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a *Grace Notes* course

## **The Gospel of Mark**

an expositional Bible study

by Dr. Daniel Hill, Pastor

Southwood Bible Church

Tulsa, Oklahoma

Lesson 9

Mark 9:1-50

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*Grace Notes*

1705 Aggie Lane, Austin, Texas 78757

Email: [wdoud@bga.com](mailto:wdoud@bga.com)

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## The Gospel of Mark

### Lesson 9: Mark 9:1-50

Lesson Instructions

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## Instructions for Completing the Lessons

There are sixteen (16) lessons in the MARK course curriculum, one lesson for each chapter.. There will be questions in the Quiz for each lesson on the topics that are named here.

Begin each study session with prayer. It is the Holy Spirit who makes spiritual things discernable to Christians, so it is essential to be in fellowship with the Lord during Bible study.

### Instructions

Read the introduction to the study of Mark.

Study the Mark chapter for this lesson, by reading the verses and studying the notes. Be sure to read any other Bible passages that are called out in the notes.

Before taking the Quiz, **Review** all of the notes in the Mark lesson.

Go to the Quiz page and follow the instructions to complete all the questions on the quiz. The quiz is "open book". You may refer to all the notes and to the Bible when you take the test. But you should not get help from another person.

When you have completed the Quiz, be sure to SAVE your file. If your quiz file is lost, and that can happen at Grace Notes as well, you will want to be able to reproduce your work.

To send the Quiz back to Grace Notes, follow the instructions on the Quiz page.

Grace Notes  
Warren Doud  
1705 Aggie Lane  
Austin, Texas 78757 USA  
Telephone: 512-458-8923  
Email address: <wdoud@bga.com>

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## Chapter 9

Commenting on the grace of God, Charles Spurgeon said, *How great a stoop from the height of His throne to a dunghill! How wonderful that power which occupies itself in rescuing beggars, all befouled with the filthiness in which they lay. For He lifts them out of the dunghill, not disdaining to search them out from amidst the base things of earth that He may by this means bring to naught the great ones, and pour contempt upon all human glorying.*

In our passage we are going to see glory, but not the glory of man, the glory of our Savior Jesus Christ.

In the previous chapter we saw Peter confess his faith in Christ. We also saw Peter rebuke the Lord when he spoke of his suffering and his death. Then we saw the challenge given to those who wish or desire to follow Jesus Christ - a challenge even for us today. Now the last verse of chapter eight and the first verse of chapter nine really go together.

In Mark 8:38 the Lord spoke of his coming in the glory of the Father. After the rejection, the suffering, and the death, there would be resurrection and glory.

Suffering precedes exaltation. Of course all Peter heard back in Mark 8:31 was that his friend, Jesus, was going to suffer and die. Now Peter is told again that Jesus will rise from the dead.

Peter, like many of us, had selective hearing and heard only so much and then, what is always worse, acted upon the partial information he heard.

Mark 9:1 is a promise that reinforces the statement that the Lord will be glorified, that he will rise from the dead, and that any suffering, even to the point of death, is just a prelude to exaltation.

### Mark 9:1

**And He was saying to them, Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.**

Those who take this verse out of context really get confused. Some even go so far as to say there are those who were present when that was said who are wandering the earth today, not having died but having celebrated a couple of thousand birthdays.

But they forget an important principle: The King in glory is the kingdom. The king is not separate from the kingdom. Jesus, king of kings and lord of lords, is the kingdom.

The verb HE SAID is imperfect indicating he said this repeatedly in the message to the multitude and the disciples.

The pronoun limits this promise to just some of those standing there.

And the promise stated: Who by no means may taste death until they see the kingdom of God having come in power.

Jesus Christ had declared upon coming to Galilee that the presence of the King meant the presence of the kingdom:

**Mark 1:15 And Jesus was saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.**

Why is the Kingdom of God at hand? Because Jesus Christ the King is present.

And when His Resurrected Glory is seen by a few who are present, they will get a glimpse at the glory of the divine, the God-man, Jesus Christ as he will be forever.

### Mark 9:2

**And six days later, Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John, and brought them up to a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them.**

The mention of six days relates what is about to occur to the prediction of verse 1.

Verse 1 states that some will not see death until they get a glimpse of the King in His kingdom, now six days later this is going to occur.

Three disciples were selected for this special privilege:

Peter, James, and John (James and John being brothers):

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Prior to this it was Peter, James, and John who went with Jesus and witnessed the raising of Jairus daughter from the dead in Mark 5:37.

Later in Mark 14:33 Peter, James, and John would again be privately with the Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane on the eve of the crucifixion.

Now why just these three?

One reason is that they knew enough of what the Lord was saying to have some real questions about why he had to suffer and die.

If you do not know anything about a given topic you do not even know enough to know what you don't know. But these three had some doctrine, but not enough, so the Lord was going to let them see that suffering and death are a mere prelude to eternal glory.

The high mountain is probably a portion of Mt. Hermon which rises to an altitude of over 9,000 feet.

In Luke 9:32 the parallel account tells us that Peter, James, and John took a nap after arriving on the mountain. We are also told that while they were sleeping, Jesus was praying.

And it was while he was praying that he was transfigured:

The phrase BEFORE THEM uses an adverb that looks at physical relationship rather than time. When they awoke he was transfigured.

The word TRANSFIGURED is METAMORPHOSIS where we get the word metamorphosis.

It means to change into another form, more than just an outward change.

For a brief time the Lord's earthly body was changed into what it would eternally be in resurrection.

In Philippians 3:10 Paul looks back at the resurrection of Christ and states:

**Philippians 3:10 That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.**

The resurrection of Christ and our resurrection is a display of the tremendous power of God.

### Mark 9:3

**And His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them.**

The glory of Christ's resurrection body at the transfiguration was a preview of the uniform of glory of the winner, the mature believer in eternity.

All believers are destined to have a resurrection body like the resurrection body of Christ:

**I Corinthians 15:49 And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.**

But the winner, the overcomer, the believer who presses the advance to maturity in Christ will have a uniform of glory:

**Revelation 3:5 He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments -**

And just like with these three disciples, our Lord will always give us a glimpse, often through the Word, of what is in store for us not only in time but in eternity.

All the confusion, all the misunderstanding, all the worry and concern should have been laid to rest when Peter, James, and John saw the glorified Christ and knew that this is what their friend Jesus would be forever.

### Mark 9:4

**And Elijah appeared to them along with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus.**

Both Matthew and Mark write that Jesus, Elijah and Moses were talking but only Luke gives us the content of the conversation:

**Luke 9:30-31 And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.**

1. Moses was Israel's deliverer and lawgiver
2. Elijah was the defender of God and the prophet of future restoration.
3. The combined ministries of these two significant Old Testament men would have

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revealed the suffering, death, and future glorification of Christ.

4. Moses knew what it was to be a deliverer under pressure. Elijah knew what it meant to be rejected and to suffer. Both knew of the future kingdom of the King of kings.
5. The disciples on the other hand had been confused and rejected even the thought that Jesus must suffer and die.
6. Luke, stating that they talked with Christ about His death that was about to be accomplished makes this a very exclusive conversation. No one else understood what Christ would have to face and what was ahead through death for Him.
7. They then ministered encouragement to Christ that could come from no other source.

We must recognize that the God-man, Jesus Christ, was in need of encouragement just like we are.

And we also must see that that encouragement was provided just like it is provided to us.

God wants us to endure towards the goal of our destiny and in that endurance he provides encouragement.

