



Empowering People to Change the World

## **Greatness in the Kingdom**

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## Mark 9:30-50 | Greatness in the Kingdom

You recall that in our journey through Mark, there has been a decisive turn in the ministry of Jesus and He is now talking about His main purpose on the earth—going to Jerusalem to be killed and rise again

Jesus is preparing his disciples for the ultimate tests that are coming. Jesus is sharing with us what greatness in the kingdom looks like...

### **Vs. 30**

**Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know *it*. For He taught His disciples and said to them, “The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day.” But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him.**

- It is not the time for Jesus' identity, purpose, and plan to be known to the vast majority of people—they would both hate him for it and love him for it. The timing isn't right
- But the timing is right to explain his mission to a few. His disciples are beginning to understand that Jesus has come to set up a kingdom, but it's not a kingdom of this earth, but a kingdom that is heavenly, eternal
- They don't actually understand the whole picture but have only glimpses of it—the transfiguration, the casting out of a death and mute spirit that they could not cast out, questions about his identity
- It might be in this time that Jesus will also share,
- Jesus, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn

the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.  
“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”<sup>1</sup>

### **Vs. 33**

**Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, “What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?” But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who *would be the greatest*.**

- They have seen the power of Jesus, three of them have seen the actual glory of Jesus—the transfiguration, and they want to be set up nicely—next to the power and glory
- After all, they have left everything to follow Him—don’t they deserve such recognition
- We all tend toward wanting privileges and entitlements
- This is the struggle. Power, prestige, notice...
- Ex. We have all known people who succumbed to the power given them...
- But Jesus shares an entirely different way of looking at power...

### **Vs. 35**

**And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.” Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, “Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me.”<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Jn 3:14–18). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>2</sup> *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Mk 9:34–37). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

- A new definition of greatness—not positions of power but the position of servitude
- A new definition of being first—first will be defined by who is last
- The upside down kingdom—the very opposite of everything we’ve been told
- “Get what you can, can all you get, and sit on your can”
- A new route to greatness: become like a child. Receive a child and you receive Me.
  - When we embrace a child, we embrace Jesus
  - When we love a child, we are loving Jesus
  - When we listen to a child, we are listening to Jesus
  - When we kneel down and talk to a child, we are kneeling down and talking to Jesus
  - When we protect a child, we are protecting Jesus
  - When we hold the hand of a child, we are holding the hand of Jesus

**Now John answered Him, saying, “Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us.”**

**But Jesus said, “Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. For he who is not against us is on our side.”<sup>3</sup>**

- We all tend toward sectarianism. That spirit of the age that believes our way, our group, our beliefs are the only truth
- This is how we tend to view other people different from us
- This shows us just how powerful the name of Jesus is—that someone who didn’t yet even follow Jesus and his group could successfully be casting out demons in His name

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<sup>3</sup> *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Mk 9:38–40). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

- Ex. I have told many of you that if you are seeing specters in the night, having bad dreams, being haunted by spirits, call out in the Name of Jesus and tell them to leave! You don't have the power and authority, Jesus does. Use His power. there is power in the name of Jesus!
- There are beautiful churches and denominations: expressing their worship to Jesus in different ways. Some have incense, candles, robes, stained glass, and they love Jesus
- May we at The Road adhere to the Moravian axiom:

#### **Vs. 40**

**For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.<sup>4</sup>**

- In other words, whoever would give you the most simple thing in the name of Christ because you belong to Christ—no other motives, no other reason but that you are a Jesus follow, he will be rewarded
- Ex. When you open your home to someone in the Name of Christ, you will be rewarded
- This is how the upside down kingdom works—the simple acts of kindness do not go unnoticed
- Ex. Victor was helping my mother-in-law to her seat a few weeks ago. Jesus noticed that.
- Ex. You who serve with our children, playing with them, loving on them, Jesus notices that and you will be rewarded
- Ex. You who have D Groups and C Groups, opening up your

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<sup>4</sup> *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Mk 9:41). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

home, cleaning, getting everything ready for all those people. And they spill, cry, sometimes they don't help clean up, Jesus notices. You will be rewarded

- Ex. All of you leaders working with the Youth, giving of your Sunday's for meetings, planning, thinking, working. Jesus notices that. You will be rewarded

**“But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.”<sup>5</sup>**

- Parents we have a great responsibility don't we?
- When we have done things in anger, retaliation, and acting out of our brokenness, injuring our children out of spite and selfishness, there will also be judgment
- So, if this has been true, what do we do?

**Vs. 43**

**If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— where**

***‘Their worm does not die***

***And the fire is not quenched.’***

**45 And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched—46 where**

***‘Their worm does not die***

***And the fire is not quenched.’***

**47 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire—48 where**

***‘Their worm does not die***

***And the fire is not quenched.’<sup>6</sup>***

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<sup>5</sup> *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Mk 9:42). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>6</sup> *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Mk 9:43–48). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

- Jesus is not saying that we should maim ourselves but uses a stark ruthless metaphor of the discipline needed to walk the talk
- Jesus is speaking of a ruthless self denial because you love God more than your stuff
- Hand—what you're doing with your time
- Foot—where you're going—there is usually an association with what you're doing and where you're going
- Eye—what you're viewing, what you're looking at
- The walk of holiness involves all of this and the context are the little ones in our life—they don't care what you say but what you do. Kids see it all. They are phenomenal observers and lousy interpreters. We must be careful with our little ones
- Kids will do whatever you tell them up to about 14. Then they start exercising their growing independence and if your modeling has been hypocritical they will rebel. If your life has been consistent, you will have spiritual authority
- Hell or hades or Sheol in the OT seems has two compartments in the underworld
  - Hades which seems to be a resting place for the dead
  - But the Hell spoken of here is the place of punishment, Gehenna, the valley of Hinnom, the lake of fire in Rev 20:10
  - The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.<sup>7</sup>
  - It is a place of utter despair: And cast the unprofitable

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<sup>7</sup> *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Re 20:10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’<sup>8</sup>

- A place of darkness, utter anguish, and eternal punishment!

### **Vs. 49**

**For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. Salt *is* good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another.”<sup>9</sup>**

- Evaluate your life! Jesus is saying look at your life and ask if your life is expressing the life of Christ
- We will all go through fire! We will all go through fire! But how will you go through it?
- Salt was a preservative and Jesus can preserve you through the fire
  - For some, God always gets blamed when hard times come
  - For some, they simply fall away and can't handle it
  - For others, they grow through it and come out stronger and better people as a result
- Our children, our loved ones, they see how we handle the difficulties—the cancer, the loss of a job, the struggles of a marriage
- When we pass the test, choosing Christ, choosing the right thing, we have peace! Glorious peace!

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<sup>8</sup> *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Mt 25:30). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>9</sup> *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Mk 9:49–50). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.