

Luke 9 (Part 4): 37-55 • The Natural Man

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Luke chapter 9, verse 37. Skip down to verse 37. It says,

“On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, (and that means of course, from the Mountain of Transfiguration) a great crowd met him. ³⁸ And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, “Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. ³⁹ And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and shatters him, and will hardly leave him. ⁴⁰ And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.” ⁴¹ Jesus answered, “O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here.”

⁴² While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy and gave him back to his father. ⁴³ And all were astonished at the majesty of God. But while they were all marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, ⁴⁴ “Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men.” ⁴⁵ But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

⁴⁶ An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest. ⁴⁷ But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side ⁴⁸ and said to them, “Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great.” ⁴⁹ John answered, “Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he does not follow with us.”

⁵⁰ But Jesus said to him, “Do not stop him, for the one who is not against you is for you.” ⁵¹ When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. ⁵² And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. ⁵³ But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, “Lord, do you want us to tell fire to

come down from heaven and consume them?”⁵⁵ But he turned and rebuked them.” (ESV)

I'm going to have you stop right there for this morning. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, open our hearts. Open our hearts, open our eyes, help us to hear, help us to see, help us to receive. Lord this is Your Word, and I believe that You have a word to speak this morning. Lord, I humble myself before You that you might use this, Your servant, to accomplish that word today, but I know Lord, it's by Your Holy Spirit that the Word is made alive.

So, we invite Your Holy Spirit to speak to us. Lord, help us to always, always find room in our hearts to let You do the talking. Guide us and direct us through this time, this study. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

I was reading through this very same story and the different Gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and they're very different. I mean, they, well, different in the sense that they give different information. They give different perspectives. Some say things that others do not.

Interestingly enough, Luke is the only one that tells us that this man declared that this was his only child and so forth. Mark leaves that out. But instead of focusing on the differences of the different Gospel writers, I want to instead focus and give some emphasis here this morning on the statement that Jesus makes to His disciples when He learns that they've been asked to cast out the demon and were unable to do it. And the reason I want to focus on that statement is because I think it gives us some really, really great insight into our world today, our lives, who we are.

We're told here in verse 37 through 39 that as Jesus came down off the Mount of Transfiguration, there was a huge crowd that was waiting there. And among the people of that crowd, we're told there was a man who was a father who was calling out to Jesus that He might heal his son from this form of epilepsy that was somehow demonically induced. And again, he makes mention to Jesus, I asked Your disciples to cast out this demon, but they couldn't do it.

And it was then that Jesus made the statement that we want to focus on, and it's in verse 41, and I want you to look at it again in your Bible. It says, *“Jesus answered, Oh faithless and twisted generation. How long am I to be with you and bear with you?”* All right.

I think that as we look at this verse, we find two key words that really help us to unravel what Jesus is saying to us. And we're going to show you those in just a moment, but I believe the reason it's important for us to look at these two words and this statement that Jesus is making is because I don't, even though He says, this generation, this faithless and twisted generation, I don't believe that Jesus was necessarily limiting it to that generation. In other words, I don't think we've gotten a lot better.

I don't think we're less faithless or less twisted, to be completely honest with you. And what that means is what Jesus said here to His disciples applies to you and I. And I think there's a great deal we can learn from it. And so, we're going to look at these two words and the first word, and we'll put it up on the screen for you. These are key words. The first word is Faithless.

Key Word #1: “Faithless”

By the way, that's the same word that's rendered in the New King James as here in the ESV, Faithless.

If you have a different translation like the New American standard Bible, or the NIV your word is unbelieving, and frankly that word might help you to understand this a little bit better. Because you look at the word faithless and you might think that He means something that He doesn't mean. He's referring to a lack of faith and that's why I kind of like unbelieving from the other translations. But there's probably no better illustration of this unbelieving attitude than in the person of Thomas.

And you'll remember that when Jesus appeared to His disciples on the evening of His resurrection He came, and He appeared to them and Thomas wasn't there. And so, when Thomas was told by the other disciples, we've seen the Lord, He's alive. You'll remember what Thomas' response was. I won't believe it unless I see it with my own eyes. In fact, I not only want to see Him, I want to touch him. I want to see His wounds; I want to feel His wounds; I want to touch His wounds and so forth.