Encouragement comes from three sources:

1. From the Word of God as it is being taught: God the Holy Spirit knows your needs at every given moment and God the Holy Spirit leads gifted communicators to provide encouraging teaching.
2. From the Word that is resident in your Soul: As you have learned the Word and it is yours, you bring it into your memory center and are encouraged by it.

This is a promised ministry of God the Spirit:

**John 14:26 But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.**

3. From others who encourage you with God's Word, promises, doctrines, and principles:

**I Samuel 23:16 And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David - and encouraged him in God.**

**Principle:** God our Father provides sources of encouragement to us. This need that we have is in no way a weakness, it is a strength we have as we press the advance towards God highest and best for us.

### Mark 9:5,6

**And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.**

**For he did not know what to answer; for they became terrified.**

We really need to look at these two verses in reverse order:

The reason Peter spoke up was because he had nothing to say. Sounds like a few politicians I know. The less they know the more they say -

The phrase: For they (Peter, James, and John) became exceedingly afraid, is explanatory, beginning with the conjunction GAR, for you see.

"Terrified" is a Greek word only used here and in Hebrews 12:21, where we read of Moses' fear in the presence of God at Mt. Sinai.

It is a very strong word for fear that results, in Peter's case, of saying a rather ridiculous thing:

We are even told at the beginning of verse 6 that he did not know what he was saying.

At the beginning of verse 5 we read that Peter answered, but no question was asked.

Then he calls Jesus RABBI or TEACHER, but what he has just seen should have told him that Jesus was much more than a teacher or rabbi.

His next statement is that: It is good for us to be here.

The verb in the sentence is present tense, indicating that Peter wanted to stay. It was so good, but only in a comparative way KALOS, that he did not want to leave.

So his suggestion is to build three tents, one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah, and they would never leave the mountain top.

Let's analyze what Peter had to say:

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1. Peter was exceedingly afraid, which is understandable. But his fear should have lead him to silence, not answering when he was not asked a question. This was like nervous banter that was not needed or right.
2. Peter was right in that it was good to be there but the good should have been the encouragement he received.  
As Moses and Elijah encouraged Jesus, this scene should have encouraged the three disciples.
3. When Peter wanted to stay there he was rejecting reality. A reality he had been taught, that Jesus must be rejected, suffer, and die before he is raised in glory.
4. Peter was having a mountain top experience, and he did not want to go back to the lowlands of reality.  
But the whole purpose of this exercise was to show Peter and the others that reality must be faced but eternal glory is the sure result.
5. In Peter's desire to stay on the mountain top he parallels many believers today who go for the spectacular and do not face reality.  
They want the glory without the problems of life. They want to hide away on a mountain top and never are willing to bring their relationship with Christ into the arena of reality.
6. Peter, also in his nervous banter, rejected the supremacy of Christ by suggesting that they make three tents, one for Christ, one for Moses, one for Elijah.  
But Jesus Christ is above Elijah and before Moses and we must never put others on His unique level.
7. When we are told that Peter said these things to Christ a present tense verb is used to indicate that he just kept on talking and talking. The next verse tells us how he stopped talking.

### Mark 9:7

**Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!**

The cloud was formed to shield Peter, James, and John from the divine glory of God which no mere man can look upon.

The voice that came out of the cloud was the voice of God the Father:

**This is my Son, the beloved, you hear him.**

The verb is imperative, a strong command to shut up and listen to Jesus Christ.

Now the next verses tell us what Jesus had to say - but before we look at that, let's look at what was pre-figured by this experience with Christ:

NOTICE WHO WAS PRESENT:

1. The Lord Jesus Christ was present in glory
2. Two Old Testament saints were there, Moses having died a normal death and the other, Elijah having been translated or raptured into glory
3. And the three disciples, Peter, James, and John

This composition illustrates the illustrates the Millennial Kingdom of Christ:

Remember what Christ said back in verse 1:

There are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.

And in that Millennial Kingdom of Christ that will last for a literal 1000 years Christ will be there in glory, the believers who have died in ages past will be there, along with the CHURCH AGE believers who are Raptured at the coming of Christ for His church, and there will be men and women who by faith endured through the tribulation and will behold the glory of the Son of God as did these disciples.

Jesus Christ was transformed on that mountain top and he was encouraged as he faced his death. That exercise on Mt. Hermon told him it will all be worth it -

And we can have that same encouragement and confidence and we too can say, it will all be worth it.

Alexander de Seversky said that man must: Welcome change as a friend, try to see new possibilities and blessings it is bound to bring. If you stay interested in everything around you, in new ways of life, new people, new plans, you will grow. Never stop learning and never stop growing, and that is the key to a fascinating life - in the midst of change.

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In the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ we see a change in bodily form but more important, a change in what will be the mission of the disciples and their anticipation of the kingdom of Christ -

While God's plan remains set from eternity past, the timing of that plan as revealed to man may take appropriate turns, even delays, as divine progress goes forth.

We have noted that Peter just had to say something and having nothing to say said something that was wrong.

We also saw that a cloud formed overhead to shield these disciples from the glory of the Father and that God the Father told Peter:

This is my beloved Son, hear him -

I want to take some time to look at this very important event Theologically. What was the importance and the significance of the Transfiguration?

First we have to note something about the entire book of Mark:

To this point we have seen Jesus Christ present himself to Israel as the King and the one who offers to them the kingdom.

From this point on we see Jesus preparing for the Cross and preparing his disciples for what will follow, the Age of the Church.

### Mark 9:8,9

**As they were coming down from the mountain, He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man rose from the dead.**

**They seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead meant.**

Let's look at what happened immediately after God the Father told Peter to keep quiet and listen to His Son, Jesus Christ.

Moses and Elijah had vanished, returned to Sheol, Abraham's Bosom. There were again just the four, Peter, James, and John and their Lord Jesus Christ.

It was time to come down from the mountain. The glory that they saw was for a future time and not for the present.

That mountain top was a time out of reality and not reality itself. It was grand and it was glorious but now it was time to return to the lowlands of life.

We have seen a parallel in that to the Christian way of life. We may occasionally be on the mountain tops with our Savior but that is not reality. Reality is lived in the lowlands where we take the doctrine he has given us and apply it to life.

As they were coming down from Mt. Herman, the Lord gave them some curious orders:

**And He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man should rise from the dead.**

Here is something different. We have read that on other occasions the Lord told the recipients and witnesses of miracles not to say anything to others.

That was because of the hardness of heart of the people, the ones who were already negative and rejecting the king and his kingdom.

But here the disciples, the three who were the closest to the Lord are told to not say anything to anyone about seeing the Lord in glory for an appointed time, until after the Jesus would be raised from the dead.

So the prohibition is for only a period of time:

The word ORDERED is DIASTELLW, and was a military term for placing under orders.

The authority in the chain of command is Jesus Christ and he gives an order at a point in time and the middle voice sees it as benefiting the subject.

Now if this order benefits Christ it will also benefit those who belong to Christ.

They were ordered not to RELATE what they had seen. The word is much stronger than merely telling someone something. It refers to a narrative that goes through to the end of the story.

Now in that we can begin to see why there is a prohibition with a time limit - the story was not yet completed. And would not be completed until Jesus, the God-man was raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of the Father.



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### Mark 9:10

This verse gives us the response by the three disciples to this command:

**And they seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead might mean.**

“Seized” is KRATEW, which refers to a very intense holding on to, the disciples seized upon the statement, they kept it, they held it.

