

Going All Out
Week 2: Serving

I. This August Tab is going ALL OUT in 4 key disciplines. What a great focus! And at just the right time. If you're like me, you are in the process of mentally turning the corner from summer to fall. In many ways, Fall is the true 'new year' for most of us. We may make 'resolutions' in January, but September is when we establish new rhythms that will define the next season of life. How do YOU want to define this next season? And what do you need to put in place to get there?

A. A W Tozer famously said, "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." What would happen if the 'most important thing about you' got sharpened and refined this fall? Would that be worthwhile for you? What if it's all that happened – if you got to Christmas and all you had to show for it was a deeper knowledge & love of Christ? Would it be enough? What would you be willing to give, how far would you be willing to go, to gain a fresh encounter with the living Christ? Are you going ALL OUT?

II. Today we're talking about SERVING. What if I told you there was a direct connection between SERVING Jesus & SEEING Jesus? Would it influence your priorities? Today we're going to connect the dots between Serving & Seeing by looking at a story in Luke 9. Read with me now:

Luke 9:10 On their return the apostles told him all that they had done. And he took them and withdrew apart to a town called Bethsaida. 11 When the crowds learned it, they followed him, and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing. 12 Now the day began to wear away, and the twelve came and said to him, "Send the crowd away to go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging and get provisions, for we are here in a desolate place." 13 But he said to them, "You give them something to eat." They said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we are to go and buy food for all these people." 14 For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." 15 And they did so, and had them all sit down. 16 And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. 17 And they all ate and were satisfied. And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets of broken pieces. 20 Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" 19 And they answered, "John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen." 20 Then he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered, "The Christ of God."

A. In this chapter Jesus establishes a pattern of discipleship that leads to Peter's great confession in v20. I'm calling this pattern THE FOUR C's. It's how Jesus moves his disciples toward a clearer vision of his glory.

1. CALLING. Luke 9 begins with the words, "1 And he called the twelve." CALLING IS CRITICAL – but what is it exactly? Miriam Webster defines calling as a strong inner impulse toward a particular course of action, but in the Bible it means almost the exact opposite – a strong outer beckoning to a particular person. In other words, Jesus calls us to HIMSELF. You can't 'GO FOR' Jesus until you COME TO Jesus! Mark makes this point super clear when he says in Mark 3:13 "And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. 14 And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach."

a. This is often overlooked when we talk about mission, but is mission-critical! Being called to Jesus is not just a one-time-thing, to be followed by a life of mission and service. No, being called to Jesus is an all-the-time-thing. It is PART of the life of mission & service! Look just at the pattern here in Luke 9. Vs 1 we already looked at, but did you notice v10? "On their return the apostles told him all that they had done. And he took them and withdrew apart to a town called Bethsaida." Or what about 9:18 "Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him." Or look at 9:28 "Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray."

b. Not a one-time thing. This pattern of stealing away with Jesus in prayer shows up before EVERY SINGLE major act of God from here through to the end of the book of Acts. Luke 9 – Prayer before Jesus begins his journey to Jerusalem. Luke 22 – Prayer before Jesus goes to the cross. Acts 1 – Seven days of prayer before the Spirit falls in Jerusalem at Pentecost. Acts 10 – BOTH Cornelius and Peter receive visions from the Lord during prayer, resulting in their meeting and the gospel going to the Gentiles. Acts 13 “While [the elders of the church] were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ 3 Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.” And so the church steps into her mission as Christ’s witness in Jerusalem, Judea & Sam, the Ends of the Earth! HOW? By responding to the CALL to COME. You’ve got to COME before you GO.

c. A.T. Pierson "From the Day of Pentecost, there has not been one great spiritual awakening in any land which has not begun in a union of prayer, though only among two or three."

d. Jesus is ready to unleash some Tab Church on the city of Norfolk in this next season! But it starts here. Heed his CALL.

2. THE NEXT ‘C’ IS COMMISSION. This is actually the thing we typically refer to as ‘calling,’ but the most common word for the work of mission in the bible is SEND. 9:2 “He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.” The greek word for ‘send’ is apostello, which is why these guys are called Apostles. They were SENT! The English word “Mission” also comes from the Latin word for ‘send.’ Jesus CALLS us to himself, then he SENDS us to serve people in his name.

a. It is important to note that Commissioning is NOT just for apostles and missionaries. Sometimes Jesus sends people around the globe. MOST of the time, Jesus sends people around the corner.

(1) Sometimes people have an Isaiah experience, receiving a clear sense directly from the Lord as to where they are to go and what they are to do: Isaiah 6:8-9 “And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Then I said, ‘Here I am! Send me.’ 9 And he said, ‘Go, and say to this people.’”

(2) Sometimes people have a Barnabas experience, where someone who is already on mission just comes and grabs you and says, “do this with me!” Act 11:25 “So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch.”

