

## Looking for an Essential Church

### Luke 9:1-40

With COVID-19 or Corona Virus a completely new lexicon of words and definitions have arisen. We now speak in terms of “bending the curve”, herd immunity, social distancing, contact tracing, shelter in place, quarantine 15, just to name a few. However, one of the most impactful and polarizing words I have heard used is the word “essential.” There are essential workers, essential services and essential businesses and there is a great debate in some circles as to whether the church is essential. Therefore, I began looking into the word of God for scripture that could inform my reasoning.

Luke takes us on a journey with Jesus and his disciples and shows us what it means to be essential. In Luke chapter 9, we get a good look at the intricacies of essential ministry. Let us start at the end and work our way back to find answers.

*“...And behold, a man from the multitude shouted out, saying, “Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only boy, and behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly screams, and it throws him into a convulsion with foaming at the mouth, and as it mauls him it scarcely leaves him. And I begged your disciples to cast it out, and they could not.”(Luke 9:38-40)*

- Jesus set the standard for essential (vital, indispensable, crucial, critical) ministry.
- By sending the twelve out with specific instructions, Jesus established and clarified the disciple’s role with him.
- As those who would reproduce the works of Jesus; they were classified and identified as disciples.

One of the main hindrances to our freedom is our lack of identity. Much of our identity is tied up in who we portray ourselves to be verses the essence of who we are. In today’s lesson, Jesus takes time to declare that we can remain essential only as we see ourselves through the eyes of the Master. Here is a glimpse of what essential ministry looks like: **insert Luke 9:1-6**

1. He called them together—there is a singleness of purpose

2. He gave them Power and Authority—ability and right
3. He sent them out—to proclaim the kingdom and to perform healing
4. He commanded them to keep it simple
  - a. Take nothing for your journey (vs.3)
    - 1) Staff—protection and support
    - 2) Bag—beggars bag for incidentals
    - 3) Bread—sustenance
    - 4) Money and Clothing
  - b. Stay in one place (vs.4)
  - c. Don't get attached to your surroundings

Between the empowering in the early verses of chapter 9 and the ineptness (uselessness) of ministry towards the end of the day, many things take place.

1. They speak the Word, they heal the sick (v.10),
2. They return from the ministry field to give an account and withdraw to a solitary place (v.11).
3. The multitudes follow and they heal more people (v.12).
4. They feed 5,000 (v.18).
5. Jesus is praying (v.28).
6. Jesus takes three disciples up the mountain where he is transformed (v.32).

The reality is that the disciples have many things happening in succession and all the demands distract them. Everything feels urgent and immediate.

Unfortunately, by the time they face the situation they have very little energy to come against the enemy. They are ineffective because they have not been able to replenish the resources that God has so freely given.

Much of the dysfunction in the church today is because of a powerless church trying to hold up the blood stained banner for the Lord with weak praise, a non-existent prayer life, no discipline, very little intimacy and no power.