And they, only among themselves DISCUSSED it, which is a word used for dialogue, debate, and is present tense indicating a continued discussion.

This response shows us that they were perplexed over what was said yet they obeyed the command not to tell others of what they had seen.

**Principle:** Obedience even in the midst of lack of understanding.

**Illustration:** A man was visiting an African Mission center and the missionary was showing him around the compound. The missionary’s son was playing under a tree when the missionary turned and shouted, “down on the ground,” then he ordered, “crawl towards me!” It was only after the boy was safely away from the tree that the visitor saw the poisonous snake hanging from the limbs over where the boy was playing.

The boy was obedient, even though he did not know what was going on.

How obedient would we be in a similar situation?

Peter, James, and John did not understand. But they were obedient.

Now we today have an advantage over Peter, James, and John. We can understand; we can see the story to its completion because we have the advantage of the complete canon of Scripture.

There is an event in Matthew’s Gospel that precedes the Transfiguration that helps us to understand both the Theological significance of the event as well as the reason Jesus ordered them to not tell anyone of it until after his resurrection:

Read Matthew 16:13-20

This account parallels the confession of Christ by Peter that we examined in Mark 8:27-30

But we have an important insert. Matthew’s Gospel was received by the Jews who had believed in Christ. Matthew is very concerned with showing Jesus as the Messiah, the Old Testament prophetic king who will establish his kingdom.

But there will be a delay in the kingdom, a delay that will see the establishment of the CHURCH AGE

**Matt. 16:16, And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.**

The name JESUS looks at the Lord as Savior

The title LORD looks to his deity

The name CHRIST in the NEW TESTAMENT. is the equivalent of the Old Testament MESSIAH

Now the Jews had prophecy that told them that the Messiah would come and establish his kingdom. Daniel 7:13-14 closely associates the King and His kingdom.

But look at Matthew 16:17-19

**And Jesus answered and said to him, Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.**

While we will study these verse in depth at another time, what I want you to see now is that at the recognition of Jesus as the Christ, the Old Testament Messiah, he begins to give prophecy regarding the Church which will begin on the day of Pentecost.

He does not talk about the Kingdom, but the Church.

Then at verse 20 he says:

**Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ.**

He prohibited them from telling the Jews that he was the Messiah, because in the Jewish mind,

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filled with Old Testament prophecies, the Messiah would establish his kingdom.

But that was not the plan, between the King and his Kingdom we have the entire course of the Church Age.

Now look at Matt. 16:21:

**From that time Jesus Christ began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.**

And there is a change. No longer the ministry of the Messiah and the kingdom of God being at hand, but now a personal and intense preparation of the disciples who, on the day of Pentecost will be the heralds of the church, who will be filled with the Holy Spirit, and who will take forth the message of a risen Christ and proclaim the rest of the story turning the world up side down.

Now the change in ministry creates a problem that takes us back to Mark 9:9

Jesus has been recognized and confessed as the Christ, the Old Testament Messiah who will establish his kingdom. But he doesn't talk about the kingdom. He talks about the church, he tells his disciples not to tell others he is the Messiah, he begins to personally train his disciples for the coming church age.

The conclusion in the minds of these disciples would be that there would be no kingdom. They would become amillennialists overnight. No proclaiming of Christ the Messiah, no kingdom to come, now this new age, the church.

But that would be the wrong conclusion. The essence of what the Transfiguration is all about was mentioned regarding other prophecies by the prophet Habakkuk:

**Habakkuk 2:3 For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hastens toward the goal, and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay.**

**Principle:** Jesus reveals his kingdom in glory to Peter, James, and John and in doing so tells them, it is not cancelled, it is still to come, it is part of God's plan.

Let's look at this under a few points:

1. The synoptic Gospels are largely concerned with the kingdom. John's Gospel sets forth truth belonging to the church. And John's is the only Gospel that doesn't record the Transfiguration.

2. In each Gospel (Matthew, Mark, Luke) the Transfiguration is preceded by a declaration by Christ concerning his kingdom:

**Mark 9:1 And He was saying to them, Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.**

3. Each Gospel shows that the Transfiguration was the significant turning point in the ministry of Christ.

He tells his disciples to tell no one he is the Christ, the Messiah. and he begins training the disciples for future service in the Church Age.

4. Those changes resulted from the rejection of the King and his kingdom. We have seen the active rejection by the religious leaders and even the passive rejection of those who followed Christ only briefly, or only to see miracles worked by the man from Nazareth.

Remember what Jesus called that generation in Mark 8:38 An adulterous and sinful generation -

A generation who was rejecting the King, the Messiah, because he did not fit their mold.

5. With the changes, and the prophecy to Peter regarding the Church, it would have been very easy to assume that the kingdom was abrogated. Just like many do today.

6. So Jesus took three disciples, who had enough doctrine to know that they did not understand, and gave them a glimpse of future glory, the kingdom of the King.

7. Lewis Sperry Chafer states: The Transfiguration was essential to verify the promise of the kingdom and thus give full assurance of its final realization.

8. After the resurrection, the disciples would speak of what they saw and be a witness to the fact that the kingdom is to come at God's perfect and appointed time.

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Now the question remains, did the disciples catch on, did they understand that while the church age would stand between the king and his kingdom that this would in no way eliminate the kingdom?

Read Acts 15:13-18

**And after they (Paul and Barnabas) had stopped speaking, James (half brother of Jesus) answered, saying, Brethren, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. And with this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written (quotes from Amos and Jeremiah), After these things I will return, And I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen, And I will rebuild its ruins, And I will restore it, In order that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name, Says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old.**

James certainly did not reject the promise of a literal kingdom of Christ yet to come.

Nor did Peter:

**2 Peter 1:16-18, For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, This is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased -- and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.**

Remember what Peter was doing in Mark 9:10? Discussing, debating what was meant by what the Lord says -

There is no debate in 2 Peter 1, questions have been replaced with confidence. A confidence in the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ will return and establish His kingdom.

We may think that Peter's confidence was built upon his presence on that Mount of Transfiguration, because he was there, he saw and

he heard. But the next verse in 2 Peter 1 shows us where Peter found his confidence:

**2 Peter 1:19, And yet we have, right now, the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts -**

Peter is saying that the Word of God, that we have before us this morning is more sure than that experience on the mountain top, that the Word is even a greater reality than what was seen and heard.

We may marvel at what it would have been like to see the Glory of the Lord, to hear the voice of the Father - and yet every time we open the Bible that is exactly what we are privileged to see and privileged to hear.

These same three, Peter, James, and John had been present at the raising from the dead of Jairus' daughter and the disciples had been with Jesus in Nain where he raised the widow's son from the dead.

Their questioning and debating did not merely deal with what was meant by Jesus' statement of rising from the dead. It dealt more with the prophetic significance of it. What did it mean in relationship to the future kingdom and the suffering their friend Jesus was beginning to talk about.

These three disciples had enough doctrine to think that something was not right according to their understanding, but not enough doctrine to figure it out.

### Mark 9:11

At verse 11 they did a very noble thing, they asked a question. They were discussing the problem of prophecy, the kingdom, the Lord's suffering. They finally figured out they did not have the answer, so they asked a question.

**Principle:** They did not assume to know the answer, so they were bold enough to ask a question.

One problem we all have is that we don't ask questions. We fear that others will think us

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ignorant where, in reality, all of us have questions that beg for answers.

