

Discussion Guide

Week of April 14, 2013

Mark 9:30–41

Passage Overview:

Chapters 9–10 of Mark describe the journey of Jesus and his disciples to Jerusalem. This is the way to the cross. In these chapters Jesus explains what it means to be his disciple. This teaching is built around three predictions of his death (8:31; 9:31; 10:32–34). We learn that to follow Jesus is to accept the way of the cross—a life of service and sacrifice. Here, 9:30–41 records three teachings that Jesus gave to his disciples. The first should sound familiar—the death and resurrection of the Son of Man, which the disciples do not fully understand. The remaining dialogue between Jesus and his disciples more closely examines the humility that necessarily follows.

Understanding God’s Word—Read Mark 9:30–41.

- In verses 33–37, what are the disciples discussing? Why? How does this fit into the plans of Jesus and his kingdom as revealed in vv30–32?
- John brings another source of contention to Jesus in v38. What motivates the disciples’ argument this time?
- In vv33–41, the disciples are at odds, first with one another, then with others outside their group. Is there a single theme running through both?

Living and Applying God’s Word

- Jesus plainly states that the *Son of Man* will be “delivered into the hands of men” in order to die (v31). If Jesus is to be *delivered*, what does this say about God’s power and authority over the death of Jesus? Who exercises *ultimate* authority over Christ’s death?
- Since the disciples still see Jesus as a political figure, they expect political spoils for being his close followers, but Jesus turns their expectation upside down (vv34–35).
 - Why does Jesus mention children? In what ways do they represent something contrary to “greatness” and political power?
 - If not power and “greatness”, what are the true hallmarks of his kingdom?
- What reason do the disciples give for rejecting the work of another in Jesus’ name (look closely at v38)? Jesus does not appear to be as concerned as John. What seems to be the disciples’ primary concern/problem?

Turning to God in Faith and Repentance

- Christians are called to exemplify the kingdom as Christ did, through humble service, love and even suffering. Discuss ways in which this truth goes against your own sensibilities. What would it look like today to accept “one such child in [Christ’s] name”—both *literally* and *figuratively*?
- How do you perceive the lives and work of fellow believers? Are they more or less valid based on their similarity to you? What should be our primary “criteria” when we think of other believers (and even ourselves)?

Prayer: Thank God that, in Christ, sinners are graciously brought into his kingdom, without any need to compare ourselves to each other or prove our greatness. Pray for one another and encourage each other with the grace of a God who welcomes those with nothing to offer. Pray also for Paul Tokunaga as he serves with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.

Announcements

- Ladies’ Lunch (April 16 @ noon) (sigourney@insidecrosspointe.com)
- Meet & Greet (April 21, immediately after the service)
- “One Another” Member Meeting (May 5, 6–7:30 p.m.)