Interestingly, one week later, Jesus appeared again, and this time, Thomas was there, good thing, and here's how it went down. Let me put it on the screen for you. It's from John chapter 20. It says,

John 20:26-29 (ESV)

Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

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I want you to take note of this statement that Jesus makes when He says, "Do not disbelieve." You see that there? Do not disbelieve. You know what's interesting? That is the very same Greek word that's used in Luke chapter 9, verse 41, when Jesus, that is translated faithless. Do not disbelieve. Same Greek word.

Here's my point. I don't think Thomas is a great deal different from you or I and what he's dealing with, and what I want to do is I want to just highlight for you the latter part of this message. I'll underline this last part. Look at this again.

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you have seen, and then He goes on to say) *Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.*”

This statement right here is where Jesus reveals Thomas’ issue. The real underlying issue. Thomas had to see for himself. He had to feel those wounds. He had to see them. He had to see Jesus alive. He had to talk to Him. He had to hear Him, or he wasn't going to believe. You with me?

In other words, Thomas demanded that God submit the evidence of the resurrection to his 5 senses. That's what he was saying. Unless God submits the evidence in the way that I want to see it, I will not believe, right? And even though Jesus did accommodate Thomas that day, He also said, “*Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.*”

Here's my question. Why did Jesus say that? Why did He pronounce this blessing, if you will, upon those who believe without seeing. Well, it's basically like this. Thomas is the poster boy for the natural man, and the way the natural man thinks. And when I use that term, the natural man, I hope you understand what I'm talking about.

I'm talking about the natural man who is tuned to his natural senses and who uses those natural senses to judge all things. And those senses are the final judge for the natural man. In fact, the natural man exalts his senses as the ultimate means of determining truth.

Now, let me just say something. I'm really glad God gave us senses. Our five senses are pretty sweet. I mean, I like being able to look at things and touch things, and smell things, and taste things, and hear things. I really like that, and I think you do too, and we probably all know someone who has lost one or more of those senses, and those people are at a disadvantage in this world as it relates to being able to make determinations about their world. Like for example, if you've lost your sense of smell, and there's a strong odor of gas or something other noxious sort of a fume, you're definitely at a disadvantage.

God gave us these senses and they're wonderful, but the natural man uses those senses and those senses only to make his determinations about life and truth, and he demands that God submit Himself to those 5 senses. And that is essentially the natural man. But he's at a disadvantage. He is at actually a disadvantage. Let me show you what the apostle Paul says about the natural man. 1 Corinthians chapter 2. He says,

1 Corinthians 2:14 (ESV)

The natural person (or the natural man) does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The natural person (or the natural man) does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, (Look at this. Look at this) and he is not able to understand them. (Why?) because they are spiritually discerned.

Because they require a spiritual level of discernment, which he doesn't possess and isn't willing even to consider. He's saying, no if I don't hear it, if I don't taste it, if I don't touch, you see what I'm saying? So, the natural man is the man who is keyed to his five senses and demands that God place all of the evidence for who he is and what He is and His plan and so forth to those, and he says if it isn't, and if I can't, if I don't see it, I'm not going to believe it.

And that's why Jesus pronounced a blessing on those who believe, apart from their simple natural senses, because they are those who have recognized that the natural man is actually lacking in his ability to understand the things of God and needs God's help.

Oh, what a terrible thing to admit I need God's help. If you've been walking with the Lord for a while, that's not a problem. But boy, is it a tough hurdle to get over at some point in your life. I need God's help. I can't understand this without God's help. I can't see what's going on in the Kingdom without God's sight. I can't hear without the ears that He would give me. I don't know what's going on. Boy, that's a tough thing to admit. And its pride that keeps us from admitting that we don't have the ability to make a good determination about God and the things.

Oh, I get so many questions during the week emailed to me usually from people who are trying to figure God out with their 5 senses and with their intellectual brain, and they're just going crazy trying to put it all together, and it becomes oppressive. It becomes oppressive to try to figure out the purpose of God apart from the illumination of God. It really does.

You guys probably remember, Psalm 73 is one psalm that I've loved over the years to teach on repeatedly because it's one of those interesting Psalms where the psalmist admits that he started looking at his life through the eyes of the natural man, and he didn't like what he saw. What he saw was, he saw himself as a man who loved God, but he saw his life as less than the life of his neighbor,

who was an ungodly man and yet who was just reveling in what appeared to be the blessings of God.

