



## What's Going On Here?

Jesus has been teaching His disciples and the people that He is the anointed one (Christ) who was promised by God to come establish the kingdom reign of God, about the goal of His mission, and about the nature of following Him on this mission (discipleship). Then at the hinge of the Gospel account of Mark, Jesus tells what it means for Him to be the anointed one. But the importance and reality that Jesus must suffer and die did not yet register with the disciples, who were more concerned about glory and rank within the kingdom. In response to their grasping for glory and greatness, Jesus taught that to follow Him means to follow Him first in service and suffering and only then in glory. Here we will see this same theme display itself again. As an example to those who would follow Him He here holds up Himself—the Son of Man whose express purpose in coming was to serve and to give His life to ransom people from sin and death.

## **“Discipleship = Servanthood”**

**Mark 9:14-10:16**

<sup>14</sup> After getting back to his other disciples, they saw a large crowd surrounding them and some Bible Scholars conversing with them. <sup>15</sup> Immediately after the whole crowd saw Jesus, they were amazed and were running out to greet Him. <sup>16</sup> He asked them, “What are you conversing about with them?” <sup>17</sup> One from the crowd replied, “Teacher, I brought my son with a mute spirit to you. <sup>18</sup> Whenever it overtakes him it throws him down, he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes stiff. I told your followers to cast it out, but they were not powerful.” <sup>19</sup> Jesus replied to them, “O faithless generation, up till what point must I be with you? Up till what point must I put up with you? Bring him to me.” <sup>20</sup> They brought him and, after the spirit saw Him, it immediately convulsed him and he fell upon the earth, rolling around while foaming at the mouth. <sup>21</sup> Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been like this?” He said, “From childhood, <sup>22</sup> and often it has even thrown him into fire and water in order to destroy him. But if you are able to do anything to help us, have compassion upon us!” <sup>23</sup> Jesus said to him, “‘If you are able’? All things are possible for the one who believes!” <sup>24</sup> Immediately after crying out, the father of the boy was saying, “I believe! Help me with my unbelief!” <sup>25</sup> Seeing the crowd rushing together, Jesus rebuked the impure spirit, saying to it, “Mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again!” <sup>26</sup> After crying out and greatly shaking, it came out, and he was almost dead, so that many said, “He is dead.” <sup>27</sup> But after Jesus took his hand, He lifted him up and he arose. <sup>28</sup> After entering a house, Jesus’ followers were asking Him privately, “Why were we not able to cast it out?” <sup>29</sup> He said to them, “This kind is not able to come out except with prayer.” <sup>30</sup> After going out from there, they were passing through Galilee. He was not wanting anyone to know, <sup>31</sup> for He was teaching His followers and saying to them, “The Son of Man is being given over into human hands and they will kill Him and, three days after being killed, He will rise.” <sup>32</sup> But they were not understanding the matter and were afraid to ask Him. <sup>33</sup> They entered Capernaum and, after He was in the house, He was asking them, “What were you discussing on the way?” <sup>34</sup> But they were being silent, for on the way they were discussing with one another who was greatest.

<sup>35</sup>After sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, “If someone wants to be first, he will be the last of all and the servant of all.” <sup>36</sup> After receiving a child, He stood him in the middle of them and, after embracing him, he said to them, <sup>37</sup> “Whoever welcomes a child such as this one on the basis of my name, welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me, but the one who sent me.” <sup>38</sup> John began saying to Him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons with your name and we were preventing him because he hasn’t been with us.” <sup>39</sup> But Jesus said to him, “Do not prevent him, for no one who exercises power on the basis of my name will also be able to speak evil against me. <sup>40</sup> For the one who is not against us, is for us. <sup>41</sup> For whoever gives you a cup of water with the name, ‘You belong to the anointed,’ truly I say to you, he will certainly not lose his reward. <sup>42</sup> But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stop following me, it is better for him if a massive grinding stone were tied around his neck and were thrown into the sea. <sup>43</sup> If your hand causes you to stop following, cut it off! It is better for you to enter into life crippled rather than having two hands depart into hell, <sup>44</sup> [where the maggots do not stop and the fire does not extinguish.] <sup>45</sup> If your foot causes you to stop following, cut it off! It is better for you to enter into life lame rather than having two feet be thrown into hell, <sup>46</sup> [where the maggots do not stop and the fire does not extinguish.] <sup>47</sup> If your eye causes you to stop following, gouge it out! It is better for you to enter into the reign of God with one eye rather than having two eyes be thrown into hell <sup>48</sup> where the maggots do not stop and the fire does not extinguish. <sup>49</sup> Therefore, everything will be made salty with fire. <sup>50</sup> Salt is good, but if the salt becomes salt-less, how will you season anything? Have salt among yourselves and keep peace with one another.”

