



The Gospel of Mark



WARM-UP

What is the funniest thing a kid has said to you?



What happened last time in Mark chapter 9?

Possible Answers: the transfiguration of Jesus, the disciples couldn't cast out a demon from a little boy, and the father begged Jesus for help saying the classic line "I believe help my unbelief".

Read out loud as a group

MARK 9:30-37 (NIV)

³⁰ They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, ³¹ because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." ³² But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.

³³ They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the road?" ³⁴ But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

³⁵ Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all."

³⁶ He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷ "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."

Read out loud as a group

“Because this is all according to the divine plan, God is ultimately behind this handing over. Human hands are instruments of his judgment, his wrath. The harshness of human beings without mercy makes this instrument of wrath bitter indeed. God is ultimately also behind the handing over of Jesus, because his death is part of the divine plan, and because it is governed, in particular, by the prophecies relating to the suffering servant. The servant was handed over by God himself, not for his own sins, but for the sins of others. Jesus is well aware of the harshness of human power, and he predicts that the son of Man will be handed over into the hands of these people who are without mercy, who lord it over their subjects. “

- [The Cross from a Distance](#) by Peter G. Bolt, page 54



What stands out to you?

Possible Answers: Answers will vary.



In what subtle or socially acceptable ways do we still measure “greatness” today?

Possible Answers: Will vary. Sometimes we see someone else’s holiness and turn it into an idol of personal greatness instead of their personal surrender to Jesus, fall into legalism, job titles, ideals of beauty, fitness, education, etc.



In each prediction of death Jesus mentions 4 things: the son of man, will be killed, after 3 days, He will rise. But here we see the addition of “being delivered into the hands of man”. Why do you think that would be important for Jesus to mention?

Possible Answers: Truly reveals that Jesus KNEW about his upcoming death and that He had knowledge that only the Son of God could know. It also shows the difference in heavenly power/authority and worldly power/authority, showed and bridged the gap between human imperfections and divine holiness, fulfilled OT prophecies, showed the immense Love that God has for people by still saving them despite their own participation in killing their savior (that’s all of us!.)



Jesus is talking about His suffering and resurrection in plain language, yet the disciples are confused and afraid to ask about it. What do you think they could have been afraid of? What is your response to truths you don’t like or can’t control?

Possible Answers: based on where this passage sits, it seems as if they could have been afraid to ask questions because they wanted to look like they had all the answers. If they asked questions it could reveal to others that they were not “the greatest”. They could have also been afraid of the possibility of Jesus’ death and losing a teacher both not wanting what Jesus said and not wanting to be corrected by Jesus. Response: will vary. Could be avoidance, denial, pride, running away from God, wrestling with God, deep exploration, self reflection on “why” etc.



Verse 35 begins with “sitting down”. This is important because Rabbi’s would sit down to teach. By doing this, Jesus was emphasizing that he was about to teach the disciples. How does Jesus use this teaching to answer the question of greatness/rewards and flip it on its head?

Possible Answers: in the round about way He’s also kind of showing that HE is the greatest. That greatness isn’t about what you receive but what you give. Flipping the idea of greatness and rewards on its head.

Read out loud as a group

MARK 9:38-50 (NIV)

³⁸ “Teacher,” said John, “we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us.”

³⁹ “Do not stop him,” Jesus said. “For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, ⁴⁰ for whoever is not against us is for us. ⁴¹ Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward.

⁴² “If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea. ⁴³ If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. ^[44] ⁴⁵ And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. ^[46] ⁴⁷ And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸ where

“the worms that eat them do not die,
and the fire is not quenched.’

⁴⁹ Everyone will be salted with fire.

⁵⁰ “Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt among yourselves, and be at peace with each other.”



Each prediction of Jesus’ death also contains the announcement of death, a failure on the part of the disciples, and a moment of Jesus teaching on discipleship. List out where you see each one in these two passages.

Possible Answers: Announcement of death: vs 30-32, Failure of disciples: didn’t ask Jesus about confusion around death and resurrection, argued about their own greatness, disciples stopping others from casting out demons in Jesus’ name. Jesus teaching: the first shall be last and last first, faith like a child, the reality of the severity of sin and causing others to sin.



In verse 38, John tries to stop someone from “driving out demons” in Jesus’ name because they were not one of the twelve disciples. This reveals exclusivity and a desire to protect the “in group” even if it's stopping a good thing. Where do you see that same mentality today? What are ways to avoid that type of exclusionary behavior?

Possible Answers: Will vary. Could be around the failings of the church or work or other places in the world. Avoiding this behavior: having good friends to call you out, pausing before avoiding connection, having margin in your schedule, reminding yourself that it is all level ground at the foot of the cross.



Jesus speaks of being “salted with fire.” How can suffering, discipline, or repentance actually preserve and deepen our faith rather than destroy it?

Possible Answers: Will vary. Romans 5:3-5 “...suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not put us to shame...”. These things shatter idols, self reliance, and comfort while reinforcing future otherworldly hope. Reminds us that this world IS actively broken and in need and of our true home to come.



Looking at the entire passage, list out the different attitudes and responses we see from the disciples. How does the gospel meet them right where they are?

Possible Answers: responses: confusion, fear, shame and avoidance, ambition, exclusivity, pride, eager for reward, implied listening. Gospel: Jesus draws to the big picture: his death and resurrection which is the culmination of the backwards way that the kingdom of God works. He supports his own death prediction with this call that the first shall be last and the last shall be first. This ultimately points to the saving grace of Jesus and the call to follow after his example.



With the question above, which response from the disciples do you relate to the most right now? Why?

Possible Answers: will vary.



How do both these passages hold together both radical grace and radical holiness without contradiction?

Possible Answers: vs 40 “whoever is not against us is for us” and meeting the disciples with questions and teaching rather than scolding as well as the lesson on how it's better to “cut it off” than sin. We should desire to follow Jesus’ example because we have been saved by Christ. Jesus doesn’t diminish or lessen the severity of sin but he is the answer to it and the way out of it.

DISCUSSION FOR ACCOUNTABILITY



- What do you feel like Jesus is teaching you today?
- Is there anything that you are afraid to ask Jesus?