This man was blessed, he was healthy, his wife was gorgeous, his kids were strong and smart. He had all the things that the world thinks are important. And this guy's looking at his neighbor and he's going, what is going on here? And he's looking with the eyes of the natural man, and he admits in the course of that psalm, he said, this became oppressive to me.

But then as you go on and read the Psalm, he says, then I entered the sanctuary of God, and then I understood. Then I saw. Then I was able to see. Oh, when this man's life is over, he perishes. And even though I may not have all the things today that he does, I am always by your side, and you take me by the hand, and you lead me into life everlasting. Wow.

But see, those things aren't going to necessarily be quick to come to the natural mind, because I'm looking with the natural senses. I'm trying to understand things. But when we recognize that we don't have that ability to grasp the spiritual, and so much that goes beyond our natural senses.

People, there are things beyond your natural senses, okay some people say? There are things beyond your natural understanding. I'm sorry if that sounds like maybe an insult to you, and maybe you feel a little bit slighted by hearing me say that. Tough. It's the reality of the situation.

You cannot discern everything about your existence through your natural senses. You just can't. There are things you cannot apprehend and for the person who finally comes to terms with that and admits it, God helps them to understand through the revelation of the inside of His Spirit. And people, that is a blessed condition.

And that is why Jesus said blessed is the one who believes without seeing through his natural eyes. It's a blessed condition. Why? Because God has brought revelation. Remember what, we just read it earlier in this chapter? Remember when Jesus was asking those guys, who do you all, who do the people say that I am? Well, some people say, some people say, some people say. Who do you say that I am?

Peter speaks up. You're the Messiah, the son of God. Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven revealed this to you. Blessed are you.

See that's the blessed condition that comes when we recognize we don't have the goods to be able to discern all that we need to discern and know all that we need to know. And yet what's interesting about the natural man is that he goes on making judgments as if he has all the evidence.

That's the folly of the natural man. He perceives his world through his 5 senses and believes himself perfectly capable of perceiving all there is to perceive. And that's where pride comes in.

He looks at the situation, he looks at, he hears about God, and he says, well, let me tell you a little something about God, and then he starts making assessments based on what he sees, what he knows, and says, I don't think that, and he begins to spew his opinion. But his opinion is based on the natural man, and the natural men will never get it. That's what Paul is saying.

The man or the natural man, which by the way the NIV translates the man without the Spirit, which isn't an accurate word for word translation, but it actually gives the best understanding I suppose that the man without the Spirit just doesn't have the ability.

So anyway, it is a wonderful blessing when the Lord opens our eyes. The other key word from this statement that Jesus made, let me put this up here. The second key word is the word, Twisted.

Key Word #2: "Twisted"

"Oh, faithless and twisted generation." Your bible may say *"perverted"* or *"perverse."* It all comes from the same Greek word. Let me put the definitions. This is the way this is translated differently in the Scriptures.

Key Word #2: "Twisted"

- To distort,
- To make crooked
- To misinterpret
- To turn away
- To pervert

This is the meaning of this word that's translated twisted. To distort, to make crooked. This is interesting, to misinterpret, to turn away, to pervert. If somebody, if you were to hear someone call another person a pervert, you'd

probably be horrified because that's considered to be a very, very mean, cruel thing to say to someone. But you know that the word pervert literally means twisted one. That's what it means. Twisted one. And I'm sorry, Jesus is calling us twisted ones here. Oh, faithless and twisted generation. Oh, faithless and perverted generation.

And the reason that He's using that term is because the world that you and I live in is a twisted version of the original. Oh, that's something that we forget. Even as Christians, we forget, life is twisted. This life is twisted, and because of that, our relationships get twisted, our family connections get twisted, our minds and our bodies get twisted living in this fallen world, and the crazy thing is we think it's normal. We live in a twisted world that we think is normal. We've stopped seeing it as twisted. We've, we just think this is the way, this is it. This is life. Thank you, God, for making a twisted world.

