. Ryle said, "Of all creatures none has so little right to be proud as man and of all men none ought to be so humble as the Christian."

That's not all of it. Their pride takes a different form in vs.49. Look at this, *"John answered and said, Master, (and he's telling the story now of when they were all out in pairs preaching through Galilee) we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow along with us."* Not only do we struggle with a spirit of superiority toward those within our group, we struggle with a spirit of exclusivity toward those who aren't in our group. And this too is pride. Thinking we're the only servants of Christ doing the Lord's work in the Lord's way, and all others must be stopped. *"But Jesus said to him, vs. 50 "Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you."* Do not hinder him. Do not try to stop him. He's not against you, he's for you. In other words there should be a spirit of cooperation not separation among servants of Christ. If the other brother is not working against you, he's working with you, so let him work. You're on the same side. I mean what was the guy doing? He was casting out demons. Who does that? Not the enemy. And he was doing it *"in Your name."* So why are you trying to hinder him? Just because *"he does not follow along with us."* That's petty isn't it.

I heard a quote on the radio last week, we were just driving somewhere andwas quoting a missionary who said, "Before sending anyone to the mission field, make sure they have done battle with the enemy. Because those who have not learned to fight the enemy will fight with each other." That's so true in Christian circles, isn't it? And granted this is a difficult thing, sometimes it requires a great deal of discernment to evaluate whether someone's ministry is against us or for us, but this ought to at least serve as a warning to us that Jesus' circle is wider than our circle. And our attitudes of exclusion and separation and division are driven more likely driving by pride than humility.

So do you see what each of these incidents are doing? They're all demonstrating the need for further training. Maybe we've been disciples long enough that we can regurgitate the things we've heard Jesus say, maybe we can recite verses, maybe we can parrot back right answers, but clearly the teaching of Jesus has yet to transform our life if we lack faith in the power of God, lack understanding of the purpose of God, and lack humility in the service of God.

Here's a fourth deficiency.

4. We lack compassion for the enemies of God.

Love, Mercy....Look at vs.51. *when the days were approaching for His ascension (meaning time to go back into Heaven, that's what happens after His death and resurrection), that He was determined to go to Jerusalem; and He sent messengers on ahead of Him. And they went, and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make arrangements for Him.* Now Samaria was

between Galilee and Judea, so to get from the north to the south they had to go through there. So Jesus sent a few messengers on ahead to find food and lodging, make arrangements, accommodations for their party as they went in. They wouldn't want to just show up the day of and people would just be scrambling around to accommodate your needs. So He sent them on ahead. Vs.53, *"But they did not receive Him, because He was traveling toward Jerusalem."* But they did not receive Him because He was traveling toward Jerusalem. This shows the animosity between Jews and Samaritans. Josephus, the historian, writes that the Samaritans were not averse to ill-treating pilgrims going up to Jerusalem, even to the extent of murdering them on occasion. The Samaritans hated the Jews and the Jews hated the Samaritans. In fact sometimes the Jews, the Galilean Jews would go through Samaria, they'd go all the way around, cross over the Jordan River and going all the way around and come back....to avoid Samaria all together. So there was this was a long-standing feud, dating all the way back to the Assyrian captivity maybe, 721B.C. Long history....a lot of bad blood between the Northern and Southern tribes. And so the people of this little village refused accommodations, "We don't want you here," not so much because of where they were from but because of where they were going. "Oh you're going to Jerusalem, eh...we're closed."

So, vs.54, when His disciples....these are the pillars of the church you know, these are the guys that lay the foundation, these are the apostles from whom we owe it all...we owe everything....hmmmm. James and John saw this, they heard what was going on and said *"Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"* Well, now you know where their nickname "sons of thunder" came from, right? They were just ready to zap 'em. *"They what?"* Don't they know who they're dealing with? They refuse to serve us? Are you kidding me? Lord, let's just burn this place to the ground! Give us the word, and we'll take care of it."

Verse 55, Jesus turned and rebuked them! Severe admonition. He chewed them out. Some of the earlier manuscripts don't contain the content of the rebuke "You do not know what kind of spirit you are of; for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." The original maybe just said "Jesus turned and rebuked them, and they went on to another village." But the point is clear, either way. Jesus was not pleased with their attitude, their response. No compassion at all....zero...burn 'em down? Guys, we can't wipe out everybody that opposes us. These people are unbelievers; they need to be evangelized not executed. They need the gospel, they need conversion, not condemnation. But I mean, this is a typical attitude...isn't it....among Christians. This is how we are so much of the time. Just zap 'em, Lord. No mercy. No grace. No patience. Just burn 'em up. Instant judgment. Is that what we want? No. But that's what "they" deserve.

May I say to you....this is a little bit of a barrier to evangelism and missions – hatred. There are people groups we hate. Right....who is it for you? I hate Blacks? I hate Whites? I hate Hispanics? I hate Muslims. I hate Marshallese? I hate Texans? This is a problem among Christians. Prejudice, racism, bigotry. It keeps us from praying for people, it keeps us from reaching out in friendship to people, it keeps us from going to them, even though Jesus has already given the order to go into all the world. It's just comes down to a lack of compassion for people; people just like us, who are sinners, that Jesus came to save. We're glad He saved us, but we could care less if He saves them. They don't deserve mercy like we do.

