

SERIES: **The Jesus Journey**
TEXT: **Mark 9:30-41** TITLE: **The Journey to True Greatness**

Family road trips always sound fun... until you're on the road and the kids start fighting, and dad misses the exit, and the nearest rest stop is 10,000 light years away.

Jesus is taking His disciples on a journey to Jerusalem- but it won't be a smooth ride.

They're on the same road but thinking in completely different directions.

He is focused on the cross and humility; they are chasing crowns and greatness.

But before we judge them too quickly, we should ask ourselves:

How often do we walk with Jesus, while still chasing our own agenda over His?

MARK 9:30-31 Then they left that place and made their way through Galilee, but he did not want anyone to know it.

He doesn't want it to be known because Galilee isn't the destination, Jerusalem is.

This is an important detail to keep in mind in light of the conversations that are going to follow

³¹For he was teaching his disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after he is killed, he will rise three days later."

Jesus often takes time away from the crowds to invest into teaching His disciples. Why?

Because spiritual understanding and growth takes time... even when you have the best teacher

We need to make the most of the time by carving out time in our life to intake wisdom (read, church, etc)

This is now the 2nd prediction of His death in the book of Mark (Jesus adds the detail of betrayal)

MARK 9:32-34 But they did not understand this statement, and they were afraid to ask him.

The disciples struggle still to understand, but in this text, we get a glimpse into why.

Their idea of what their place in the Kingdom of God meant needed to be reversed

³³They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" ³⁴But they were silent, because on the way they had been arguing with one another about who was the greatest.

"on the way"- Where? Jerusalem. What happens there? Jesus is betrayed and crucified

And what is their debate on the way? Which of them is the best.

It's as if they believe that the march to Jerusalem will result in glory and places of prestige for them.

They don't see that this journey leads to suffering and humiliation.

They are focused on who is the greatest of them, and in so doing, have neglected that Jesus is the greatest and His name is above every name.

We must be cautious not to be too easily impressed with ourselves

Romans 12:3 For by the grace given to me, I tell everyone among you **not to think of himself more highly than he should think**. Instead, think sensibly, as God has distributed a measure of faith to each one.

Romans 12:16 Live in harmony with one another. **Do not be proud**; instead, associate with the humble. **Do not be wise in your own estimation**.

Our highest achievement is not to make a name for ourselves, but to exalt the Name of Christ

Our ambition shouldn't be that we would be known, but that Jesus would be!

Listen church- The Way Church is not about David Rangel. It's not about any pastor or leader. This church has always been and must always continue to be about magnifying the name of Jesus Christ

Moravian Bishop, Count Zinzendorf, *"Preach the gospel, die, and be forgotten"*

"But they were silent"- Barclay, *"It was the silence of shame. They had no defense. It is strange how a thing takes its proper place and acquires its true character when it is set in the eyes of Jesus... If of everything we did, we asked, 'could I go on doing this if Jesus was watching me?' If everything we said we asked, 'could I go on talking like this if Jesus was listening to me?', there would be many things which we would be saved from doing and saying."*

Keep in mind, they never answered Jesus; but Jesus always asks questions He already knows the answers to.

MARK 9:35 Sitting down, he called the Twelve and said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be last and servant of all."

This is the gravitational verse in our passage. Jesus reverses the culture's conceptions of who is great

It's not the rich, or the ones with most followers on social media, or the powerful-
it's those who have humble, tender hearts towards others

Jesus is the greatest example of this-

Philippians 2:5-8 Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus,

⁶who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited.

⁷Instead he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity.

And when he had come as a man, ⁸he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death—
even to death on a cross.

Now Jesus is going to give them 3 lessons on what this looks like in action (followed by some warnings next week)

MARK 9:36-37 He took a child, had him stand among them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷ "Whoever welcomes one little child such as this in my name welcomes me. And whoever welcomes me does not welcome me, but him who sent me."

Jesus is positioning Himself not with the revered and respected higher ups of society, with those who can return favors, but with the lowly and helpless

A child has no influence and cannot give you anything to advance your place in life;

a child needs things and needs to have things done for them.

They are dependent, vulnerable.

We are called to serve those who have nothing to offer us in return

Isn't this what Jesus did for us?

And Jesus says, *'when you welcome them, you welcome Me, and you welcome God'*

Jason Meyer, *"A flourishing church is a place where the weak and poor and frail flourish. A flourishing church is a church not of big shots but of big hearts."*

Side note: Children are important to Jesus. God bless our wayKIDS volunteers, teachers and leaders

They need help! Consider investing into the lives of our kids by serving in the wayKIDS ministry

MARK 9:38-40 John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him because he wasn’t following us.” ³⁹“Don’t stop him,” said Jesus, “because there is no one who will perform a miracle in my name who can soon afterward speak evil of me. ⁴⁰For whoever is not against us is for us.