Now we don't even think of it as twisted. It's just normal. And I guess for us it is, but the Bible makes it clear that this world is not what God intended it to be. It's been twisted by sin, and we've just become accustomed to it as if God made to meant to make it this way. And the result of that, the result of getting comfortable living in a twisted world is that we've settled in to a place where we've stopped looking beyond this world for something better. Do you know that one of the great hallmarks of God's people are that they look beyond this world?

The great hallmarks of God's people is that they look beyond this world. Guys, don't ever forget, the reason Jesus came, the reason God sent His Son to be born as a man was to launch the plan of God to untwist this creation that has been twisted by sin. Jesus came to launch God's plan to untwist the world. Can I show you a wonderful statement from the book of Revelation? On the screen, chapter 21. Look at this.

Revelation 21:4-5 (ESV)

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also, he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.””

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things (let's make that twisted things) have passed away.” And he who was

seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also, he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.""

I love that. I love that. This is our hope. How does God feel about people who have that hope? Like I said, this hope you guys, is the hallmark of believers. We've forgotten it. We need to get back to it.

Do you know, I love one thing about the book of Hebrews. It gives us in chapter 11, that wonderful chapter about people who lived on this earth by faith. And we call chapter 11 of Hebrews the hall of faith, right? And at the very end of that chapter, it makes a very interesting statement. Let me put it up here for you. It says,

Hebrews 11:13, 16 (NIV)

All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them."

All these people (after having listed them) were still living by faith when they died. (and what that means is) They did not receive the things promised (them during this life); they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. Instead, (It says, and this is very key) they were (looking) longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

Wow. I think that's a powerful passage. Particularly how it ends. *"Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God."* Those people who think beyond the natural, who understand beyond what they can see with their eyes, by faith, to know that God has a purpose and a plan to untwist this creation, and to bring about all the things that we saw promised there in that passage in Revelation. It says, God is not ashamed to be called their God because these people are those who look by faith. Who look by faith. Who, through spiritual discernment have been given eyes to see what cannot be seen with the physical.

And yet, they see it just as much as anyone else. Like I said that passage could say, they were longing for an untwisted world. One where all that was distorted and perverted would be made right. They were hanging on to it. Look what it goes on to say in verse 43 again. Tells us that, *"all those who were there were astonished at the majesty of God"* when they saw this young boy set free from

this demonic spirit. But it tells us here that *“while they were all marveling at everything He was doing, Jesus said to his disciples,”* and this is an interesting statement. He said, *“let these words sink into your ears.”*

And then He goes on to tell them the fact that He's going to be delivered into the hands of men. But verse 45 tells us that they didn't understand the saying, and it was concealed from them. I read a whole bunch of commentators on this passage, and it's amazing to me how many of them assume that what Luke is telling us here is that God concealed the truth from the disciples, when it says, *“it was concealed from them.”* They assume God did the concealing, and yet did you notice that Jesus said to His disciples? *“Let these words sink into your hearts.”*

Did you catch that in verse 44? I don't know guys. It seems strange to me that on the one hand Jesus would exhort His disciples to listen carefully and let His words sink into their heart and on the other hand God would make it so that they couldn't understand. That seems like God is at cross purposes with Himself, Guys listen carefully, let this sink into your heart, oh, by the way, I'm going to keep it from happening. I have a problem with that. I don't think God limited them here. I think the limitation was theirs. I think the limitation was theirs.

Sometimes, our own ideas, our own perceptions, our own expectations in what we think God is supposed to do just create in our hearts a view that is so contrary to the Word of God that when we hear the Word of God, we're just like our immediate thing is like, no, and we can't perceive it because it's just too contrary. It's too other, sort of a thing, and we become determined in our refusal to accept what we're hearing because it's just, it doesn't fit with what I believe, and it gets back to the idea of disbelief.

But when we get to the 24th chapter of Luke, and I imagine it's probably going to be a while before we do, we're going to read about Jesus appearing to a couple of men post resurrection who were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, and they're going to be walking along with Jesus, and they're not going to recognize who He is, and He's going to be talking to them about the things that have happened in the last few days. And as He speaks to them, He's going to come up against this very thing.

He's going to come up against their preconceived expectations that keep them from really understanding and hearing the truth. And He's going to say something to them that I think is very key for you and I to understand as it relates to this study. I'll put it up on the screen so we can see it together. Chapter 24, verse 25.

