

Re-charged

Luke 9: 28 - 36

February 14, 2010

I. Introduction

A. I have a couple of pop quiz questions for you this morning –

1. How long were Peter, James and John up on the mountain with Jesus
 - a. When Moses and Elijah appeared and talked to him?
2. Two, why did Jesus climb up to the top of that mountain that day?

A. If you have an answer to the first question, shout it out

1. If not, I'll give you a hint – look at the next verse following our text
 - a. “On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain...”
2. It's not a hundred percent certain, but the indication is
 - a. That Jesus and those disciples spent the night up there in the cool, crisp air
3. No wonder then that we hear the disciples were “weighed down with sleep”
 - a. When's the last time you stayed up all night in a place of solitude?

A. The answer to the second question is somewhat plainer, in the first verse of our text –

1. Jesus took Peter, James and John with him, and went up on the mountain to pray
 - a. To get away from the crowds, perhaps as well
 - (1) Jesus did that on several occasions that we hear about in scripture
 - (a) There may have been other times that didn't get recorded
2. And because those disciples were willing to go with Jesus
 - a. And because they stayed awake, even though they were drowsy
 - (1) Or because they woke up at the right time
 - b. They were privileged to see and be a part of something really spectacular
3. But we are getting ahead of ourselves a bit with the story

II. Both Matthew and Mark also recount this event in their gospels

A. With a few slight differences in the details

1. But there is one part of the context that remains the same in each account

A. Soon after this mountaintop experience, Jesus would begin the journey

1. That would take him to Jerusalem, and eventually to the cross on Golgotha

A. If you have your Bibles open to our text in Luke 9, look on down to verse 51

1. “When the days drew near for him to be taken up,” Luke says
 - a. Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem

- A. That seems to be a sort of turning point in Jesus' earthly ministry
 - 1. Especially in the account as Luke tells it
- A. From the mountains of Galilee, south to Jerusalem was a fairly long trip
 - 1. There would be many more events along the way for Jesus and his followers
 - a. But this night of prayer seems to set the stage, as it were
 - (1) For these final days of Jesus' physical life on this planet
- A. Did Jesus sense a special need for the support and encouragement he would receive
 - 1. From that time spent with God and the company of those OT men of God?
- A. Was he feeling spiritually and emotionally exhausted from all those days of ministry
 - 1. Fending off the increasing verbal attacks by the Jewish religious leaders
 - a. While at the same time dealing with the physical and spiritual needs
 - (1) Of the crowds that were attracted to his loving care?
- A. At least two other times in Jesus' life, one after 40 days of fasting in the wilderness
 - 1. And the other in the garden of Gethsemane later on
 - a. We find angels coming from heaven to minister to Jesus' needs
 - 2. But this was different – more like a special cheering squad
 - a. Although it may be hard for us to think of Moses and Elijah as cheerleaders
- A. I don't get the sense that this was quite the critical time as those other occasions
 - 1. So much as it was a part of the regular routine that Jesus followed
 - a. During his ministry – taking time to get away by himself to pray
 - (1) And commune with his heavenly father
- A. But this particular time, that communion with God, and with saints from of old
 - 1. Had such an effect on Jesus that his very appearance was changed
 - a. Much like Moses when he came down from the mountain
 - (1) After spending time with God and receiving the Law
 - b. His face was so bright that he had to wear a veil over it
 - (1) Because the people were afraid to look at the brightness
 - 2. Luke simply reports that Jesus' face was changed
 - a. Matthew's account says that his face became shiny like the sun
 - 3. And even his clothing was changed to a dazzling white
 - a. Reminds me of the description of the angels who appeared at the tomb
 - (1) After Jesus' resurrection
- A. Several weeks ago, our scripture text said that Jesus' disciples "saw his glory"

1. Revealed in the miracle of changing water into wine
 - a. That is, they were given a glimpse of the power and authority
 - (1) That rightfully belonged to Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God
 2. Here, that glory takes on physical characteristics or manifestations as well
- A. This transfiguration of Jesus, as it is sometimes called
1. Made a very deep impression on the disciples that were with him, too
 - a. Many years later, Peter would write about it in his second epistle, or 2 Peter
 - (1) As we have it in our Bibles today, where he says –
- A. ...we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”
1. We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, Peter writes
 - a. While we were with him on the holy mountain.
 2. Wouldn't it be great if we could have been there to see and hear it ourselves?
 - a. I guess it's just something we'll have to take Peter's word for now
- A. But I don't believe those outward effects were all that happened to Jesus
1. As he spent those hours in prayer up there on the mountain
 - a. In fact, the change in his appearance may have been more a side effect
 - (1) Of the true transformation that took place
- A. Because I believe Jesus must have received an inner blessing as well
1. Perhaps a renewed perspective on the events that lay ahead for him
 - a. Perhaps fresh courage, a new sense of determination to see this thing through
 2. Surely it was not just Peter who felt that it was good to have been there
 - a. I have to think that Jesus also experienced an invigorating lifting of his spirit
- A. I believe he must have come down from that mountain feeling renewed/recharged
1. And in the days to come, he would need every bit of that strength
 - a. To face the weight of suffering and shame that he took upon himself
 - (1) In order to fulfill his purpose in God's plan of salvation for the world
- III. Re-charged – I had chosen that title for the message this morning several weeks ago
- A. And I found it interesting when our conversation at the Congregational Leadership Team meeting this week turned for a few moments to the subject