Jesus rebuked them! And He would rebuke you too, if you had that attitude. He would say to you, "Go and learn what this means, I desire compassion and not sacrifice." Judge in the same way you want to be judged; for judgment will be merciless to the one who has shown no mercy. It's a compassion issue. Love. Unbelievers are not "the enemy;" they're the mission field. They may oppose us, they may reject Christ, but to our dying breath we should have mercy on them and long for their salvation. Then finally, a fifth deficiency, not only the lack of faith, lack of understanding, of humility, of compassion, but

5. We lack commitment to the kingdom of God.

We've covered this a little bit. Verses 57 and following. Notice these three examples. Vs. 57, *as they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go."* And Jesus said to him (I don't have anywhere to go), *"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, (but not me, I have nowhere to lay my head.)"* Oh, You mean I could be homeless? Never mind then. (Vs. 59), *He said to another, "Follow Me."* But he said, *"Lord, Permit me first to go and bury my father."* And He said to him, *"no, allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God."* "You mean I can't wait until my dad dies so I can collect the inheritance? What am I going to live on?" (Vs. 61) *And then another said, "I will follow You, Lord but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home."* But Jesus said to him, *"no one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."* "If something back there is more important to you than the kingdom of God, you're not fit for the kingdom of God." No. And that's what we do right? I'll follow You, Lord, I'll serve You with all my heart, as long as..... it doesn't interfere with.....my plans, my comfort, my security, my safety, my lifestyle, my career, my family.

I was extremely blessed this week I read the testimony of one of my seminary classmates, Greg White who is in Kiev, he's a professor of New Testament at Urpine(?) Biblical Seminary he wrote these words:

When my wife and I first went to Ukraine in 1992 things were difficult, quite frankly we did not like it. The first night there, Euchon(?) (his wife), and I discussed how we could leave as soon as possible, but we had a major problem. What would we tell our church elders. Upon our arrival in Kiev we were confronted by a number of hurdles. First of all our dorm room at language school wasn't ready and so we had to spend our first night in a hotel. Arriving at our room we saw a maid finishing her cleaning duties in the room. We thought that was nice until we saw her take a swig of water and spit it onto the bed and use the wetness to make the sheets neat and flat. Later that evening at dinner, we could hardly eat, to exhausted, all we wanted to do was drink, but the bottled water tasted like salt water. The more we drank, the more thirsty we became. Emotionally drained from saying goodbye to family, awake during the transatlantic flight, being overwhelmed by the new sights, sounds and smells we could not wait to go to bed. Excusing ourselves from the table our leader remarked, "When you go to bed, be sure to leave the light on. Just trust me on that, just keep it on." When we got to our room I realized why. I turned on the light and roaches scrambled everywhere. This was totally out of our comfort range. We wanted to leave fast. (Then he says) In hind sight, the real reason we wanted to leave was selfishness. This was not meeting how we expected to be treated as missionaries. We were prepared to sacrifice, but this much? After all we had a two year old daughter how could she possible grow up here. Yeah, that's what we would tell others. The field was not ready for a family with young children. With our luggage locked in the language school dormitory and having only our overnight bags, we had no access to our disposable diapers. As we were soon to learn Ukraine has no disposable diapers. They have tights. Those were their diapers. Tights. It stops some problems but certainly not all of them. So in a panic we started manipulating the situation for ourselves to make

us feel more comfortable. Long story short, he says, simply put....we were not content in our situation. Even more important than learning Russian, we needed to learn the basic essentials of contentment and commitment. (The Master's Mantle, Spring 2012; Vol.19:1)

So just ask yourself what conditions do you put on your commitment to Christ? Do you put any. I've got to have my Ozarka, Pampers, Holiday Inn...minimum. I will follow you Lord, but.....as long as.....Jesus said "No one after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Do you see any of those deficiencies in your life? I hope you do; they're there. Unbelief. Spiritual blindness. Pride. Separatism. Prejudice. Racial discrimination. Judgmentalism. Half-heartedness, Conditional limited devotion. These are the things, people, these are the things that weaken the church, these are the things that impede the progress of the gospel. These are the things that keep Christ from being glorified and magnified to the degree that he should be. These are the things that keep our lives and ministries from being effective and fruitful.

So what can you do about it?

Well, what did God say to do? Remember what just happened on the mount of transfiguration? A cloud came down over the mountain and a voice out of the cloud spoke. And what did He say? **Vs.35**, *"This is My Son, the chosen One, hear Him, listen to Him!"* And all these things happened immediately after that as a way for God to show, "See you still need to listen, you're not done yet, you have a long way to go...stop talking and spend more time listening and learning. "Listen to my Son." All this just shows that we need to do exactly what God said, *"Listen to My Son."*

So if we have these deficiencies it means one thing, it means we still need His instruction, we just need to keep listening to His instruction. This is why these deficiencies, why we need divine revelation; biblical instruction. We can't trust our intuition. We can't be led by tradition. We can't be controlled by our emotion. We can't default to public opinion. We need instruction. So for everything in life, everything, we need to listen to the Lord.

Let's pray together.