Luke 24:25 (ESV)

And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!”

And he said to them, “O foolish ones, (Look at this) and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!”

That would be a rather mean thing to say if God was the one who'd been doing the concealing all along. If God had been concealing this information from their hearts so that they couldn't perceive it, and then He comes along and talks to them and they're like going, duh!, and He goes, yeah, you guys, how slow of heart, foolish you are. Well, you made us that way do you get it? No, they made themselves that way. It wasn't something God imposed on them. God wants us to know.

God wants us to see. The problem is our understanding is twisted. Simple. Our understanding is twisted. Guys our understanding is perverted. And I'm not talking about sexual perversion. I'm just talking about twisted. And we don't understand things because we're so fixated on natural, earthly things.

Now, as we keep reading here, what we run into are just more examples. Look at verse 46. *“An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest.”*

Guys, let me ask you a question before we read on. What criteria do you think they're using for greatness? Heavenly criteria? No, I seriously doubt it. They're using earthly, natural criteria, right? And they're having a conversation based on that natural, earthly criteria. Which one do you think, who do you think's the greatest? I think it's me, and I defy you guys to challenge me on that. Look at verse 47. But Jesus, knowing they were idiots. Oh wait, stop. Don't say that.

“But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side and said to them, “Whoever receives this child in my name, receives me. Whoever receives me, receives Him who sent me.” (And then here's the key) for he who is least among you is the one who is great.”

What we have in this passage is Jesus once again confronting their twisted and distorted thinking about greatness. And He's explaining to them how the Kingdom of God sees greatness. Well, it has nothing to do with worldly sort of criteria. He says, *“the least among you is the greatest among you.”*

They thought they knew what greatness, how greatness should be defined, but they were, of course, only seeing it from the realm of man. Another example, verse 49. Look with me in your Bible.

“John answered, Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him because he doesn't follow with us. But Jesus said to him, “Do not stop him. For the one who is not against you is for you.””

Now, did you notice in this particular section the reason that John gave for stopping that man who was casting out demons in the name of Jesus? He doesn't follow us. He's not one of us. He's not one of the chosen, right? So, I mean, I can imagine the disciples going up to this guy and going, hey, what are you doing? You're not in the group. You're not in the group, you're not in the inside group. We're in the group. You're not in the group. Stop what you're doing right now and so forth, we're the ones Jesus chose. You're not us. That's the thinking of the natural man. That's the thinking of the earthly man.

We're the special ones and you aren't. But when our hearts are humble, and God begins to show us the larger plan of His Kingdom we suddenly begin to see things from a different perspective. And then a final example, verse 51,

“When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem, and he sent messengers ahead of him, who went ahead and entered a village of the Samaritans.”

Notice that, Jesus sent these guys into a town in Samaria to find a place to make preparations, and it says that the people, when they learned that He was on His way to Jerusalem, said, uh-uh not in here, you can't do that here in our town. And the reason they did that, of course, is because they hated the Jews. The Samaritans hated the Jews. Remember the Samaritans were half breeds. They were part Jew, part Gentile, and the Jews hated the Samaritans, and the Samaritans hated the Jews.

And the Samaritans rejected the idea that you had to go to Jerusalem to worship God. Now that's what God told them, but they rejected it anyway. So, the fact that Jesus' disciples told them He's on His way to Jerusalem, they were like, yeah, forget it then. We think Jesus is okay, but if He's going to Jerusalem, we don't want nothing of Him being in our town. And so, I want you to check out the response of James and John, verse 54.

“And when His disciples, James and John, (which by the way Jesus referred to, He referred to the guys as the sons of thunder, and you'll see why) Lord, you

want us to tell fire to come down from heaven? Burn them up, burn them to a crisp. We'll do it. Just give us the word.” We'll tell them. Boom, boom, done.

It says in verse 55, *“He turned and rebuked them.”* Now, if you have a New King James Bible, you're going to notice that you have an extra verse. So, I'll show you this on the screen for those of you that don't. This is both verses together.

Luke 9:55-56 (NKJV)

But he turned and rebuked them, and said, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.” And they went to another village.

But he turned and rebuked them, and said, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.” And they went to another village.