(3) Most of the time, people have a Dorcas experience. Act 9:36 “Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity.” Now, the only reason Dorcas is in the Bible is because Peter raised her from the dead. But her story is SO IMPORTANT, because it gives us a glimpse into the life and ministry of a NORMAL DISCIPLE in a little town. The scripture says that when Peter arrived, 9:39 “All the widows stood beside him weeping and showing tunics and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them.” This woman did not have an Isaiah experience, some extraordinary vision of the Lord that sent her around the globe. She did not have a Barnabas experience, where some missionary came and snapped her up and brought her to another city. She came to saving faith in Jesus, and she stayed right where she was. It was simply her awareness of a need that constituted her SENDING. She had a ministry making clothing and garments for widows. SENT! COMMISSIONED! Right there in her own home.

b. Tab:Teams Sunday is about COMMISSION. Where is Jesus sending you? You might be an Isaiah, you might get a Barnabas, but most of us are Dorcases. Most of us will see a hole that we know we can fill. Pastor Dick Woodward used to say to folks who complained to him about how things were done in the church: “If you see a hole, JUMP IN IT!” What hole can you fill in this community? Or maybe your hole is not here at Tab – that’s great! There are so many needs in the city! But if you’re here today and you’re thinking, “I don’t know where Jesus is sending me, how I can serve,” I encourage you to just PRAY and PICK one Tab:Team on the list. Get more info from the ministry leader, and go try it

out. See if this can be your mission, your avenue of service. Don't get hung up with 'fish & loaves' syndrome. "I don't have enough time/talent/experience. I don't know the right people. I don't know where to start." **GOD'S MISSION IS NOT DEPENDENT ON YOUR RESOURCES!** **1ST C: CALLING. 2ND C: COMMISSION. 3RD C: CRISIS!**

3. **THE THIRD 'C' IS FOR CRISIS.** Crisis is an important component of discipleship. Crisis is where you realize Jesus has sent you to do something you are not able to do, or you don't necessarily WANT to do.
 - a. Imagine being part of that first short term trip in Luke 9. You've been accompanying Jesus in his ministry of preaching and healing and casting out demons. Now he gathers you together and says, "It's your turn. I'm giving YOU the authority now. Oh, and one more thing – I'm going to strip you of every possible means of self confidence. Anything you might bring along in order to get by on your own strength, you're not allowed to bring it along. Luke 9:3 "Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics." This is high-flying trapeze without a safety net!
 - b. Or what about later in vv10-13? You think you've done your job, you think you've given all you've got, and then 5000 people show up and Jesus says, "YOU give them something to eat!" Have you ever experienced this 'when it rains it pours' thing? Right when you think you've reached your end, a whole new exorbitant challenge blows up in your face, which you're pretty sure would have been too much to handle, even if you weren't already at your end – BUT YOU ARE! **Why does Jesus do that? This is why. CRISIS is critical to the process of discipleship with Jesus.**
 - c. This is why we have verses like Jas 1:2 "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds," or 1Pe 4:12 "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you." Crisis is a NORMAL part of discipleship, and it is a NECESSARY part of discipleship, because **IT IS ONLY WHEN WE REACH OUR END that we can recognize the power and sufficiency of Christ on our behalf.**
4. **That brings us to our 4th C: CLARITY.** 1Pe 4:13 "Rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed." Following Jesus THROUGH CRISIS is how we gain clarity about his power and glory.
 - a. Think about it: the crisis of the 5000 was totally manufactured! Jesus easily could have sent them away! He forced the crisis IN ORDER to reveal his glory. **THE MIRACLE WAS NOT PRIMARILY FOR THE PEOPLE GATHERED – IT WAS FOR THE DISCIPLES!** THEY were the ones who had only 5 loaves and 2 fish; THEY were the ones who picked up 12 baskets at the end. Likewise, in the instructions for their short-term trip: Jesus' instruction was not primarily for the good of the townsfolk, but for the discipleship of these 12 men. Luke 22:35 "And he said to them, 'When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?' **They said, 'Nothing.'**" That's what the crisis is about. It brings clarity.
 - b. Your CALLING to Jesus in prayer, your COMMISSIONING by Jesus for service, that CRISIS that has surprised you – these things are not separate and coincidental! They are the work of the sovereign King of Glory, an integrated system just for you, custom tailored just for you, to CLARIFY your vision and help you to know Him more. "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." The way Jesus accomplishes this is the 4 C's. He **CALLS** us, he **COMMISSIONS** us, he brings us through **CRISIS**, and he **CLARIFIES** our vision. Hallelujah!
5. **One last C: COMMITMENT is key!** Those first 4 C's are what Jesus does. This one is how we respond. **When Jesus calls, draw near!** Even your mission can become an idol that stands in the way of stealing away with Jesus. Commit to prioritizing personal prayer and worship! **When Jesus commissions, obey fast!** Commit yourself to go, before you know where you're going. Sign the contract while the page is blank! **When Jesus brings crisis, trust him!** And watch him provide. Heb 10:39 "We are not those who shrink back and are destroyed, but those who believe and are saved!"

**6. Finally, when Jesus reveals himself, when he clarifies your vision and deepens your knowledge of him,
CONFESS him in worship!**

B. Peter's confession has echoed through the ages. Ours will too. Jesus is gathering for himself a chorus of confessors from every tribe and tongue and nation, "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." Forever and ever! Amen.