**Application:** Are we bold enough to ask the questions?

**And they asked Him, saying, Why is it that the scribes say that Elijah must come first?**

Four pieces of information went into asking this question:

1. What they had just seen: On the mount of Transfiguration they saw Elijah with the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Their understanding of Old Testament prophecy: They knew the Scriptures of Malachi 3:1 and 4:5-6

**Mal. 3:1, Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming, says the Lord of hosts.**

**Mal. 4:5-6, Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse.**

3. They also knew that Jesus had told them that He would be rejected by the people, that he would suffer, and even die, and then be raised from the dead.

What Jesus was saying that he had to suffer, greatly disturbed them. Why would the king, the promised Messiah have to suffer and even die?

You see, while they knew some of the Old Testament prophecy, they did not know it all, and the portions of the prophets that predicted the Lord's suffering and death was unknown or ignored.

4. They also knew what the scribes taught about Elijah. So they had some current theological understanding.

Tradition taught that Elijah would come with the two flasks of oil to anoint the Messiah making known to the Messiah his purpose.

And since they saw Elijah with Jesus, they would think, according to current teaching of the scribes, that the king and his kingdom were ready to be established.

But then Jesus said: **Tell no man of this until I am raised from the dead.**

So putting all these facts together did not lead to enlightenment but to confusion - just like we as Christians are occasionally confused as we learn the Word. But out of confusion can come understanding.

"If Elijah comes first, identifies you as Messiah, as we have, then should not the kingdom be established now and forget this suffering and death stuff?"

### Mark 9:12

**And He said to them, Elijah does first come and restore all things. And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He should suffer many things and be treated with contempt?**

Now Jesus brings in the prophecy that they were neglecting, he tells the rest of the story so to speak. And He gives us a chronology of how these things will occur:

Elijah will come to restore all things: we have an aorist participle and a main verb in the present, active, indicative.

The aorist participle precedes the main verb and so this is yet for a future time.

Then the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, experiences the fulfillment of the passion prophecies of the Old Testament

He will suffer many things and be set at naught.

The word SET AT NAUGHT is an aorist, passive, subjunctive and looks to a future event. The Cross and the suffering of the Savior.

The word means to be treated with contempt, to be despised, to suffer. And that will be the treatment that Jesus will experience as he sets his face towards Jerusalem and the Cross.

## Mark Lesson 9

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At verse 12, Jesus is looking ahead to the Tribulation and the events that precede His second coming:

The one who comes will restore all things prior to the Lord establishing his kingdom.

This is recorded in Revelation 11:3-12

The two witnesses will have tremendous power and authority.

They will be killed by ABADDON, prince of the demons of the abyss (Compare Rev 9:11 and 11:7).

**But after three and one-half days they will be raised from the dead. And the second woe and seventh trumpet judgment will follow.**

It is believed that these two witnesses are Moses and Elijah the same two who were with Jesus on the mount of Transfiguration.

So verse 12 looks at the future events, the coming of Elijah and the coming suffering and death of Jesus Christ.

### Mark 9:13

Now remember the reason for this dialogue. The disciples were having a hard time accepting the fact that Jesus had to suffer and die.

They knew Jesus was the Messiah, the promised King of the Old Testament prophecies. They wanted him to usher in His kingdom now and forget about any suffering and death.

But Jesus is telling them that suffering is necessary if exaltation is to result.

**But I say to you, that Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him.**

Here, and in Matthew 11:14 more specifically, John the Baptist is identified with Elijah.

**Luke 1:17, Of John the Baptizer it is stated that He who will go as a forerunner before Him (The Lord) in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.**

And the Lord now is telling his disciples that even John who could have fulfilled the prophecies of

Malachi and prepared the way for the King and the Kingdom, was ill-treated, suffered and killed:

They did to him what they wished -

Now let's get down a few points about John and Elijah:

1. Elijah was predicted to precede the Messiah and John was the forerunner of Jesus Christ.
2. John's message was one of repentance to Israel because the kingdom of God was at hand.
3. Jesus also told Israel that the kingdom of God was present because he was the king.
4. But Israel rejected John and the Roman ruler Herod Antipas had him killed.
5. Jesus said of John's ministry: Matthew 11:14 **"And if you care to accept it, he himself is Elijah, who was to come."**

Accepting it would have been accepting the legitimate offer of the kingdom. And if Israel would have accepted the kingdom message then they would have accepted the king and John would have fulfilled the predicted ministry of Elijah.

But they did not -

6. John had come in the spirit and the power of Elijah to announce the Messiah, Jesus Christ, but he was rejected and Jesus Christ was rejected.
7. So at this point in the narrative of Mark we are seeing the shift from the offer of the kingdom to the establishment of the church which will come on the day of Pentecost.

Now in verse 13 Jesus brings in the story of John who came in the spirit and power of Elijah to demonstrate that if Israel rejected the forerunner of the Messiah they would also reject the Messiah.

If the forerunner suffered and died at the hands of man so to would the Messiah.

This entire dialogue and the mention of Elijah occurred as a result of the disciples inability to understand why the King, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, had to suffer.

No one likes seeing someone they love hurt, and these three disciples who were the closest to Jesus did not want to see him suffer and refused to believe he had to die.

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Even with the promise of resurrection the idea of Jesus having to die was a thought they rejected.

But suffering must precede the exaltation and it is God who takes the cursing and turn it into blessing:

The suffering and death of Christ is the greatest gift God could ever give to man and that suffering and death was because of us and on our behalf:

Our spiritual separation from God and God's very character establishes a barrier between God and man.

Man cannot bridge the gap and God cannot ignore his own essence and excuse man.

And that is the reason we need a Savior. A Savior who was willing to suffer and die on our behalf:

There were six things accomplished on the Cross that could have been accomplished in no other way apart from this perfect plan of God:

1. Redemption and unlimited atonement
2. The penalty of sin is removed by expiation  
Definition: Expiation is Christ making the satisfaction for the offense of sin and thus canceling out the necessity for guilt and punishment.
3. Physical birth is taken care of by regeneration: We are born again spiritually.
4. God's righteousness was satisfied by Christ's work on the cross: propitiation
5. Man's lack of righteousness was taken care of by the imputation of God's righteousness.
6. Our position in Adam is replaced by a new position in Christ: positional truth

Our Savior had to suffer and had to die for us to saved. But he also suffered the rejection and abuse of man so that we could have a Savior who sits at the right hand of the Father and understands every pain we might have, every rejection we might face and every hurt that only He can heal.

**Hebrews 12:1-4** Let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith,

**who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart. You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin.**

Peter, who in Mark 9 so protests the revelation that his friend Jesus must suffer would later on learn that suffering precedes exaltation -

**I Peter 4:12-14** Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

*Only a great God can do for His children what they cannot do for themselves.*

The glory of the transfiguration is over, that glimpse of things to come is complete. Now it is time to leave the mountain top and return to the lowlands of reality.

At the Transfiguration Jesus gave his three closest disciples something very special, an opportunity to see what he would be in glory, a glimpse of the King and His kingdom that they and even believers today will be a part.

But you as a Christian, do not live on a mountain top. You must not live ignoring the opportunities you have to apply God's truth to reality.

### Mark 9:14-16

**And when they came back to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with them. And immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed, and began running up to greet Him. And He asked them, What are you discussing with them?**

Peter, James, and John had been with Jesus on the mountain so that left nine disciples waiting.

