



Week 28: **Who Will Be Greatest?** ~ (Luke 9:43-50, Matt 18:1-4, Mark 9:33-36)

Todays Text: Luke 9:43-50

⁴³ Awe gripped the people as they saw this majestic display of God's power. While everyone was marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, ⁴⁴ "Listen to me and remember what I say. The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies." ⁴⁵ But they didn't know what he meant. Its significance was hidden from them, so they couldn't understand it, and they were afraid to ask him about it.

⁴⁶ Then his disciples began arguing about which of them was the greatest. ⁴⁷ But Jesus knew their thoughts, so he brought a little child to his side. ⁴⁸ Then he said to them, "Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me also welcomes my Father who sent me. Whoever is the least among you is the greatest."

⁴⁹ John said to Jesus, "Master, we saw someone using your name to cast out demons, but we told him to stop because he isn't in our group."

⁵⁰ But Jesus said, "Don't stop him! Anyone who is not against you is for you." (Luke 9:43-50 NLT-SE)

INTRODUCTION:

We started this Road Trip on May 21, 2017. Interestingly, the chronological period of time between Luke 4:14 and Luke 9:50 is about one year; almost the exact time to the day that it has taken us to work through the Road Trip with Jesus sermon series.

The journey began for us a year ago with Jesus showing up to teach at the synagogue in his home town, Nazareth...

¹⁷ The scroll of Isaiah the prophet was handed to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where this was written: ¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free,¹⁹ and that the time of the Lord's favor has come." ²⁰ He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and sat down. All eyes in the synagogue looked at him intently. ²¹ Then he began to speak to them. "The Scripture you've just heard has been fulfilled this very day!" (Luke 4:17-21 NLT-SE)

The first thing Jesus did on his return to the Galilee region was to reveal the truth, infuriate the religious leaders, and leave town looking for the next step of the Father's unfolding plan. **His only agenda was to glorify His Father.** He would heal sick people, deliver the demon possessed, raise dead people back to life, and even take authority over nature. Everything he did seemed to thrill the needy and provoked the religious.

His followers watched all this play out, right before their eyes. **They consistently found themselves in awe of what their teacher was able to say and do.** This amazement would turn to devotion as they grew in faith, day by day, on the road with Jesus!

The question we have asking this past year has been, **"What would YOU have learned had you been with Jesus on they Road Trip?"** How would it have changed your faith, your willingness to grow spiritually, your understanding of the Kingdom of God?

So, let's jump into the story one last time as this year-long road trip comes to a close. It's another opportunity to **learn** and **grow** together...

THE TEXT:

What is it you see manifesting in the disciples as they engage with Jesus?

- **Inspiration...** ⁴³ Awe gripped the people as they saw this majestic display of God's power. While everyone was marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, ⁴⁴ **"Listen to me and remember what I say. The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies."**
 - **Amazed, Astonished, Awe-struck...** When was the last time you were amazed? Have you ever been "gripped by awe?" The Greek word for amazed (ekplēssō) literally means to be "struck out of their senses." Another way to put it might be that their "world was rocked" by the miracles they saw Jesus perform right in front of them!
- **Confusion and fear...** ⁴⁵ But they didn't know what he meant. Its significance was hidden from them, so they couldn't understand it, and they were afraid to ask him about it.
- **Insecurity...** ⁴⁶ Then his disciples began arguing about which of them was the greatest.
- **Arrogance...** ⁴⁷ But Jesus knew their thoughts, so he brought a little child to his side. ⁴⁸ Then he said to them, **"Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me also welcomes my Father who sent me. Whoever is the least among you is the greatest."**
- ⁴⁹ John said to Jesus, "Master, we saw someone using your name to cast out demons, but we told him to stop because he isn't in our group."
- **Disappointment...** ⁵⁰ But Jesus said, **"Don't stop him! Anyone who is not against you is for you."**
 - *Screwtape to his young student, Wormwood on the peaks and troughs of the Christian walk...* "Our cause is never more in danger than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending, to do our Enemy's will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys. ~ C.S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters
 - *Offended at Jesus' leadership...* "The purpose of God's judgments against the Antichrist's empire is to remove all that hinders love; they are expressions of His love. Those who misunderstand God's judgments will be offended and angry with Him. Forerunners will help people receive Jesus' love instead of being offended at Him. People must rightly interpret Jesus' judgments in order to trust His leadership so that they may mature in love for Him." ~ Mike Bickle
 - ⁴ "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. ⁶ And **blessed is the one who is not offended by me.**" (Matt 11:4–6 ESV)

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK!

The Disciple's Version of Reality... After everything the disciples had seen and heard, they still believe that at any minute Jesus would establish his power and authority over the Romans. They always believed that he would present himself as the Victor, immediately putting them on the winning team. That is why they were arguing over who would be greatest in the kingdom. They saw the miracles Jesus was performing and were left with only one conclusion...the next obvious step was that he would turn his power toward the Romans and they would be powerless before the majesty of God's Son!

- **The prophecies of Jesus, the Coming King**

- **The Messiah would be seen as King...** Rejoice, O people of Zion! Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious, yet he is humble, riding on a donkey— riding on a donkey's colt. (Zech 9:9 NLT-SE)
- **The Messiah would be rejected by his own people...** He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care. (Is 53:3 NLT-SE)

- **Jesus' birth was celebrated as a King**

- **And have you ever wondered why the magi asked King Herod...** "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him." (Matt 2:2 NLT-SE). They obviously took the prophecies of the Christ as the anointed King literally. And so did Herod, who then tried to kill any possible competitor for the throne.
- **Before Jesus' birth, the angel Gabriel brought an important message to Mary...** "You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!" (Luke 1:31–33 NLT-SE).

- **Even though it was prophesied, his entry into Jerusalem begins to reveal a different reality. The disciples could embrace Jesus as their leader, rabbi, but his title and influence as king had yet to be fully revealed.**

- **When Jesus enters Jerusalem, 'the whole city is in an uproar,** saying: "Who is this?" And the crowds keep saying: "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee!" (Matthew 21:10, 11) Those in the crowd who had seen Jesus resurrect Lazarus tell others about that miracle. The Pharisees lament that they are getting absolutely nowhere. They say to one another: "The whole world has gone after him." (John 12:18, 19)
- The Jewish rulers could not believe that Jesus was the Son of David. The crowd thought that he was. But **they thought that the Messiah would come like a soldier.** And they thought that he would force the Romans to leave. But Jesus came in to Jerusalem on a young animal. This was a sign of peace, and not of war. Later the *disciples realized how important this was. Jesus completely fulfilled the prophecy about the coming Messiah. (Zechariah 9:9).

- **It wasn't until Pilate pressed the issue directly that Jesus revealed his identity as "King of the Jews." Even then, their response was to mock him (Matt 27:42).**

- ¹² Then Pilate tried to release him, but the Jewish leaders shouted, "If you release this man, you are no 'friend of Caesar.' Anyone who declares himself a king is a rebel against Caesar." ¹³ When they said this, Pilate brought Jesus out to them again. Then Pilate sat down on the judgment seat on the platform that is called the Stone Pavement (in Hebrew, Gabbatha). ¹⁴ It was now about noon on the day of preparation for the Passover. And Pilate said to the people, "Look, here is your king!" ¹⁵ "Away with him," they yelled. "Away with him! Crucify him!" "What? Crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the leading priests shouted back. (John 19:12–15 NLT-SE)