

Program: SS Panel 2024 3 Q

Quarterly title: The Book of Mark

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Lesson Title: #7 Teaching Disciples Part 1

Section title: Wednesday - Who is the Greatest?

Note: This color and font = quarterly text

Note: This color and font = John Dinzey notes

J Dinzey 2024 Q3 L7 Who is the Greatest?

Teaching Disciples: Part I

Read for This Week’s Study: *Mark 8:22–38; Matt. 20:29–34; John 12:25; Mark 9:1–50; Mal. 4:5, 6; Luke 9:30, 31.*

Memory Text: “When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” *Mark 8:34, NKJV.*

WEDNESDAY

August 14

Who Is the Greatest?

Read Mark 9:30–41. What is different about Jesus’ second prediction of His death and resurrection (compare with Mark 8:31)? Also, what do the disciples argue about, and what instruction does Jesus give?

Mark 8:31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Mark 9:30–41 30 Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know *it*.

31 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.”

32 But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him.

In the first prediction, Jesus refers to those who will reject Him and kill Him. In the second prediction, Jesus refers to the fact that He will be betrayed. The betrayer is not pointed out at this time, but the reader already knows who it is because of the identification of Judas (see [Mark 3:19](#)). Again, the Lord refers to being killed and then rising after three days. But the disciples seem even less interested in the details of this prediction than in the first. Unwelcome news does not garner discussion.

>>> when you compare Mark 8:31 with Mark 9:31-32 you will notice that Jesus is talking about being killed and rising of the third day. This is the second time Jesus mentions being killed. Versus 32 states that they did not understand this saying and were afraid to ask Him. The question is, why? We can suspect that the disciples expected and were convinced that Jesus is the messiah and their understanding is that He was supposed to go to the throne. They knew that Jesus was not ordinary man, notice:

Jesus walks on water

[Mrk 6:47](#) And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land.

[Mrk 6:48](#) And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.

Jesus feeds five thousand and four thousand

[REF:>> Mrk 8:19](#) When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve.

Mrk 8:20 And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.

Jesus Heals a Blind Man at Bethsaida

REF: >> Mrk 8:22 And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

Mrk 8:23 And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.

Mrk 8:24 And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.

Mrk 8:25 After that he put *his* hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

Mrk 8:26 And he sent him away to his house, saying, **Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.**

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ

Mrk 8:27 And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, **Whom do men say that I am?**

Mrk 8:28 And they answered, John the Baptist: but some *say*, Elias; and others, One of the prophets.

Mrk 8:29 And he saith unto them, **But whom say ye that I am?** And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.

Mrk 8:30 And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

They were afraid to ask Him

it was not in their understanding that he was supposed to be killed as Jesus stated. They were afraid to ask Him because they did not want to be rebuked as Peter was:

Peter rebuked - Get thee behind me Satan...

REF: >> Mrk 8:31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and *of* the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Mrk 8:32 And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

Mrk 8:33 But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, **Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.**

Comparing Mark 8:31 and Mark 9:31-32

The Transfiguration

REF:>> Mark 9:1-9 **Mrk 9:2** And after six days Jesus taketh *with him* Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.

Mrk 9:3 And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

Mrk 9:4 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.

Who Is the Greatest?

Mark 9:33 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?”

34 But they kept silent, for **on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest.**

If you want to be first you will be last

Mark 9:35 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.”

36 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,

37 “Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me.”

Those who classed themselves with the followers of Jesus, but who had not left all in order to become His disciples, were influenced in a great degree by the reasoning of the Pharisees. They were often vacillating between faith and unbelief, and they did not discern the treasures of wisdom hidden in Christ. **Even the disciples, though outwardly they had left all for Jesus’ sake, had not in heart ceased to seek great things for themselves. It was this spirit that prompted the strife as to who should be greatest.** It was this that came between them and Christ, making them so little in sympathy with His mission of self-sacrifice, so slow to comprehend the mystery of redemption. As leaven, if left to complete its work, will cause corruption and decay, so does the self-seeking spirit, cherished, work the defilement and ruin of the soul. DA 409.1

COM: Self-seeking and desire to be the greatest is still a great challenge and problem among gods people today..... Notice what Jesus said to His disciples and says to us today:

Jesus says - he who is not against us is on our side

Mark 9:38 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.”

39 But Jesus said, “**Do not forbid him**, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me.

40 For **he who is not against us is on our side.**

41 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.

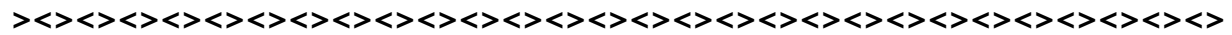
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In Mark 8:27, Jesus was north of the Sea of Galilee near Caesarea Philippi. In Mark 9:30 He is passing through Galilee, and in Mark 9:33 He enters Capernaum. Thus, it is not difficult to envisage His journey from north to south. However, He enters Capernaum alone as the twelve disciples lag behind. In the house, He inquires about their discussion on the way. No one speaks up, a sure sign of their discomfort at the question, almost like children caught doing something they know is wrong. Their conversation had been about who was the greatest. As little as most people are willing to admit it, this question of who is greatest is something everyone thinks about. But in the kingdom of God, this idea gets turned upside down.

Jesus responds to the problem in two steps. First, He utters the clear statement that to be first (greatest), you have to become a servant. Then Jesus illustrates His meaning by an action. Evidently a child was standing nearby listening. Jesus takes the child and places him in the midst of the group. That would be intimidating for the child. But then Jesus takes the child in His arms, relaxing the scene. He teaches that if you receive the child, you receive Him. And if you receive Him, you receive His Father. Thus, the lowest child is linked to God Himself.

John asks a question about outsiders, and Jesus teaches the important lesson that those not against us are for us. The Lord affirms that helping those in Christian service, even in small ways, does not go unnoticed in heaven.

What is the biblical idea of greatness in contrast to the world’s idea? Which one are you striving for?



Additional notes:

Those who classed themselves with the followers of Jesus, but who had not left all in order to become His disciples, were influenced in a great degree by the reasoning of the Pharisees. They were often vacillating between faith and unbelief, and they did not discern the treasures of wisdom hidden in Christ. Even the disciples, though outwardly they had left all for Jesus’ sake, had not in heart ceased to seek great things for themselves. It was this spirit that prompted the strife as to who should be greatest. It was this that came between them and Christ, making them so little in sympathy with His mission of self-sacrifice, so slow to comprehend the mystery of redemption. As leaven, if left to complete its work, will cause corruption and decay, so does the self-seeking spirit, cherished, work the defilement and ruin of the soul. DA 409.1

Among the followers of our Lord today, as of old, how widespread is this subtle, deceptive sin! How often our service to Christ, our communion with one another, is marred by the secret desire to exalt self! How ready the thought of self-gratulation, and the longing for human approval! It is the love of self, the desire for an easier way than God has appointed that leads to the substitution of human theories and traditions for the divine precepts. To His own disciples the warning words of Christ are spoken, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.” DA 409.2

The religion of Christ is sincerity itself. **Zeal for God's glory is the motive implanted by the Holy Spirit; and only the effectual working of the Spirit can implant this motive. Only the power of God can banish self-seeking and hypocrisy.** This change is the sign of His working. When the faith we accept destroys selfishness and pretense, when it leads us to seek God's glory and not our own, we may know that it is of the right order. “Father, glorify Thy name” (John 12:28), was the keynote of Christ's life, and if we follow Him, this will be the keynote of our life. He commands us to “walk, even as He walked;” and “hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.” 1 John 2:6, 3 DA 409.3