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Rather than wait patiently for the Lord and the others to return, they decided to do two things:

1. They tried to cast a demon out of a young boy but failed (See verse 18).
2. They tried to tell the lawyers and the people about the truth they had been learning from the Lord but failed there also, ending up in an argument.

The prepositional phrases show us what Jesus and the three disciples saw as they came off the mountain:

The other disciples were surrounded [PERI ] by the crowd and the lawyers.

There was a continual, present tense, argument going on and the disciples were trying to stand their ground against the crowd and the lawyers.

Preposition PROS face to face.

As soon as the people saw Jesus they did three things:

1. They were greatly astonished: Passive voice, caused to be astonished by his presence.
2. They ran to him: Active voice
3. They greeted him: A middle imperfect indicating they greeted him for their benefit.

The idea is that they welcomed him because they wanted him to take their side in the debate, the argument that was going on.

This is a lot like proof texting, try to find a verse in the Bible which agrees with your preconceived position.

Jesus, however, asks them a question before they have a chance to draw him into the argument.

**What are you (crowd) debating with them (disciples)?**

### Mark 9:17,18

We find the source of the problem, or issue under debate

**And one of the crowd answered Him, Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; and whenever it seizes him, it dashes him to the ground and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth, and stiffens out. And I told**

**Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not do it.**

We see here a father in great distress, hurting for his son who is possessed by a demon.

During the incarnation of Jesus Christ and his earthly ministry, Satan launched an all out attack on the Son of God which is why we read in the Gospels of so much demonic activity even among the children who Jesus loved so much.

In his distress the father brought his Son to Jesus but Jesus was not there, he was on the mountain. So he asked the disciples to help his son - they tried but failed.

The word used for their inability can be translated WORTHLESS, they were worthless when it came to helping this boy and his father.

Now notice Jesus' response at verse 19.

### Mark 9:19

**And He answered them and said, O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you?**

To whom did the lord say this? His disciples - He answered them. Not the man but the disciples.

The word DISCIPLES in verse 18 is a mas, pl, dative noun and the word THEM in verse 19 is a mas, pl, dative pronoun.

So this indictment is not against the man or the crowds or the lawyers, but his own disciples:

1. Oh, unbelieving generation
2. How long shall I be with you
3. How long shall I put up with you

The Lord knew he would only be with them for yet a short time and as he looked at them and heard of what they tried to do, apart from him, he wondered how long he could put up with them.

I really think this was said with a tremendous groan and even a shaking of the head of our Savior.

**Principles:**

1. When Jesus called his disciples "unbelieving," this was not unbelief regarding salvation; they

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were saved. But it was unbelief that prevented their functioning in a Christ-centered Life.

2. In Mark 6:7 Jesus sent the twelve out to minister in his name and gave them power over the unclean spirits. But that was a commission for that specific tour of Galilee. He sent them out to do what he had been doing and sent them with His mandate.

3. But now they are trying to do this apart from Christ, while he is away. They are presuming that they can help this poor man and his son.

4. They were motivated to do this out of all the noble virtues, love, pity, compassion, and sympathy. They really wanted to help the man and the boy, but they lacked faith dependence upon Christ.

5. They had compassion but no power; they had love but not the Lord; they had opportunity but not the omnipotence of God, they had sympathy but not the Savior,

They were doing what they did, a right thing out of noble virtue, but doing it without faith dependence upon Christ.

6. They wanted to help but, just like us, they forgot that the only true help, the only help that is going to last and really make a difference must be centered upon Christ.

7. There may be someone you really love and want to help and maybe they have a need God wants you to fill, but apart from you first being dependant upon Him there is nothing you can do that will last.

Can you give a thirsty man a drink of cold water? That is a small thing. But Jesus said that even that must be done in dependence upon Him.

**Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.**

That time of need may be a time in which you want to help another. How are you going to do it? With your own human power, putting nothing more than a temporary band-aid on a problem? Or can you depend upon Christ to use you to really help the ones you love?

Take a look at the end of the story, Mark 9:28,29.

**And when He had come into the house, His disciples began questioning Him privately, Why could we not cast it out? And He said to them, This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer.**

What had the disciples not done, their had not drawn near with confidence to the throne of grace to receive mercy (grace in action) in a time of need.

Christian, you can be so wonderfully used in the lives of people around you who are helpless and hurting but what kind of help can you give if you exclude the Lord as did these disciples?

### Mark 9:20-22

**They brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth.**

**And He asked his father, How long has this been happening to him? And he said, From childhood.**

**It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!**

Upon confronting Christ, the demon seized the boy and violently threw him to the ground causing an extreme convulsion.

Our Lord demonstrated his love and concern for the boy and the father by asking how long this possession has occurred.

We see the poor state of this boy who is so abused by the demons. This really shows us what Satan can do for us - not much. Ever since childhood the boy had suffered. And in the same way Satan wants the innocent, even the children, to suffer. He wants to put scars not only on their bodies but on their souls.

But notice what the father says to the Lord:

**But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!**



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### Mark 9:23

Jesus seizes the moment to teach a principle of truth:

*EXPANDED: As regarding your remark as to my ability to help your son, I tell you everything depends upon your ability to believe on me, not on my ability to acts.*

In telling the man this he tells us that his power and compassion are not withheld by him but withstood by man.

### Mark 9:24

The father of the boy understood what the disciples had missed:

**Immediately the boy's father cried out and began saying, I do believe; help my unbelief.**

This man had believed in Christ as His Savior, and now requests help, help for his faith dependence upon Jesus Christ.

We should just have that same attitude. All of us lack faith, living faith. And all of us can go to God and ask, help me with my unbelief.

Lord, help me trust you. Show me that there is none other upon whom I can depend. I believe in you, Lord, help now my life of faith and dependence upon you.

At this point in the story there are four parties present and represented:

1. The boy: A picture of what Satan wants to do to mankind. He hates that which God created and in his vile hatred wants man to suffer and feel the horrible pain he inflicts.
2. The Disciples: Standing there helpless, wanting to do something, having even tried, but worthless when it comes to helping this boy.

The disciples picture the world with its solutions, a cold cup of water, but not Christ. A temporary solution but not the Savior, as in the world today with its words of encouragement that are hollow of anything eternal.

Many Christians today want to help the ones they love but try to do so apart from Christ.

3. The Father: A man in a desperate situation, having sought help and finding none. Realizing

his lack of faith and yet asking for help with his faith.

This is the one we should seek to imitate. A man who has a need but not a mere need for himself but for another. Not a man of great faith and doctrine but a man willing to say, I believe, help me to believe even more.

A man desperate for help and crying out to Christ: The true glory of God is born in the parched soil of our destitution rather than the fertile ground of ability.

It is when we are unable that God is able. When we say "no way," He says, "my way." The glory of God and his majesty shines forth from our weakness and then His strength in us.

When believers are bold enough, and they go to the Lord and say that they are not much, but that they depend upon him for help, the Lord will always be there.

4. The fourth party present is Jesus Christ himself. He is the solution, he is the one who can give help in a time of need.

### Mark 9:25-27

Jesus dispels the demon and restores the boy:

**And when Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again.**

The crowd was ready to interrupt, to perhaps pursue the theological debate. So, very quickly, Jesus commanded the demon to come out of the boy.

**And after crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and the boy became so much like a corpse that most of them said, He is dead!**

When the crowd arrived they saw the boy and he looked like a corpse, like he is dead.

But Jesus Christ doesn't restore to death, but to life.

