

Luke: 9:1–6

From Catena Aurea:

9:1–6

1. Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.
2. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.
3. And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.
4. And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart.
5. And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.
6. And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the Gospel, and healing every where.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA. It was fitting that those who were appointed the ministers of holy teaching should be able to work miracles, and by these very acts themselves be believed to be the ministers of God. Hence it is said, Then called he his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils. Herein He brings down the haughty pride of the devil, who once said, There is none who shall open his mouth against me. (Isai. 10:14.LXX.)

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA. (in Thesaur. l. 12. c. 14.) Mark here the divine power of the Son, which belongs not to a fleshly nature. For it was in the power of the saints to perform miracles not by nature, but by participation of the Holy Spirit; but it was altogether out of their power to grant this authority to others. For how could created natures possess dominion over the gifts of the Spirit? But our Lord Jesus Christ, as by nature God, imparts graces of this kind to whomsoever He will, not invoking upon them a power which is not His own, but infusing it into them from Himself.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. 22. in Matt.) But after that they had been sufficiently strengthened by His guidance, and had received competent proofs of His power, He sends them out, as it follows, And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God. And here we must remark, that they are not commissioned to speak of

sensible things as Moses and the Prophets; for they promised a land and earthly goods, but these a kingdom, and whatsoever is contained in it.

GREGORY NAZIANZEN. (Orat. ii. 69.) Now in sending His disciples to preach, our Lord enjoined many things on them, the chief of which are, that they should be so virtuous, so constant, so temperate, and, to speak briefly, so heavenly, that no less through their manner of living than their words, the teaching of the Gospel might be spread abroad. And therefore were they sent with lack of money, and staves, and a single garment; He accordingly adds, And he said to them, Take nothing in the way, neither staves.

CHRYSOSTOM. (ubi sup.) Many things indeed He ordained hereby; first indeed it rendered the disciples unsuspected; secondly, it held them aloof from all care, so that they might give their whole study to the word; thirdly, it taught them their own proper virtue. But perhaps some one will say that the other things indeed are reasonable, but for what reason did He command them to have no scrip on their way, nor two coats, nor staff? In truth, because He wished to rouse them to all diligence, taking them away from all the cares of this life, that they might be occupied by the one single care of teaching.

AMBROSE. Of what kind then he ought to be who preaches the Gospel of the kingdom of God is marked out by these Gospel precepts; that is, he must not require the supports of secular aid; and clinging wholly to faith, he must believe that the less he requires those things, the more they will be supplied to him.

THEOPHYLACT. For He sends them out as very beggars, so that He would have them neither carry bread, nor any thing else of which men are generally in want.

AUGUSTINE. (de Con. l. 2. c. 30.) Or, the Lord did not wish the disciples to possess and carry with them these things, not that they were not necessary to the support of this life, but because He sent them thus to shew that these things were due to them from those believers to whom they announced the Gospel, that so they might neither possess security, nor carry about with them the necessaries of this life, either great or little. He has therefore, according to Mark, excluded all except a staff, shewing that the faithful owe every thing to their ministers who require no superfluities. But this permission of the staff He has mentioned by name, when He says, They should take nothing in the way, but a staff only.

AMBROSE. To those also who wish it, this place admits of being explained, so as to seem only to represent a spiritual temper of mind, which appears to have cast off as it were a certain covering of the body; not only rejecting power and despising wealth, but renouncing also the delights of the flesh itself.

THEOPHYLACT. Some also understand by the Apostles not carrying scrip, nor staff, nor two coats, that they must not lay up treasures, (which a scrip implies, collecting many things,) nor be angry and of a quarrelsome spirit, (which the staff signifies,) nor be false and of a double heart, (which is meant by the two coats.)

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA. (ut sup.) But it may be said, How then shall necessary things be prepared for them. He therefore adds, And into whatsoever house ye enter, there abide, and thence depart. As if He said, Let the food of disciples suffice you, who receiving from you spiritual things, will minister unto you temporal. But He ordered them to abide in one house, so as neither to incommode the host, (that is, so as to send him away,) nor themselves to incur the suspicion of gluttony and wantonness.

AMBROSE. He pronounces it to be foreign to the character of a preacher of the heavenly kingdom to run from house to house and change the rights of inviolable hospitality; but as the grace of hospitality is supposed to be offered, so also if they are not received the dust must be shaken off, and they are commanded to depart from the city; as it follows, And whosoever will not receive you when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony, &c.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA. (ubi sup.) For it is very improbable that those who despise the saving Word, and the Master of the household, will shew themselves kind to His servants, and seek further blessings.

AMBROSE. Or it is a great return of hospitality which is here taught, i. e. that we should not only wish peace to our hosts, but also if any faults of earthly infirmity obscure them, they should be removed by receiving the footsteps of apostolical preaching.

From Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture:

9:1–2 The Twelve Preach and Heal

Jesus Giving Them Power to Heal and Exorcise.

Cyril of Alexandria: The grace bestowed upon the holy apostles is worthy of all admiration. But the bountifulness of the Giver surpasses all praise and admiration. He gives them, as I said, his own glory. They receive authority over the evil spirits. They reduce to nothing the pride of the devil that was so highly exalted and arrogant. They render ineffectual the demon's wickedness. By the might and efficacy of the

Holy Spirit, burning them as if they were on fire, they make the devil come forth with groans and weeping from those whom he had possessed....

He glorified his disciples, therefore, by giving them authority and power over the evil spirits and over sicknesses. Did he honor them without reason and make them famous without any logical cause? How can this be true? It was necessary, most necessary, that they should be able to work miracles, having been publicly appointed ministers of sacred proclamations. By means of their works, they then could convince men that they were the ministers of God and mediators of all beneath the heaven. The apostles then could invite them all to reconciliation and justification by faith and point out the way of salvation and of life that is this justification. Commentary on Luke, Homily 47.3

9:3–5 Instructions for the Mission of the Twelve

Free from Anxiety About the Body.

Cyril of Alexandria: It was most appropriate for Jesus to instruct his disciples to take nothing with them. He wished them both to be free from all worldly care, and so entirely exempt from the labors that worldly things require, that they would not even worry about obtaining necessary and indispensable food for themselves. Manifestly, One who instructs them to abstain even from things such as these entirely cuts away the love of riches and the desire of gain. For their glory, he said, and, so to speak, their crown, is to possess nothing. He separates them even from such things as are necessary for their use, by commanding them to carry nothing whatsoever, neither staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money nor two coats. Observe, therefore, as I said, that he takes them away from worthless distractions and anxiety about the body. He commands them not to worry about food, repeating to them, as it were, that passage in the psalm: “Cast your care upon the Lord, and he shall feed you.”⁴ For what Christ says is also true: “You are not able to serve God and money.” And, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”⁵ Commentary on Luke, Homily 47.6

Feet that are Beautiful in Preaching the Good News.

Ambrose: This is a great vision. But if you wish to see it, remove the sandals from your feet.⁷ Remove every chain of sin. Remove the chains of the world. Leave behind earthly sandals. Jesus sent the apostles without sandals, without money, gold and silver, so that they would not carry earthly things with them. The one who seeks to do good is praised not for his sandals but for the swiftness and grace of his feet.

The Scripture says, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, of those who bring glad tidings of good things!”⁸ Therefore remove the sandals from your feet, that they may be beautiful for preaching the gospel. Flight from the World 5.25.⁹

Dependent on the Hospitality of Others.

Cyril of Alexandria: He commanded them both to remain in one house, and from it to take their departure. For it was right that those who had once received them should not be defrauded of the gift. It is also right that the holy apostles themselves should not place any impediment in the way of their own zeal and earnestness in preaching God’s message. This would happen if they allowed themselves to be carried off to various houses by those whose object was not to learn some necessary lesson but to set before them a luxurious table, beyond what was moderate and necessary. Commentary on Luke, Homily 47.¹⁰

Unbelieving Houses that Reject Apostolic Preaching are Abandoned.

Ambrose: So the faith of the church must be sought first and foremost. If Christ is to dwell in a house, it undoubtedly must be chosen. But lest an unbelieving people or a heretical teacher deface its home, the church is commanded that the fellowship of heretics be avoided and the synagogue shunned. The dust is to be shaken off your feet lest when the dryness of barren unbelief crumbles the sole of your mind it is stained as if by a dry and sandy soil. A preacher of the gospel must take on himself the bodily weaknesses of a faithful people, so to speak. He must lift up and remove from his own soles worthless actions as if they were dust. For it is written: “Who is weak, and I am not weak?”¹¹ Any church which rejects faith and does not possess the foundations of apostolic preaching is to be abandoned lest it be able to stain others with unbelief. The apostle also clearly affirmed this by saying “Reject a man that is a heretic after the first admonition.”¹² Exposition of the Gospel of Luke 6.68.¹³

9:6 The Twelve Depart

Undistinguished and Ill-Equipped Men.

Chrysostom: Christ had the power to set the human race free from all these evils—not only the Romans but also the Persians and simply every race of barbarians. He succeeded in doing this with no force of arms, nor expenditure of money, nor by starting wars of conquest, nor by inflaming men to battle. He had only eleven men to start with, men who were undistinguished, without learning, ill-informed, destitute,

poorly clad, without weapons, or sandals, men who had but a single tunic to wear. Demonstration Against the Pagans 1.7.14