

## THIS WEEK’S MESSAGE

AUGUST 24TH, 2025 // GOSPEL OF MARK

### MISUNDERSTANDING (MARK 9:30–34) STILL KEEPING QUIET

Again, we see in verse 30 that Jesus wants to move about in secret without others knowing (Mark 5:43; 7:36; 8:26). This was because the disciples did not yet fully understand Jesus’ ministry, as verse 32 explains.

- Even in the midst of misunderstanding, Jesus was intentional with His disciples to limit distractions during teachable moments.

### THE DISCIPLES STILL DID NOT UNDERSTAND

Similar to Chapter 8, here in Chapter 9 the disciples were confused by Jesus’ purpose. The destiny that Jesus was speaking of did not line up with the political conquering that the disciples had envisioned.

- **We must be careful not to attribute things to Jesus of which He has not spoken.**

### ARE WE CONFUSED?

Many times, if we are not careful, certain truths about Jesus can be misunderstood and then also miscommunicated. To better understand the person of Jesus, we need to be reading truth, and we need to be led by wise individuals.

- Who do we understand Jesus to be? His death was necessary for our salvation.

### THE DISCIPLES WERE AFRAID TO ASK

The Greek word used here for being afraid is *phobeo*. The thought of the Messiah, and their friend, being betrayed and killed terrified them.

- Rather than ask questions to receive clarity, they allowed fear to conquer them. **Knowing the “why” can provide comfort, even when the outcome stays the same. There will still be times when our faith and trust must fill the gap.**

### A PETTY ARGUMENT

Further displaying their lack of understanding, the disciples started arguing about who the greatest was among the group. **Their argument showed that they cared more about Jesus’ fame than His purpose.**

- Their silence showcases their shame. Jesus was reinforcing the fact that **humility and sacrifice are necessary to follow Him.**

### PROPER ESTIMATION (MARK 9:35–42) TEACHING INSTEAD OF CONDEMNATION

Instead of rebuking His disciples for arguing about a seemingly ridiculous topic, Jesus seizes the opportunity for a lesson. Here is Jesus, truly first and absolutely the greatest, telling His followers how to be seen as great.

- This idea of servanthood is not self-degradation but, **out of joy**, choosing to serve others and **place ourselves last**.

### LEARN BY EXAMPLE TO RESIST PRIDE

Jesus is sharing what authentic servanthood looks like, not only with His words but also with His actions. “[We must] not love in word or speech, but in action and in truth” (1 John 3:18).

- Pride will usually drive our desire to be seen. Instead, in order to gain honor, we must have humble spirits (Proverbs 29:23).

### “WHOEVER WELCOMES ONE LITTLE CHILD...”

Children were often considered among the lowest in Jewish society. They were generally seen as less than adults.

- This is the exact reason Jesus chose such an example. Even as servants, we are not to show favoritism (James 2:1–7). **When we are stewards of the gospel to the “least of these,” we honor and welcome Christ** (Matthew 25:40).

### IN HIS NAME

Again, we see some jealousy and pride well up in John in making these accusations. Not only had the disciples just failed to drive out a demon (Mark 9:28), but now they hear of others not in their group doing just that.

- We cannot determine the heart of another individual. Actions done for the purpose of the gospel give glory to God regardless.

### THE GOSPEL SHOULD UNITE, NOT DIVIDE

**This is not to say that there are not false teachers** and those who utilize the gospel for ulterior motives. Jesus addresses that group of people in verse 42.

- As Paul states in Philippians 1:15–18, if Christ is being proclaimed, whether out of envy or good will, He is being made known regardless. **When the gospel is taught from a truthful, biblical perspective, that should be celebrated.**

### THE WEIGHT OF INFLUENCE

When leading others in truth, our intentions are not to be taken lightly.

- It requires a massive evil desire to plant doubt in the heart of a child. According to Jesus, **this evil must be extinguished**. Innocence is portrayed through the faith and prayers of a child; **the trust displayed by a child does not warrant manipulation for our own agenda!**

### SACRIFICES (MARK 9:43–50) METAPHORICALLY SPEAKING

Starting in verse 43, Jesus uses hyperbole to make a very serious point. He did not intend for us to literally cut off parts of our bodies. Removing a hand, foot, or eye will not keep sin from happening in our hearts.

- Sin is a deeper issue. **We cannot exterminate the fire of sin by spraying water on the smoke;** the root must be dealt with.

### SIN IS SERIOUS

Even though these verses are not to be taken literally, the severity of the issue remains.

- The problem is, at times, we are in love with sin and afraid of closing a door of opportunity, locking it, and throwing away the key. Some of us need to come to the realization that we need to “lose an extremity.” **We are not missing out on anything when we have Jesus.**

### WHAT IS IT THAT WE DESIRE?

To truly be at peace with cutting things out of our lives that lead us away from God is to honestly love our Creator and His Word. **If we have a genuine desire for God, we will have a desire for His will.**

- **“His commands are not a burden, because everyone who has been born of God conquers the world”** (1 John 5:3–4).

### BETTER THAN BEING THROWN IN HELL

Hell is a real place. It is an eternity spent absent from the love, grace, and mercy of God and in torment.

- If we absolutely understand the consequence for our depravity and sin, then we should be willing to sacrifice anything to avoid the realities of Hell.

### “WHERE THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE...”

In verse 48, Jesus is quoting Isaiah 66:24. Our time on this Earth is finite (James 4:14), and judgment is inevitable. For those who reject His grace and lack remorse for the evil they have committed, condemnation awaits.

- Unquenchable fire does not sound pleasant. **Therefore, the gift of the sacrifice of Jesus should never be taken for granted.**

### PURIFY OUR SACRIFICES

Sacrifices in the temple were to be salted (Leviticus 2:13). As Believers, we must offer ourselves as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1).

- To live in a sacrificial manner, we are called to be purified in accordance with God’s will and sanctified by truth. This is not only to set us apart as His Holy people but also to “be at peace with one another” (Mark 9:50).

### SYMPATHIZE WITH HIS DISCIPLES

- Are we following Jesus because we understand our wickedness, recognize our need for Him, and genuinely love Him? Or do we see Jesus as an opportunity to obtain fame and followers?
- **We are not in competition with others while doing Kingdom work. If truth is being taught, we can rejoice in God’s blessing.**

### TRUE SACRIFICE AND TRUE SERVANTHOOD

- Are we prepared to sacrifice the temporary for the eternal?
- **Have we properly prepared ourselves through purification and sanctification?**
- **The Kingdom of God is not only about reward but also sacrifice; the temporary sacrifice will always be worth it in comparison to eternal separation.**