**But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up.**

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We do not know how the people reacted to this, but we do know what they should have been thinking -

Whenever Satan is dethroned, whenever God's people depend upon Christ rather than being distracted and captured by the World, the Flesh, or the Devil there is the passing from death unto life.

While we see this so vividly at salvation it is also true for you and me as Christians:

Remember Paul's word in Ephesians 5:14

**Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.**

You will recall that the eighth and ninth chapter of the Gospel of Mark reveal a shift in the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Prior to the recognition of Christ as the Messiah by his disciples, and prior to the Transfiguration, the message was to Israel to repent for the kingdom of God is at hand and present in the King, Jesus Christ. But the people rejected the king or were just interested in the miracles or were merely temporarily caught up in the crowd following Jesus.

In the parallel account of Matthew 16 we saw that Jesus began talking about his impending death for sins and the church age that was to come.

So as he shifted away from the message of the kingdom, he began to prepare and train his disciples.

### Mark 9:30

The first thing that the Lord does is leave Galilee and begin to concentrate on the Judea.

**And from there they went out and began to go through Galilee, and He was unwilling for anyone to know about it.**

This the last reference to Galilee in the Gospel of Mark prior to the Crucifixion.

Before this, any journey though Galilee was accompanied by teaching and miracles. This trip was covert. No longer was he dealing with the masses who rejected, but with the few who accepted.

The verb "began to go through," and the preposition DIA, taking the genitive, gives the sense of travel with a destination as its purpose rather than a journey in which the trip is part of the purpose.

The Lord's intention was to get to Capernaum, perhaps collect some personal items, bid farewell to some, and set his face towards Judea.

### Mark 9:31

While v 30 gives us the sense of a geographical change, this verse gives us the message that marked a ministry change.

**For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later.**

Up to this point the Lord had used the situation he and the disciples found themselves in, the circumstances, his parables and miracles given and done for others as a basis for teaching truth to the disciples.

But now he begins to directly teach his disciples about what is to come as they draw near to Jerusalem.

From Mark 8 through Mark 14:53 at the arrest of Jesus the night before the crucifixion, Jesus teaches and trains his disciples for what is to come.

Teaching is the imperfect tense of DIDASKW, which is the strongest and most formal word for verbal instruction. This word always views prepared material that's given to enlighten and to result in thinking and application. We derive the word Doctrine from this word.

When it says he TOLD them we have another imperfect tense that indicates that this message was repeated over and over.

A summary of the content of the instruction is given as follows:

The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later.

This makes the fifth time in Mark 8 and 9 that Jesus refers to his suffering and death:

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1. Mark 8:31 Peter rebuked Jesus for saying he would die
2. Mark 8:34 Implies suffering as Jesus told his followers that they also must pick up their crosses
3. Mark 9:9 When returning from the Mt. of Trans-figuration Jesus mentioned his suffering
4. Mark 9:12 Jesus mentions again that he must suffer.

Now when something is stated in the Scriptures it stands as the Word of God. But when something is repeated again and again, it is because it is essential to the plan of God, or because it is something that is not readily understood by man.

In his shift from his offer of the kingdom to Israel to his message of the offer of himself on the cross, we see that the rejection of the kingdom became the reason for the intensity of his suffering at the hands of his own people.

Jesus Christ was going to be betrayed, suffer, be killed, and then be raised from the dead. The suffering that precedes the exaltation of the resurrection would pay the price for sins, even the sin of rejection of the king and his kingdom.

### A FEW OBSERVATIONS:

1. Through Mark 8 there was a legitimate offer of the kingdom of the King, the Messiah, to Israel.
2. The multitude rejected the King wanting only to be entertained by miracles or following Jesus only as a novelty.
3. This rejection was sin and now Jesus sets aside the kingdom for a time to take care of that sin and its penalty.
4. The very thing that resulted in his teaching about the cross, the rejection by the people, would be paid for on the cross.
5. It may appear that Jesus was turning his back on Galilee but actually he was going to Jerusalem where he would take care of the problem of the sin of rejection he experienced in Galilee.
6. **Principle:** Only Jesus Christ can show such grace, and love, and sacrifice, to die even for those who reject him.

What would we do? We would wash our hands of the Galileans who so quickly turned from applause to rejection - but not our Lord.

Christian, Jesus Christ is sticking with you and doing for you that which you cannot do for yourself, even when you do not stick with him.

### Mark 9:32

Now how did the disciples react to the news that Jesus would be betrayed, that he would die, that he would be raised from the dead?

**But they did not understand this statement, and they were afraid to ask Him.**

The verb "not understand" is the imperfect of AGNOEW, which can be to be ignorant or fail to understand.

Ignorance or failing to understand can either be the fault of the one teaching or the one learning.

Here the Lord is teaching so the problem rests with the ones who are learning, or attempting to.

Whenever ignorance and lack of understanding prevail, the best thing to do is ask questions.

The word STATEMENT is REMA which is used for teaching that is applicable. The disciples understood betrayal, death, and even those who were raised from the dead. But the understanding they lacked was in relationship to their Lord and why he would have to undergo such treatment.

With the use of the word REMA we could say they understood the doctrine but not its application.

And the disciples were afraid to ask Him.

The Lord had now talked about his suffering, death, and resurrection on five occasions and they were beginning to see that it was important, but they did not understand it.

This fear they had was a fear that traps people in ignorance of the truth and the glory of God.

**Application:** Many believers today stay trapped in the dungeon of ignorance because they will not go to God in prayer and ask him for understanding.

How many of you as parents would refuse to explain and instruct and train your child who

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came to you and asked why? There is at times no greater joy than being able to explain things to a child or young person.

Do we think that our perfect, eternal, heavenly Father would not have the same desire to teach his children?

**James 1:5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.**

### Mark 9:33

These disciples were satisfied to remain in the dungeon of ignorance but their Lord was not. If they would not ask him he would ask them:

**And they came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house, He began to question them, What were you discussing on the way?**

What a perfect opportunity for them to bring up their questions regarding his suffering, death, and resurrection - but instead they kept silent.

### Mark 9:34

**But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest.**

Jesus could have brought up the issue of his death and resurrection and in every chapter from now to Mark 14 he does. But here is a more important problem, they were debating which one of them was the greatest.

Now notice this: On the road to Capernaum the disciples faced two problems of ignorance:

1. An ignorance regarding the Lord's suffering, death, and resurrection which resulted in an inability to properly apply doctrine.
2. An ignorance regarding their position in Christ and in heaven which resulted in sin. The sin of boasting, of pride, of arrogance.

The Lord will deal with their ignorance that lead to sin first before even beginning to deal with their ignorance that lead to the inability to apply doctrine.

We might look at these two problems and conclude that their ignorance regarding the Lord's

death and resurrection is the far greater problem. And when taken in the whole scheme of things it is. But the problem of pride and arrogance leading to sin must be dealt with first before any understanding of the grace of God can begin.

#### Principles:

1. Every believer continues to possess a sin nature after salvation.
2. Sins result when we make the volitional decision to go with the temptation. Here the simple temptation is that of wanting to be greater than others.
3. Sins put the believer out of fellowship and in a position of antagonism towards grace.
4. The sin problem must be addressed prior to the understanding and application of grace.
5. For too many believers, like these disciples, the distraction of sin is keeping them in the dungeon of ignorance.
6. Also note: The Lord doesn't just tell them their boasting and pride is sin and to get back in fellowship through confession. He teaches them - What is interesting in this is that about two weeks prior to this the disciples were present when the Lord gave them the message regarding the cost of discipleship, the price that is paid when we follow the Lord:

**Mark 8:34 And He summoned the multitude with His disciples, and said to them, If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.**

That brings up an interesting point. Just because you learn something. Just because you were in class and taking notes, doesn't mean that you will make the proper application. You have to LEARN - THINK - AND APPLY

The disciples were not applying what they had learned.

