

We are playing the long game here at FBC.

- ⇒ We think there is no growth like the growth you receive from systematically, walking week-by-week through entire books of the Bible.
- ⇒ We are currently working through Mark's Gospel.

Joseph Caryl, who believed in expository preaching like we do, delivered 424 messages from the book of Job.

- ⇒ Let me assure you, we are not looking to do that.
- ⇒ We will not be in Mark for 8 years.

So far we have only had 23 messages and we are 2 away from ending chapter 9.

- ⇒ I'm excited to have Pastor Ethan start off chapter 10 in two weeks.
 - That passage tells us what Jesus says about divorce. (That will be a great day to tune in)

Before we jump into the passage today let me give a brief recap of the last 50ish verses.

- ⇒ Mark 8:27-30: Peter says that Jesus is the Messiah
- ⇒ Vs. 31-38: Jesus says He is going to be a suffering Messiah and the disciples don't want to believe it.
- ⇒ Mark 9:1-8: Jesus takes the inner circle to the top of mount Hermon and God tells them to listen to what Jesus is saying.
- ⇒ Vs. 14-29: The disciples get a lesson on the power of faith and prayer. A lesson that they needed more than they knew.

And then we reach **vs. 31** where he tells them again about his coming death:

“For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.³² But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.”

In the disciples mind, this would be like a political candidate running for President and then telling his campaign staff towards the end that not only would he lose the election, but he would get assassinated...

Mark tells us that they became so afraid they stopped asking questions.

Mark 9:32 “But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.”

⇒ One commentator said: “They understood enough to be afraid of understanding more”

You may wonder how they can keep missing it

⇒ they hadn't seen this thing play out yet.

⇒ There were a lot of unknowns.

Analogy – Once you've seen certain movies you can't watch them the same way you did before b/c you know the ending.

⇒ In the same way, ONCE THE RESURRECTION OCCURS all of these things begin to make sense for the disciples but before they see the end of the story they didn't get it!

Here is our first thought for the day: The Cross WAS never a Plan B

⇒ I have heard of a gospel song in which it is said that God says we've got a big problem on earth and then God looks all over heaven asking who can I send and Jesus steps up and says “Daddy, it's me!”

⇒ That is not the gospel!... The Cross was the plan all along!

Now that leads us to our passage for today...

⇒ The text starts with an argument between the disciples.

The Gospels do not record their exact words, but my guess is that Peter, James and John were arguing that they were “the greatest” because they were the privileged few to see the glorified Jesus.

Maybe they even got more specific:

- ⇒ I can hear Peter now: “Listen, men, it has to be one of three, and it’s probably me. I am the leader!”
- ⇒ At this point the Son’s of thunder probably lived up to their name and loudly objected....
- ⇒ No doubt the rest of the group was saying “We’ve been out doing it while these three were only talking about it.”

All the while... Jesus knew what was going on, even though they thought he was beyond earshot.

Here Jesus was about to face the ultimate humiliation of all time and they were arguing about who was the greatest.

- They were no different from the petty politicians of Capernaum....

My title for today:

Greatness defined by the Greatest | Mark 9:33-41

So ,

- ⇒ the disciples, who are about as sharp as a butter knife, are arguing over who is the greatest....
- ⇒ Jesus knows what going on because He’s Jesus...

Look what He does: **Vs. 33** “And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house (Probably Peter’s house) he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?”

- ⇒ Jesus here asks the question not out of ignorance but as a means of setting up a Teachable moment.

In basic: The disciples were still missing it....

- ⇒ This is the group that the future mission of the gospel to the world rests....
- ⇒ Instead of asking who would betray Jesus there asking who is the greatest.

After everything that had happened in the last 50 verses... they still saw Jesus as a political liberator....

- ⇒ they hadn't comprehended at all what taking up their cross meant!

Then Jesus turns asks them this question... I'm sure they are all like, "oh no... He knows.."

- ⇒ This is a "hand in the cookie jar" moment.
- ⇒ You can tell that is their reaction by **vs. 34**: "But they held their peace:"
 - Not even Peter would take his foot out of his mouth for this one...

Jesus uses this as a moment to teach them about the ways of the Kingdom which are opposite of the world they lived in.

He now presents a second paradox.

- ⇒ The first was in **Mark 8:35** "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."
- ⇒ The second one is here in **vs. 35** "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all."

This teaching flows from the reality of the sort of Messiah He is and BECAUSE THIS IS WHO HE IS THIS IS WHO HIS PEOPLE SHOULD BE

Then Jesus takes a child (*probably Peter's child*) and sets him in the middle of everyone. He then says in **vs. 37**, "Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me."

I think we can learn some lessons here:

#1 – Value children like Jesus did.

