



Discipleship and Greatness

Text: Mark 9:30-50

Context: Last week the disciples were reunited as Jesus and the three came down from the mountain. Our band of Jesus followers were not able to cast out the demon but witnessed Jesus' power to command and to heal. Now Jesus is traveling privately with His followers to teach them a second time about His coming suffering – the gospel. The disciples are confused and distracted by their own importance and are about to learn valuable lessons about service, sectarianism and sin.

Read Mark 9:30-50

1) Jesus teaches about His suffering. The disciples discuss their greatness. (Mark 9:30-37)

What is the gospel? Why is suffering a necessary part of Jesus' mission and the gospel? Why do you think the disciples were afraid to ask about it and instead discuss their own greatness?

2) Jesus teaches against sectarianism¹ among His followers. (Mark 9:38-41)

Why would John share this statement with Jesus? How does Jesus' correction impact the sectarianism of Jesus' day and in our own time? How does giving "a cup of water" and receiving a "reward" relate to Jesus' point in verses 39-41?

3) Jesus teaches about the seriousness of sin. (Mark 9:42-50)

Staying in the context of the passage we're studying, Mark 9:30-50, what would cause "little ones" with Jesus and the disciples to "stumble"? What is the point of Jesus teaching to cut off your hand (v43) and foot (v45) and to throw out your eye (v47)? How do verses 49-50 relate to the beginning of our study in verses 30-33?

BIG IDEA: Jesus teaches that greatness is found through serving others and being last. (Mark 9:35)

It's up to us to recognize that following the Servant King is going to involve suffering and service. Let's not be distracted by our own greatness or what other Christian groups are doing. Instead it's up to us to embrace the gospel and the suffering and service that comes with it.

Why do we as Christians today deny or ignore the role of suffering in following Jesus?

How does sin distract us from suffering and service?

How can we as a group embrace and live out the role of "servant" Jesus teaches in this passage?

Next Week's Passage: Mark 10:1-16 (Marriage, Divorce and Faith)

¹ Sectarianism is the practice of division and exclusion based on strict views and practices in religion. Here the term is used in reference to the "US versus THEM" (or sectarian) ways in the evangelical Christian world.