<sup>1</sup> After rising from there, He came into the region of Judea, across the Jordan, and crowds gathered to Him again and, as was His habit, He was teaching them. <sup>2</sup> After some Pharisees came to Him, they were asking, in order to test Him, if it was right for a man to send away a woman. <sup>3</sup> Answering, He said, “What did Moses command you?” <sup>4</sup> They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a document of divorce and to send her away.” <sup>5</sup> Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of hearts he wrote this commandment for you. <sup>6</sup> But from the beginning of the creation He made them male and female. <sup>7</sup> That’s why a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his woman, <sup>8</sup> and the two will become one flesh. As a result they are no longer two, but one flesh. <sup>9</sup> Therefore, what God has joined together, man must not separate.” <sup>10</sup> Inside the house, His followers were again asking Him about this <sup>11</sup> and He said to them, “Whoever sends away his woman and takes another for his own, commits adultery against her; <sup>12</sup> and if she sends away her man and takes another for her own, she commits adultery.” <sup>13</sup> They were bringing children to Him so that He might touch them, but His followers rebuked them. <sup>14</sup> But after Jesus saw this, He was furious and said to them, “Release the children to come to me! Do not prevent them, for the reign of God is for such as these! <sup>15</sup> Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the reign of God like a child will not enter it!” <sup>16</sup> After embracing them, He was blessing them by placing hands upon them.

**9:14-29** *What is significant about Jesus coming down the mountain (from the transfiguration) and finding things in chaos? (Exodus 32:19-35)*

**9:14-29** *How does this episode with the demon-possessed deaf/mute boy reflect Jesus’ followers and their own struggles?*

**9:19** *What does Jesus mean by his rebuke with the words, “O faithless generation...”?*

**9:23-24** *How did Jesus help and encourage the boy’s father in his faith? How was this shown in his second prayer? How do the words of this boy’s father help us?*

**9:29** How did the evil spirit react to Jesus' command to come out? What would be the reason for such a reaction?

**9:29** From everything Jesus says, why were the disciples unable to cast out this demon?

What is the "prayer" that Jesus references by which such a demon can be cast out?

**9:30-32** Earlier in the Gospel, Jesus said things to them in code (really parables), and they did not get it. They have struggled to get their minds around the fact that He often says things that have a clear meaning at the surface level, but what He wants is for them to look under the surface and gain understanding. And now He tells them something which He means quite literally; and they, not surprisingly, are puzzled because they are looking for a hidden meaning and cannot find it.

Why don't the disciples want to understand the plain meaning of what Jesus is telling them?

What is on the disciples' minds as they travel to Capernaum that is preventing them from understanding Jesus (vv. 33-34)?

**9:33-34** The kingdom of God is different from the kingdoms of the world. The world's leaders argue and jostle for positions of importance. What makes a person important in God's kingdom?

**9:37** What example of service does Jesus give us?

**9:42-48** How do Jesus' words about avoiding sin ("stop following") tie back to His words in 8:34-38 about "taking up your cross" and "losing your life"? How serious is Jesus about avoiding sin?

**9:49** What does Jesus mean when He says that all must be made salty with fire?

**10:1** Why did some Pharisees bring up the issue of divorce?

**10:1-10** This is among the verses often given as the Biblical grounds for divorce (Matthew 5:32, 1 Corinthians 7:15). What do the words of Jesus teach us is the real reason divorce is given? What does this mean?

**10:6-8** What is the basic principle we need to keep in mind about marriage?

**10:13-14** Why are little children good examples of people who have received the kingdom of heaven in a God-pleasing way?