- ⇒ This may be lost on some of you b/c our culture values children (at least the ones out of the womb).
 - We have Disney World and Chucky Cheese...we will spare no expense to love on our children.

However, children in **this culture** had no value.

- ⇒ Historical records indicate people would leave children on trash heaps and people would come by, pick them up, and sell them into prostitution, or slave labor, or gladiator games.

Application: We must fight for these people in our world— Fight for the unborn, fight for the orphan, fight for the underprivileged, fight for the AIDS patient, fight for the mentally impaired, fight for the physically disabled.

You need to know – where greatness is found:

- ⇒ It's found right over there in that hallway with women joyfully changing diapers and singles and volunteers faithfully teaching children.

#2 – Despise Pride like Jesus did.

- ⇒ True Greatness doesn't come with fighting for positions or fantasizing about the seat of honor.

Instead Jesus says there is a position you should aspire to and that is the one of the "Diaknos". (vs. 35)

- ⇒ The word used in our text is Servant.
- ⇒ The Greek word "Diaknos" is where we get the word Deacon...

Jesus is saying you should seek to be the one serving the table rather than sitting at the head of it.

This way of Greatness is so counter-intuitive to our world:

- ⇒ We only ever think in terms of what we deserve....
- ⇒ People expect to be waited on hand and foot...
 - I mean we stew if our food doesn't come out in what we deem a reasonable time

In a generation of SELFIES AND outlandish PERSONALITIES we need a revival of selfless servants!

We are so self-absorbed. We have an inexhaustible appetite for affirmation.

Let me read to you a paragraph from a very popular book in our culture:

- ⇒ “The earth turns on its orbit for you. The oceans ebb and flow for you. The birds sing for you. The sun rises and sets for you. The stars come out for you. Every beautiful thing you see, every wondrous thing you experience, is all there for you. Take a look around. None of it can exist without you. No matter who you thought you were, now you know the truth of who you really are. You are the master of the universe. You are the heir to the kingdom. You are the perfection of life.”
- ⇒ This is the culture we live in....

AND HEAR ME: If these men could walk with Jesus and still succumb to self-preoccupation and pride, don't think that you can't.

- I'm not worried about any of you ceasing to be worshippers.
- I worried that you become narcissistic—which means you remain worshippers, but you worship yourself.

We have to ask ourselves some tough questions like:

1) Am I upset if I am not praised for my work?

2) Do I long to sit in privileged places?

3) What goes on in my heart when I don't get what I feel I deserve?

4) Do I serve because of the recognition I might receive from it?

5) Do I feel a sense of rivalry in ministry?

So what happens next?

Vs. 38- John runs up to Jesus and he's going, "Okay, we saw a guy, he's casting out demons but he ain't one of us. So, I stopped him."

⇒ John must think he is about to get an attaboy and that is not what happens.

It appears to be an act of rivalry as the disciples see someone being successful where they had just failed -specifically in casting out a demon...

What going on here is that they are concerned about this man undermining their position of status in the Kingdom.... **THEY WERE STILL MISSING IT**....

At this point I've got to step back and say... I probably wouldn't have got it either...

⇒ Their culture was soooo bent and built on privilege that Jesus was literally having to reshape their entire world view...

So, **Vs. 38** reveals that they still didn't get it...

⇒ **They aren't getting that the Kingdom of Christ is not a matter of status and achievement but of grace!**

Jesus then says to them: **Vs. 39** "Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. ⁴⁰ For he that is not against us is on our part. ⁴¹ For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward."

The ESV translates vs. 40 this way “For the one who is not against us is for us.”

Now just for a moment let me address an incorrect way to view this passage:

⇒ Some people use this verse to appeal to the fact that we shouldn't care about theological differences at all.

○ They say “Who cares if one group doesn't believe such and such about the Gospel and one group does. We all ought to work together.”

○ **That's a misuse of the passage.**

Here is the Correct way to view this passage:

The disciple's opposition boils down to one fact: he was not in their clique, their group, their little tribe.

They raised their group above the mission itself.

⇒ That is tribalism, not Christian ministry.

Independent Baptists are known for their issues with Tribalism:

- They have special lightening...Jesus wouldn't step foot in their church...
- Do they serve coffee– heretics
- Do they raise their hands when they sing... Bunch of Emotional basket cases..
- They don't do business meetings? God isn't anywhere near those places.

There are times when divisions are necessary, but we must understand there is a difference between preaching a different gospel and preaching the gospel differently.

If you see God is using someone. Be a friend, be a fan, be a prayer warrior, Be an encourager. **Cheer them one.**

Jesus defines Greatness differently because He is the Greatest...

May we follow his lead!