### Mark 9:35

**And sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all.**

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We might call this the formula for being first: Jesus sat down, he called the twelve, and he began to teach them.

Their problem or ignorance resulting in sin needed a contents correction. Not a process correction.

The same with us. We often need a simple bit of information that will correct our thinking on a certain matter, that will correct a problem of ignorance allowing for sin.

The information they needed is stated as follows:

You want to be first, be last and be servant of all.

Want to be is an infinitive, a result of knowing Christ and His Word you want the best in life now and forever.

The Lord's formula for being first is the application of our spiritual identity.

1. The believers identity in Christ begins with an understanding of total depravity. We are nothing, Christ is everything

2. Once understanding that, we move on to understand our worth. Christ paid the ultimate price for us when he went to the Cross.

Value is set by the price that was paid and God paid the ultimate price for our salvation.

3. Those two principles result in humility. Humility involves knowing your place in God's plan.

4. Because of what Christ has done for us, we can have a boldness and confidence in our relationship with him.

5. And because of what Christ has done for us we can have a humility before man, even becoming a servant, coming in last - because with Christ we are first.

Servant is DIAKNOS, a servant who ministers to others, a deacon.

**Philippians 2:5-8 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being**

**found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.**

What does it mean, that "we should be last?" It means that we should have the attitude of a servant when we consider that our Lord was the ruler who came to serve and that in eternity we are even higher than the angels and exalted forever.

**1 Peter 5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time.**

### Mark 9:36,37

The Lord uses a visual aid to teach the principle:

**And taking a child, He set him before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me.**

It is important to note that what is done is done in the name of Christ. This care and compassion is not some humanitarian act apart from the motive of Christ but is because of Christ.

The word for child is PAIDION a child that need to be trained and is dependant upon others.

To receive a child requires several things:

**Awareness:** To receive a child you need to be aware the child exists. Too often we are so concerned with ourselves that we fail to see others around us. Jesus, in our passage, was very aware of the disciples.

**Sensitivity:** We need to be sensitive to the needs of the child. If a child needs to be changed you don't feed it. Maybe all a child needs is a hug. You need to be sensitive to the needs of those around you.

**Selflessness:** To often we fail in our awareness and our sensitivity because we live life looking at self.

**Willingness:** You have to be willing which means that you make a choice and follow through to be a servant, to minister to one who has need of you.

**Unconditional Love**

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The Wheaton College Bulletin once included the statement: The undisciplined is a headache to himself and a heartache to others and is unprepared to face the stern realities of life.

As we conclude the ninth chapter of the book of Mark we see Jesus training his disciples for what is to come. Little do they know at this time that within a few years they would be used of God to turn the world upside down.

This paragraph begins with strife and ends with peace and in between we have the teaching of our Savior.

### Mark 9:38

**John said to Him, Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to hinder him because he was not following us.**

John was the youngest of the twelve disciples and here he is the one who speaks up. What he says is almost like a boast given to impress Jesus.

Two issues are involved in this statement:

1. Someone other than the twelve disciples was casting out demons but doing it in the name of Christ. Remember that earlier the nine disciples who waited in the lowlands during the transfiguration tried to cast out a demon and could not. They had not depended first upon the Lord thorough prayer and, apparently, this other man had.
2. Seeing this, the disciples hindered him because he was not one of the twelve who followed Jesus. The word HINDER in the Greek means to forbid, or to restrain.

So here the disciples have taken it upon themselves to tell someone else what kind of a ministry they may or may not have.

The basis for this arrogance is that they were the ones who were following Christ and this other was not.

The sad part of this is that it was their very closeness to the Lord, the favored position they held, that became a cause for arrogance rather than humility.

They were the ones who closely followed Jesus Christ and who were called by Christ to be his closest disciples. Yet this privilege was perverted to be a position of pride rather than humility.

They were the ones who were right, they were doing what God wanted them to do in following Christ, they were in the perfect will of God but instead of having appreciation they had arrogance.

The parallel to today is the believer who is fulfilling the will of God, who is learning doctrine and yet rather than have an appreciation of what God is giving to him and what God is accomplishing in his life, he becomes arrogant in his favored spiritual position.

And this is an occupational hazard of Bible churches where the Word is taught and people are coming together to learn, think, and apply the Word of God.

We may know that God has given us a favored spiritual position, but why? Because of what Christ has done and because of our faith in Him and His Word.

Yet we so often use our Grace privilege to hinder others who are not doing exactly what we are doing.

God gives us His grace and we become arrogant and then express that mental attitude sin by attempting to tell others how they should do what they do in the name of Christ.

Rather than arrogance, we need appreciation and then to manifest that with:

**Patience:** Realizing every believer is not at the same stage of spiritual growth.

**Flexibility:** Realizing that while some things are very important, other are not, some are non-essentials.

**Tolerance:** Even when others are clearly wrong we must remember that we are not the right hand of God's justice, we are not the agents of discipline.

**Kindness:**

**Ephesians 4:32 And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.**

## Mark Lesson 9

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### Mark 8:39

The Lord very quickly corrects this arrogance:

**But Jesus said, Do not hinder him, for there is no one who shall perform a miracle in My name, and be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me.**

The word MIRACLE is the word DUNAMIS which goes beyond a mere miraculous act to the supernatural power of God in the Life given and dependant upon Christ.

Upon experiencing the power of God, which comes in our Age through the power of the Word, a believer can not quickly speak evil of Christ.

Speaking evil of Christ is when we assign the power and grace that he provides to that which is commonplace or by way of happenstance.

**Illustration:** To have God provide comfort and peace in a time of pain and then later say that the peace obtained would have been there even apart from your reliance upon the Lord.

Jesus is saying that this may happen but it will not quickly occur.

### Mark 9:40

**For he who is not against us is for us.**

The disciples and believers today are told that anyone who stands against Satan is for Christ.

Remember the issue: casting out a demon. And even today when secular movements and governments and individuals stand against evil they are on the side of Christ.

This type of stand benefits society and also benefits the believer.

**Illustration:** Those who work to preserve freedom preserve our religious freedom and therefore benefit us.

### Mark 9:41

Christ takes the triviality, a cup of water, and illustrates the point:

**For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as followers of Christ, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.**

Casting out a demon in the name of Christ is far greater than offering a fellow believer a cup of water. Jesus wants John to see that when you do even the small things in the name of Christ that is beneficial in either time, or eternity, or both.

### Mark 9:42

The context is not broken: Whoever gives a cup of water is related to whoever causes a believer to stumble.

**And whoever causes one of these little ones who believe to stumble, it would be better for him if, with a heavy millstone hung around his neck, he had been cast into the sea.**

The stumble is SCANDALIZW \_from which we get the word scandalize.

Jesus calls the disciples, and any who follow him, "little ones," with the idea of their being dependent upon him.

What John and the other disciples were doing in verse 38 was putting a hindrance, a stumbling block, in the path of this other believer.

Jesus says that type of exclusivity or for that matter any thing that causes another believer to stumble is a dangerous thing to do. Even to the point where it would be better for them to be at the bottom of the sea (And you know what is at the bottom of the sea).