1. Of whether it is correct to say that we come to church in order to –
 - a. “Get our batteries recharged” after a hard week or to prepare for the coming week
- A. That is a common understanding of something that happens in worship
 1. Even though we recognize that the primary purpose for worship
 - a. Is to...well, worship – offer our praise and adoration to Almighty God
 2. That is an act of our conscious will, and it can happen anywhere
 - a. But the worship service is designed to help us focus our attention/worship
 - (1) Away from the normal, everyday routines of life, and toward God
- A. What we “get out of worship” as we say it sometimes, I believe is a gift from God
 1. It doesn’t depend on the number or the type of songs that we sing
 - a. Or the level of formality in the order of our service
 2. And it isn’t measured by the amount of emotion that we feel
 - a. Although it’s hard to imagine that we can spend time in the presence
 - (1) Of someone who loves us as much as God loves us
 - (a) And not be touched on some emotional level
- A. But I believe the true measure of worship, whether in a congregation of worshippers
 1. Or in a place of quiet solitude, or in the company of a few close friends
 - a. Is the degree to which our hearts and minds and lives are changed by it
- A. Our relationship with God depends, first and foremost
 1. On our willingness to surrender ourselves to God - our will, our pride, our self-control
 - a. That’s the conviction, repentance and forgiveness that I talked about last Sunday
 2. Worship, prayer, communing with God are all acts of ongoing submission
 - a. Recognizing and reaffirming God’s ultimate power and authority
 - (1) And our dependence on God’s grace and love
 3. And it is in that submission, that we find our lives changed, transformed
 - a. So that we can live for God and God’s glory can be seen in us
 - (1) As clearly as the disciples saw it in Jesus that day
- A. Bible scholars and commentators often get into a discussion
 1. Of the significance of Moses and Elijah appearing on the mountaintop with Jesus
 - a. The most common thought is that they represent the Law and the prophets
 2. But to me, they are simply reminders of how God has always fulfilled his purposes
 - a. Through men and women who have recognized God’s authority and love
 - (1) And lived their lives accordingly

- A. Jesus' role in the big picture of God's work in the world is much greater
 - 1. Than the role of any other person down through the history of humankind
 - a. But the essentials have remained the same –
 - (1) A knowledge of God's love and a willingness to be obedient
 - 2. That is what we see modeled throughout Jesus' life as well as his death/resurrection
- A. When we come into God's presence with those things in our heart and in our mind
 - 1. A knowledge of God's love and a willingness to be obedient
 - a. Communion, as friend with friend becomes possible
 - (1) And we will inevitably become more like the God that we know and love
- A. I don't usually make a big deal about celebrating Valentine's Day in church
 - 1. In part, because we are not all at the same place in our relationships with others
- A. But it may be especially appropriate today to mention something that has been noticed
 - 1. About people who have been married for a number of years
 - a. That is – living in a close, loving relationship with another person
 - (1) Tends to make look and act like each other
 - 2. It might show up in the way we view the world, in our attitudes
 - a. Or in how we react or respond in certain situations
 - (1) Some would say that is true even of our physical appearance
 - b. Makes me feel sorry for my wife, and for some of you other wives out there
- A. I'm not so sure about all of that, but I am sure that it is true
 - 1. About being in love with God and spending time together
 - a. The more we learn to know God, his likes and dislikes
 - (1) The way he thinks and the way he acts
 - b. The more, I believe, our lives will conform to God's image and likeness
- A. In a cheerful thought particularly at this time of the year
 - 1. Someone has said that if we want to get warm, we need to sit in the sun
 - a. And so it is - If we are in God's presence, and open to God's love
 - (1) Our lives will reflect that warmth as surely as the warmth of the sunshine
- A. Cathy Fussell, of Apopka, Florida illustrates the point with this story –
 - 1. I have found if I don't have my quiet time each morning, I tend to lose my temper over insignificant things.
 - a. Recently, my son, Andrew, reminded me of the need for daily prayer.
 - 2. He had accidentally spilled his drink and I went into a tirade.

- a. Andrew ended my harsh words when he quietly asked
 - (1) "Mom, did you forget to ask Jesus to help you be nice today?"

A. Or, as a woman named Annie Ortlund puts it so well –

- 1. The quality of your life will be determined by the amount of time you spend with God in reading his Word, praying, and listening for God's voice.

- a. I believe that includes both public worship as well as time alone in God's presence

IV. We sometimes say that prayer can change the world, and I believe it can

A. But more importantly, I believe that spending time in communion with almighty God

- 1. Changes us, perhaps on the outside, at least in the way we act and talk

- a. If not the way we look

- 2. But definitely on the inside, in our thoughts and our attitudes

A. And yes, I believe we can be re-charged, rejuvenated, strengthened

- 1. And given new hope when we may be feeling down or discouraged

- a. Whether through gathered worship or in our quiet time with God

A. With all the benefits, it's a wonder that we don't make it more of a priority

- 1. If Jesus found it necessary to take time from the important work he was doing

- a. In order to get away up that mountain with his disciples to pray

- (1) How much more important might it be for me