

**Title:** The Measure of Greatness

**Passage:** Mark 9:30-41

## **Introduction**

Question: Have you ever been in a situation or thought where could not admit you were wrong?

- Why? Our pride.
- Truth: Pride affects all of us. We are not immune to the blinding effects of pride.
- Self-Reflection: What areas in our life is there pride? It's not a question of if pride exists but where
- Pride is the greatest enemy; humility is our greatest friend.

Genesis 3:6

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

## **Context of Passage**

- Jesus is preparing disciples for when He will be gone.
- Prior passage: What does it mean to do things by faith. (Demon-possessed boy healed by prayer with faith)
- Here: Humility (counter-cultural and counter-natural)

**Passage:** Mark 9:30-41

They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he did not want anyone to know, for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise." But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him. And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me." John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us." But Jesus said, "Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. For the one who is not against us is for us. For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.

## **Exposition**

### **Overview**

Jesus offering an example of humility (v.30-32)

Jesus teaches about humility:

- Seeks to serve others
- Sees all people valuable
- Believes the best of others
- To be sought because it will be rewarded

## **I. Jesus offering an example of humility (v.30-32)**

Mark 9:30-32

They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he did not want anyone to know, for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise." But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.

*And he did not want anyone to know*

- transition in ministry.
- Before: Jesus was with crowds
- Here: Jesus privately preparing disciples for what is to come with His crucifixion and resurrection
  - As they are heading toward Jerusalem

Jesus' teaching

- about the crucifixion and resurrection
- How? Jesus willingly allowed Himself to be delivered to crucifixion

*The Son of Man*

- refers to the Messiah

Daniel 7:13-14

"I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

*But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.*

- disciples were too prideful to ask Jesus for more clarity

## **II. Jesus teaches about humility (v.33-41)**

Mark 9:33

And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?"

- context of conversation:

Mark 9:34

But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest.

- Disciples misperception that when they were approaching Jerusalem, they were arguing about who would do want thinking of a great earthly kingdom.
- Why? Pride.

### *Pride*

- Definition: mindset of self
- Using all things with self at the center
- Why? We think we deserve it.
- Effects: ruins unity and destroys relationships. leads to division
  - Contrast: Love is other-centered
- Pride is the most common destroyer of relationships and churches.
  - Cannot accept responsibility or look to others rather than self.

### **A. Humility seeks to serve others**

Mark 9:35

And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."

- Key: our motivation
  - Glorify God or ourself?
- If you want to be great, you must be the greatest servant.

### *Humility is at heart of following Jesus*

Philippians 1:21

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Matthew 16:25

For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Matthew 20:16

So the last will be first, and the first last.

### *See Christ's example*

Philippians 2:3-8

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

## ***B. Humility sees all people valuable***

Mark 9:36-37

And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me."

- Child: example of the least as an example (children of that age were of low status)
- Mindset change: Serve those who are forgotten
- Why? All are created in the image of God and equally valuable

James 2:1-5 (sin of partiality)

My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place," while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or, "Sit down at my feet," have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?

## ***C. Humility believes the best of others***

Mark 9:38-40

John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us." But Jesus said, "Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. For the one who is not against us is for us.

- John's complaint where saw someone doing ministry in Jesus' name
- Jesus calls out John's motivation behind the complaint: jealousy
- Heart of ministry: Jesus' name being glorified
- Misperception: all differences divide us (some exclude others because of minor, non-essential doctrinal differences)
- Truth: focus on the heart of essential doctrinal issues
- Different tiers of doctrine
  - Tier 1 / Essential
    - See Statement of Faith - reflects key, essential points
      - Holy Trinity
      - Jesus is God
      - Salvation by grace alone by faith alone in Christ alone
      - Bible is inerrant/truthful
  - Tier 2 / Secondary
    - Important doctrinal positions but differences exist (baptism)
  - Tier 3
    - Debatable Topics (Ex: end times)

***D. Humility is to be sought because it will be rewarded***

Mark 9:41

For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.

**Application**

***If not a believer in Christ, only God can give you a new heart from pride, anger, jealousy***

***If a Christian, our lives must be characterized by humility***

- Treat all in the image of God
- Don't judge people by appearance
- Get to know them
- Consider ways to serve
  - See "Heart of Jesus" ministry (serving others who cannot thank you)

Matthew 25:37-40

Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'