The Jewish tradition saw sin as resulting in the external. So the Lord uses the hand, the foot, and the eye to warn believers of the results of sin.

Now sin begins as a mental attitude and gets you out of fellowship at that point. But when it becomes external, it not only builds more scar tissue but also begins to hurt and be a stumbling block to others.

By way of hyperbole, taking it to the extreme, Jesus says it would be better to cut off the hand and the foot and pluck out the eye.

He is stressing the severity of sin. Its severity to self and to others.

## Mark Lesson 9

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### Mark 9:43,48

**If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire**

**where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.]**

**If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame, than, having your two feet, to be cast into hell,**

**where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.]**

**If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell,**

**where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.**

The reference to life and to the kingdom of God, refer to the believer in time not eternity.

And the Lord says it would be better to live life as a cripple than to end up in the fire of Gehenna:

Gehenna was a ravine northwest of Jerusalem and had been the site of pagan fire worship beginning at the time of King Ahaz. In Jesus' day it was the city garbage dump where a continual fire burned the trash.

It soon began synonymous with the Lake of Fire.

Unquenchable fire is the word ASBESTON where we get the word asbestos.

These verses are a description of hell and quotes Isaiah 66:24

**Where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.**

The worm is the physical pain that for the believer is all relieved at death. The fire is the further torment of eternal damnation.

You see, if anything keeps someone from believing in Christ, whether external or internal, it would be better to suffer the pain of dismemberment than to allow that offense, that distraction to continue.

To see the transition to verse 49 let's look at some points:

1. The disciples were offending, scandalizing, another believer because he did not do what they thought he should be doing.

2. Jesus tells them that this is a very dangerous thing to do because it expresses pride by way of arrogance which then fuels more pride.

3. Jesus warns them and us against causing another believer to stumble.

4. That would be an offence or distraction that comes from the outside.

5. In the illustration of the hand, the foot, and the eye, Jesus looks at the unbeliever who would allow these distractions of sin to keep him from ever believing in Christ.

But the believer can also be distracted and can face hell on earth under divine discipline. That chastisement can include internal pain, the worm, and external pain, the fire.

6. That is not what Jesus wants for His little ones, for us. He wants us to come to that point in our Christian lives when we will allow no offense, external or internal, from others or from ourselves, to take away the highest and best he has to offer.

7. If we fail to examine ourselves, to see the stumbling blocks we place in our own paths, he will reveal them to us by fire, which is discipline in time.

### Mark 9:49,50

Verses 49 and 50 explain that we as believers must have, in us, that which will preserve us:

**For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.**

The Old Testament burnt offering was laced with salt. And salt was the main preservative of the ancient world.

Now the ideal situation is for the believer to have in himself that which will preserve him.

And that is the Word of God. Doctrine resident in the soul. Doctrine that is applied by faith to the realities of life.

But what happens when the ideal is not the real?



## Mark Lesson 9

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The Lord describes two alternatives and then a result:

1. The believer may have to be salted with fire. The fire of Divine Discipline. If you will not preserve yourself by even the painful act of cutting off that which is an offence to others and self, then the Lord will do it for you.

Can you imagine how it would feel to have salt rubbed into an open wound.

That same type of pain to the soul is what it may take for some of us to set aside the sin that can so easily cause us to stumble.

We must never think that our heavenly Father would not do that and even more for us, to preserve us and drive the offense of sin from us.

He will discipline us so that we can see those things in our own lives that keep us from being conformed to him.

It is like a parent properly disciplining a child. The parent knows what is best in the long run and God, our heavenly parent, knows what is best for us in time and eternity.

2. But there is a second option. The salt of discipline becomes unsalty. And when that happens with what shall it be made salty again?

Perhaps we can better relate to the illustration if we reversed it. What would happen if you rubbed salt on a callous or rubbed salt onto scar tissue? Nothing, you may feel some slight irritation but there would be no pain.

For many believers the salt of discipline has become unsalty. The salt is no longer rubbed into an open wound but onto scar tissue. And there is no sensitivity.

And with believers who continue to resist the loving hand of the Father's discipline, they can end up with iron souls and not feel the pain.

What a tragedy it is to see a Christian under the loving hand of God's justice become insensitive.

You see while we need to have disciplined lives, "the salt that is in us," so often we fail. But God is there to add His discipline. And how sad it is when even that fails -

With what shall the salt be made salty again?

Nothing, discipline is no longer effective and a life is lived in misery and pain.

3. The result of proper discipline, either the disciplined life that we live from within ourselves or the external discipline of God, is peace.

This is a peace that comes from:

1. Knowing that our heavenly Father will correct us even when we fail to correct ourselves.

2. A peace that comes from knowing that God will discipline others, that everyone must be salted with fire, and we can be at peace about others.

## Mark Lesson 9 Quiz

### Instructions

The following questions relate to your study of this lesson.

To answer a question, type your response in the space provided after the word "Answer:". A question may be True/False, multiple choice, fill in the blank, or short answer type.

The last question requires you to write one or two paragraphs in "essay" form. Use the space provided; it will expand to accommodate your response.

You have choices about sending the quiz back to Grace Notes.

- If you received an email file containing the quiz, you can use the REPLY feature of your e-mail application to open the quiz. Enter your answers in the reply message. Then SEND the message to Grace Notes.
- You can enter your answers on these pages, then send the whole file back to Grace Notes as a file attachment. This is handy, but these lessons will average 100K to 200K in size. As an alternative,
- After you answer the questions here, copy and paste the whole list of questions into a new MS Word document; then, send the new file to Grace Notes as an attachment. The new file will, of course, be much smaller than this main file.
- Finally, you can print the Quiz pages on your printer and send your response back to Grace Notes in the regular mail. If you do this, send the mail to:

**Grace Notes**

**% Warren Doud**

**1705 Aggie Lane**

**Austin, Texas 78757 USA**

Whichever transmission method you use, when Grace Notes receives your completed Quiz, the next lesson will be sent to you, by the same means you received this one. EXCEPT: when you have sent in the FINAL QUIZ, we will send your certificate to you, by regular mail.

## Mark Lesson 9

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### Questions on Mark Lesson 9

1. Which disciples were taken by Jesus to the Mount of Transfiguration?

Answer:

2. Who appeared with Jesus and was talking to Him on the mountain?

Answer:

3. From what sources does a Christian's encouragement come?

Answer:

4. "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make \_\_\_\_\_."

Answer:

5. What was the purpose of the cloud that formed (verse 9) on the Mount of Transfiguration?

Answer:

6. The disciples understood fully what Christ meant when He spoke of His rising from the dead.

[True/False]

Answer:

7. Jesus said that "Elijah has indeed come..." Who was He referring to?

Answer:

8. Name the six things that Christ accomplished on the Cross that could have been accomplished in no other way.

Answer:

9. Expressing the teaching of Hebrews 12:1-4 in your own words.

Answer:

10. The disciples who had not gone to the Mount of Transfiguration waited patiently and quietly for the Lord Jesus to return. [True/False]

11. What had the disciples tried to do that they failed at?

Answer:

12. Where can a Christian find "mercy" and "grace to help in time of need?"

Answer:

13. Why was Christ unwilling that people should know that he was traveling through Galilee, trying to get to Capernaum?

## Mark Lesson 9

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Answer:

14. "But if any of you lacks \_\_\_\_\_, let him \_\_\_\_\_, who gives to all men generously..."

Answer:

15. What was Christ's response to the disciples who wanted to know who was going to be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

Answer:

End of Quiz