Each of the 3 predictions of Jesus’ death in Mark, are followed closely by a selfish response from one of the inner 3

8:32- Peter rebukes Jesus

9:38- John brags that they opposed someone working in the name of Jesus

10:35-37- James (with John) request that they have the seat of prominence in God’s kingdom

The disciples in the gospel accounts are often great examples...of what not to do

Look at the sad irony- Jesus has just finished teaching them that they need to receive people in His name, when John interrupts with V38

Keep in mind that 9 of the 12 disciples have just failed in their attempt to cast out a demon, and this person they tried to stop was successful!

“we tried to stop him because he wasn’t following us”-

Numbers 11:27-29 A young man ran and reported to Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.” ²⁸Joshua son of Nun, assistant to Moses since his youth, responded, “Moses, my lord, stop them!”

²⁹But Moses asked him, “Are you jealous on my account? If only all the Lord’s people were prophets and the Lord would place his Spirit on them!”

Are they jealous for Jesus or for themselves?

What was their error? They drew the circle around themselves because they couldn’t fathom that Jesus might also work through others

We cannot receive Jesus and reject others who proclaim the name of Jesus

1 John 4:20-21 If anyone says, “I love God,” and yet hates his brother or sister, he is a liar. For the person who does not love his brother or sister whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹And we have this command from him: The one who loves God must also love his brother and sister.

The aim isn’t to make disciples in our likeness, but in Christ’s

I have friends whom I disagree with on church governance or certain secondary doctrines- but far be it from me to think I’m more worthy to Jesus

David E. Garland, *“In the battle against evil, we must recognize that whatever particular group we belong to is not the only group of Christians in the world. We can learn from others, who worship the same Christ as Lord and Savior, but who may use different language and emphasize different parts of the Scripture from what we do... Without compromising our convictions we can have fellowship with one another”*

Side Note: V40 is averse that can easily be taken out of context

What is the context? Persecution against Jesus and His followers, so much so they will kill Jesus and eventually most of the disciples as well

In such an environment, those who don’t take up sides with the enemy are our allies

MARK 9:41 And whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in my name, because you belong to Christ —truly I tell you, he will never lose his reward.

Casting out a demon in the name of Jesus is a big thing!

But according to Jesus, even something as small as giving a cup of water to the thirsty in His name will be rewarded.

No act of service is too small when it is done in the great name of Jesus

Jesus will receive anyone in His name and He will reward what anyone does in His name—whether sensational or small

The minds of the twelve were full of mistaken ideas of their Master's reign and kingdom on earth.

They have in mind crowns and accolades. Jesus has in mind service and humility.

Culture tells us that to be great we must do so even at the expense of tearing others down;

Jesus says, true greatness elevates others.

Culture sees how we can gain power over others;

Jesus says greatness empowers others.

Culture says that greatness is achieved when others serve us;

Jesus says that greatness means serving others.

Jesus redefines the type of ambition His followers should strive for-

Be the greatest yes!... The greatest servants

If we are to walk the Jesus Journey, we ought to be people who choose

humility over hype, *service* over status, *faithfulness* over fame, and unity over indignation

Romans 12:10 Love one another deeply as brothers and sisters.

Take the lead in honoring one another.

We would do well to remember that we are not the most important person in the room; Jesus is-

And He laid down His life in service and sacrifice.

We have no good reason not to do the same.

CALL UP WORSHIP TEAM

Q: Who might God be calling you to serve in His name this week?

BULPEN-

V32 the disciples don't understand and don't ask to understand, and that will become evident in what follows

V32 why are they afraid?

Perhaps they're afraid to look foolish

Perhaps they're afraid to know more, to actually understand

Perhaps they're afraid of what this could mean to their ideas of God's kingdom and their part in it

The big question that permeates from this passage is "Who is welcome?"

The disciples have a notion that they are on the inside, and therefore anyone else outside of their camp is on the outside.

We don't welcome people based on what they can do for us.

Our example is Jesus, who welcome you and I despite the fact that we had nothing to offer, nothing we could do to benefit Him.

On the man casting out demons:

In the ancient world, exorcist used whatever name of deities they thought would be powerful enough to work

Jesus' condoning this man is more practical than it is theological.

The rational is: If he uses the name of Jesus and recognizes the power it has over demons, that man cannot claim that Jesus is powerless or that He works for the devil (as the teachers of the law had done), and that man is not far off from seeing the power that the name of Jesus has over his own life.

William L Lane, "In the light of the experience of Jewish exorcists who misused Jesus' name without understanding (Acts 19:13-16; Mat. 7:21-23), it is necessary to affirm that the name of Jesus discloses its authentic power only when a man joins Jesus in faith and obedience to the will of God."

V40 allow scripture to interpret scripture-

We should be open to welcoming others outside of our camp or circle who claim Jesus

We should also discern the spirits (1 Corinthians 12:10)

We ought to examine our motives (why do we oppose them?)

We ought to recognize who the real enemy is

V39 some have suggested that Jesus had a slightly humorous tone

Jesus avoided self-acclamation- but the disciples crave it

V34 our motives are not always Christ's motives