

Mark

Lesson 13

Chapter 9:30-10:44

Participant Guide

Leader Guide Bible Studies

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Who Will Be the Greatest?

Prayers

Introduction

In the weeks before the last Passover, Jesus began preparing his disciples for his death. After three years with Jesus, it seemed the disciples had learned nothing in their time with Jesus. They argued among themselves who would be the greatest; they could not heal a demon-possessed boy because they did not consider to pray, and they discouraged children from coming to Jesus. But Jesus loved them, instructed them, and they continued to argue.

Who Will Be the Greatest [comments from Luke 9:46-48]

Mk 9:30 They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were,³¹ because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, **“The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise.”**

Mk 9:32 But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.

Mt 18:1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

Mk 9:33 They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them [knowing their thoughts], **“What were you arguing about on the road?”**

Mk 9:34 But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

Mk 9:35 Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, **“If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.”**

Mk 9:36 He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them,³⁷ **“Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.”** [For he who is least among you all—he is the greatest.]

1. It seems hard to understand why the disciples could not understand Jesus’ statement on his death and resurrection. Why was this so hard for them to understand?
2. Being great in God’s Kingdom was utterly contrary to the idea of greatness in Jesus’s day as it is in ours. What did Jesus say the qualities of great leadership were in his kingdom?
3. What did Jesus mean by illustrating greatness by welcoming a child?

Whoever Is Not Against Us Is for Us

Mk 9:38 “Teacher,” said John, “we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us.”

Mk 9:39 “Do not stop him,” Jesus said. “No one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me,⁴⁰ for whoever is not against us is for us.

Mk 9:41 I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward.

Causing to Sin

Mk 9:42 “And if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck.

[Mt 18:7 “Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come!]

Mk 9:43 If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out.

Mk 9:45 And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell.

Mk 9:47 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 than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell,⁴⁸ where “their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.”

Mk 9:49 Everyone will be salted with fire.

Mk 9:50 “Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other.”

4. Mark 9:42-50 are some of the hard sayings of Jesus. Do you think these are literal or hyperbole?

5. How does Jesus illustrate hell?

6. What did Jesus mean by having salt in yourself!?

Divorce [Additional comments from Matthew 19:1-9]

Mk 10:1 Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again, crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them.

Mk 10:2 Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"

Mk 10:3 "What did Moses command you?" he replied.

Mk 10:4 They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away."

Mk 10:5 "It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law," Jesus replied.

Mk 10:6 "But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.'"

Mk 10:7 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,

Mk 10:8 and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one.

Mk 10:9 Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

Mk 10:10 When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this.

Mk 10:11 He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her.

Mk 10:12 And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery."

[Mt 19:9 I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."

Mt 19:10 The disciples said to him, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry."

Mt 19:11 Jesus replied, "Not everyone can accept this word (not to marry), but only those to whom it has been given. ¹² For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it."]

Discuss

7. What is God's unchanging plan for marriage?

8. Many things can destroy the intimacy God intended in marriage – constant arguing, lying, physical abuse, addiction, to name a few. Why is the discussion with the Pharisees focused on the act of adultery?

9. Given Jesus' statement, what comfort can a Christian offer a divorced person?

10. What do these passages teach about being single?

The Little Children and Jesus (also found in Matthew 19:13-15 and Luke 18:15-17)

Mk 10:13 People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them.

Mk 10:14 When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Mk 10:15 I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

Mk 10:16 And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.

11. During his ministry, Jesus showed his love for children and held them up as examples for adults to emulate. What are the qualities of children we need to have to receive the kingdom of heaven?

The Rich Young Man (covered in the next lesson)

Jesus Again Predicts His Death [also found in Mt 20:17-19 and Lk 18:31-33]

Mk 10:32 They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again, he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him.

Mk 10:33 “We are going up to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles,³⁴ who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.”

[Lk 18:34 The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about.]

12. How does this prediction of his death compare to the previous time Jesus told his disciples about his death when they did not understand?

13. The disciples did not understand what Jesus was telling them but had the courage to follow, even onto death. What situations have you faced in fear, without understanding, but with faith?

The Request of James and John [Comment inserted from Mt 20:20-28]

Mk 10:35 Then [the mother of] James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.”

Mk 10:36 “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked.

Mk 10:37 They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.”

Mk 10:38 “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?”

Mk 10:39 “We can,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with,^v

Mk 10:40 but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared [by my Father].”

Mk 10:41 When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John.

Mk 10:42 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.

Mk 10:43 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

14. Jesus' warning on the road through Galilee (Mark 9:30-37) did not finish the argument between the disciples as to who would be greatest and sit at Jesus' right hand in his kingdom. What did they and their mother completely misunderstand about the establishment of his kingdom?

15. What did they misunderstand about his kingdom?

16. What does being a slave to all look like in your life, the life a disciple?

Closing prayer (from John Baillie)

Divine Love, who eternally stands outside the closed doors of the souls of men, knocking ever and again, will You not now give me grace to throw open all of my soul? Tonight, let every bolt and lock be released that has so far robbed my life of air and light and love.

Give me an open ear, God, that I may hear Your voice calling me to high undertaking. Too often have I been deaf to the appeals You have addressed to me, but now give me courage to answer, Here am I, send me. And when any one of Your children, my human brothers, cries out in need, give me an open ear to hear in that cry Your call to service.

Give me an open mind, God, a mind ready to receive and to welcome such new light of knowledge as it is Your will to reveal to me. Let not the past ever be so dear to me as to set a limit to the future. Give me courage to change my mind, when that is needed. Let me be tolerant to the thoughts of others and hospitable to such light as may come to me through them.

Give me open eyes, God, eyes quick to discover Your indwelling in the world which You have made. Let all lovely things fill me with gladness and let them uplift my mind to Your everlasting loveliness. Forgive all my past blindness to the grandeur and glory of nature, to the charm of little children, to the beautiful things in human history, and to all the intimations of Your presence which these things contain.

Give me open hands, God, hands ready to share with all who are in want the blessings with which You have enriched my life. Deliver me from all meanness and stinginess. Let me hold my money in stewardship and all my worldly goods in trust for You; to whom now be all honor and glory. Amen