By the way, that verse doesn't appear in the ESV, simply because it doesn't appear in some of the Greek manuscripts. What it shows here is that James and John were thinking like natural men, and the natural man thinks revenge. You snub me, you're done. You're done. Lord, want us to call down fire. I think they probably thought Jesus would say yes. Yeah. Go ahead. Tell them, call down fire from heaven. We'll just level the place and move on. Yeah, it's that Rambo kind of a thing, it's like, yeah, wow. Getting even.

What happens, what happens when we give into that kind of thinking? We become vulnerable to another kind of a spirit. I actually like what it says in the New King James when the Lord said to them, *“you don't know what spirit you're of,”* because they had become vulnerable to another a spirit of revenge, a spirit of human anger. And that's not God's heart, but they became vulnerable to that because they were thinking so naturally, and so all of these passages here that we're looking at in Luke chapter 9, just serve to remind us of the foolishness and the short sightedness of natural thinking, man's natural thinking.

But we're also reminded in this passage that when we come to Christ, and when we receive Him as Savior and as Lord, through His Spirit, you and I are given the power and ability to leap beyond what the natural man can do in his thinking, and we begin to discern and understand things from a heavenly perspective that we would not possess otherwise. There's a passage in first Corinthians chapter two that we looked at a moment ago, and that's the one where it says that the natural man doesn't accept the things of the Spirit, right?

“They’re foolishness to him.” (1 Corinthians 2:14) Do you know what that passage goes on to say? Let me show you this. It goes on to say,

1 Corinthians 2:14, 16 (ESV)

The natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God. ...But we have the mind of Christ.

The natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God. ...But we have the mind of Christ.

Yes, the natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, but we, meaning believers, meaning those who have humbled themselves and said I don't have the goods. We have the mind of Christ because we've received the Spirit of Christ. But I want to remind you this morning that this new way of thinking, this mind of Christ, don't get all heady about it, because it doesn't come, it doesn't come automatically. What I mean is that we fall into some pretty incredible ruts and habits in our way of thinking, and believe me, I learned the ways of the world really well, and I think you have too.

And when somebody, I mean, I could be a James and John. Somebody insults my Lord and snubs Him, and I'm ready with a can of gasoline and a match. Oh, yeah, sort of a thing. Yeah, that's the natural man. I could, well, when I say I could do that, you know what I mean? I'm not saying that I'm going to be an arsonist, but it's in me. The natural man is in me just like he's in you to think in terms of revenge or just in whatever way the world might think.

And so, you see it, we've been given the mind of Christ. But you've still got to fight the old impulses. The old sinful nature is still there, vying for control in my heart and in my life. And the Bible tells us that the spirit, that the nature of man and the nature of Christ in us, they're at enmity with one another. They're literally in opposition to one another, which is why the Apostle Paul exhorted us in Romans chapter 12 by saying this,

Romans 12:2 (ESV)

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Do not be conformed to this world, (and that means to the way of thinking that dominates this natural realm. Do not be conformed to it. Rather, he says) but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what

is the will of God, (hey, by testing. Do you think you're going to test that by going, let's see which way is the Spirit of God moving today? Or can you hear Him? Let's just be really quiet and listen to the Spirit. These ears aren't going to do any good. It's the spiritual ears, right? It's the spiritual eyes so, Paul says, be transformed by the renewal so that by testing that goes beyond the natural man, you may discern what is the will of God) His good, acceptable and perfect will.”

See, I believe that this renewal of the mind, as I've said several times through the course of this message, begins with humility, simple humility that says, Lord, I don't have it. I don't have the ability to figure this thing out, and I am prone to think as the natural man thinks.

And so, I humbly come to You, and I open my heart to You, that You might speak words of spiritual wisdom that I would otherwise be completely cut off from. But I believe You want me to know. I believe You want me to learn. I believe You want me to grow.

But I need You to do that. I need Your Spirit living, working in me. Lord, I need You to transform my mind because my mind is dreadfully stuck in the natural realm of this world, and I need You to unstick it for me please. Or I will never know.

I will never see beyond the natural man can see. I will never hear beyond what the natural man can hear. If you don't help me. If you don't help me, it isn't going to happen.

You know what, guys? I think the Lord responds to that kind of humility. I do. I think the Lord responds to that kind of humility, and I believe He's going to be ready to help us in that sort of a case.