

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 24TH, 2025 // GOSPEL OF MARK

GREATNESS (MARK 9:30-37) ADVANCED LESSONS

As Jesus and the disciples passed through Galilee, He was teaching them privately about His death and resurrection.

- He may have expanded His teaching, but what we read is very clear. Betrayal, death, and rising again after three days were in His future.
- **Christ still clearly reveals who He is, what He has done, and how we should respond. Do we understand?**

AFRAID TO ASK

The disciples missed it. They failed to understand the significance of what He was saying.

- Jesus took the time to teach them, but their fear of revealing their lack of understanding prevented them from asking questions.
- **It is ok to ask questions, especially about the simple majors of Christianity. Are we letting our pride keep us from understanding?**

IRONY

The one with true greatness had revealed His future betrayal, death, and resurrection. He would show His power over life, death, and sin.

- The disciples—who could not cast out certain demons, failed to seek clarification, and spoke out of misunderstanding—were arguing about which of them was the greatest!
- **What do we think we do that elevates us higher than each other? Than Jesus?**

SILENCE AGAIN

The disciples were silent in response to Jesus' question.

- Their argument turned into shame when exposed to the presence and words of Jesus.
- He was the one who had shown true greatness during their journeys.
- **If we will stop our self-elevation for a few minutes and remember Who has the plan and the power to complete it, we might just learn something.**

GREATNESS DEFINED

Jesus sits down and humbly shows the concept of greatness to His disciples.

- To be great (like Jesus) means to serve others first. Acknowledgment will come in the end.
- In their culture, children had no standing. Jesus was illustrating that receiving (loving, helping, teaching) those who are without resources is the most Christ-like thing we can do.
- **Are we caring for those no one else cares for? Jesus cared for us when no one else did.**

JUDGMENT (MARK 9:38-41) THE RESPONSE

Jesus gently rebuked and taught the disciples a great truth about Himself and how to be great.

- Then, John spoke for the group and informed Jesus that another guy was doing what He had empowered them to do. This guy was stealing their recognition in their territory.
- **We do not have privilege in a club with exclusive membership. We do not own this territory. God is working to draw people to Himself and calling every follower to serve Him and others.**

"IS NOT AGAINST US"

They had judged the anonymous exorcist, but Jesus made it clear that whoever is not against Him is for Him.

- Then Jesus went a step further and explained that those who perform miracles in His name will be rewarded and that even the smallest thing done in His name will be remembered.
- **God sees and remembers all things done for His glory and for the good of others, even if they are not done by us.**

REALITY (MARK 9:42-50) SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES

Jesus says that whoever leads people away from Him will experience God's judgment.

- It is easy to imagine a millstone being tied around someone's neck and them being thrown into the sea. Yet, this would be a preferred consequence to what God will do to the one who deceives and falsely teaches the Word of God.
- **Do not miss that Jesus was talking to His disciples in response to their pride of position and judgment of others.**

HANDS, FEET, AND EYES

Jesus gives us another list of things that can cause us to sin and therefore separate us from His righteousness.

- The things we handle, the places we go, and the things we see can open doors to sin, and we must take drastic measures to remove the things that weaken our faith or hinder others.
- **We are afraid to avoid sin because it will cost us connection to our desires. That is the problem; we desire sin more than Christ, and THAT will cost us.**

THROWN INTO HELL

It is unpopular that Jesus says some will be thrown into Hell.

- He helps them understand by comparing it to a burning refuse pile outside of Jerusalem. The valley of Hinnom has a history of pagan worship and human sacrifice.
- As clearly as He foretold His betrayal, death, and resurrection, Jesus teaches that Hell is a real place with real suffering.
- **The bad news is really bad: Hell is real.**

SALTED WITH FIRE

Salt symbolizes purity and preservation.

- Jesus says everyone, even Believers, will face the trials of life and somehow salt can lose its flavor.
- Salt has to be purified so it will not lose its flavor.
- We are the salt that has to be purified. As we follow Jesus, He conforms us to His will and creates a greater desire to serve Him and others.
- **The good news is really good: Following Jesus means eternal life with Him.**

US

- We talk a lot about us.
- **It is natural to talk about the things we know best.**
- **Our problem is we tend to lift ourselves above others. We even lift our ideas of what is good and pleasing above what God is really calling us to do. How do we consider ourselves?**

THEM

- "Them" is everyone who is not "us."
- **They do not do as much as we do and definitely do not know as much as us.**
- **We agree that they need what we have, but our desire is not that they would get it. As long as they are outsiders, we believe we have and deserve more than them. How do we consider others?**

CHRIST

- Jesus desires for us to reach them.
- **Desiring God means desiring His will in our lives. When we follow Jesus, He will always lead us to others.**
- **When we were at our worst, Christ died for us. Are we looking at how good we are now or how good Christ has been to us? How are we looking at others? We need to see what Christ sees. Will we open our eyes?**