How To Be Important in God's Kingdom

On the way to another town the disciples were arguing about who was the greatest among them. They had not really listened or understood what Jesus had said.

Jesus warned them that whoever wanted to be first must learn how to be last. "You must be a servant of everyone". Then Jesus took a little child and made the child stand among them. Often in those days people thought that children were unimportant. "You need to change and become like little children," Jesus told them "If you don't, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Anyone who becomes the least important, like this child, will be the most important in the Kingdom of Heaven".

This teaching of Jesus means these things:

- To be great, we must put ourselves last of all.
- To be great, we must care for others, especially people who are ignored and need love.
- To be great, we must welcome and respect all people who have faith in the God of Abraham and belong to Jesus.

Jesus said that we should welcome and encourage other believers, even if we do not know them. We should not hinder the work of others for Jesus but look for ways to help them such as giving them a cup of water.

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The Good News told by Mark

A Bible teaching commentary on the Gospel of Mark in easy-to-read English

Written by Fred Morris

The transfiguration of Jesus

Mark Unit 7 of 12

Chapter 9:1-9:41

Manna Publications

Bite-size Manna

Introduction and Chapter 9:1 to 9:41

Introduction

Dear readers. In our first Bible teaching commentary on the Gospel of Mark (Chapters 1 to 8), we talked about the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and the many miracles that He did. He is the Son of God who lived on Earth 2000 years ago for 33 years. The word 'Gospel' means 'God's Good News about His son Jesus Christ'.

The Jewish or Hebrew name for Jesus the Christ is Yeshua the Messiah. Jesus was born to a young virgin girl, Mary, through the Holy Spirit of Almighty God. He was brought up by Mary and her husband Joseph. Joseph was a carpenter in Nazareth, Israel, so Jesus learned to work as a carpenter there until He was 30 years old.

In Part 1 of Mark's Gospel, we told you that the followers of Jesus believed He was the Jewish Messiah. Israel had been waiting many, many years for the Messiah to come. He was and is the Saviour promised by Yahweh, Almighty God, to save His people from sin and receive eternal life with Him after death. The Old Testament prophets of God said that He will save all who worship the one true God.

Some people who followed Jesus thought He came to save them from their enemies, the Romans, who ruled the world at that time. However, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, came to set up a new kind of kingdom in the world, a Kingdom of believers who trust in God and obey Him. Jesus did not come to set the people free from the Romans. He came to set the people free from their sins, and all their wrong ways, so that they can know God and be received by Him. Then they will be part of His Kingdom wherever

God can do anything for us; but we must believe!

Jesus saw a crowd running to see what was happening. He spoke to the evil spirit who lived inside the boy. He called the spirit by its name. "You spirit that makes him unable to hear or speak, I command you, come out of him! Never enter him again."

The evil spirit screamed and threw the child down and then it came out of him. The people looked down at the body of the boy. "He is dead," some said. Jesus took him by the hand. He lifted the boy to his feet and he stood up.

We must remember the important things that Jesus taught His disciples. He said: "Everything is possible for the one who believes". Ask in faith, and see how God works in all things for our good for those who love Him. Do not lose hope.

The Disciples Do Not Understand Jesus

Later, His disciples asked Jesus in private, "Why could we not drive out the evil spirit?" He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer". They needed to combine their faith with prayer.

Jesus then spoke in more detail about His crucifixion and His resurrection. He took the disciples away on their own to teach them about these things. The disciples did not understand fully what would happen. They were afraid to ask Jesus about it.

When we do not understand, this makes us afraid. When we know Jesus better, we understand more about the things of God. Then we understand our part in teaching 'the mystery of Christ' that Jesus came to earth to suffer in order to save people.

The Bible says that Jesus was our Suffering Servant. The disciples had to learn more about Jesus so that they could be more like Him. We, too, should do this and also be prepared to suffer in order to save and serve others.

Jesus. We can only win against Satan and evil spirits when we have this power of Jesus in us. Believers must learn to speak against evil with Holy Spirit power in the name of and with the authority of Jesus.

God 'does not want any of these little ones to be lost'. We must pray for our children often. We must also keep them away from evil people in our homes and streets and from evil places and evil books and films, where Satan can attack them. God's power to heal and send away evil spirits is given to believers who pray through the Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus.

Faith is always needed. Jesus blamed the disciples and the crowds for not having enough faith in God over evil. "Everything is possible for the one who believes", Jesus told the boy's father. He cried out, "I do believe." Then he added, "Help me overcome my unbelief!"

Jesus heals the boy with a demon

they live and worship and after death, receive His promised eternal life.

The Jews knew that their Messiah came from the family line of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (called Israel), Judah and King David. Jesus came to save the Jews and the whole world if they repent and believe He is the Son of God. This is why Christians believe that Jesus is their Saviour, as well as the promised Jewish Messiah.

Mark Chapter 9

The Coming of the Kingdom of God

We told you at the end of the first part of Mark's Gospel that Jesus gave His disciples a warning. He told them that He was going to suffer a lot and die in order to become their Saviour.

In this Bible commentary on Mark Chapters 9 to 16, we tell you about the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Jesus died on a cross, God raised Him back to life on the third day and went back up to Heaven 40 days later. It was God's plan for Jesus to take on the sins of our world and suffer a cruel death in our place so that we can be free from the punishment we deserve for sin. It means that all who believe that Jesus is the Son of God can have their sins forgiven. If we believe this, we can go to Heaven to live with Jesus until He returns to fully establish God's Kingdom on earth.

We begin this second part of Mark's Gospel with chapter 9 verse 1. Here, Jesus tells His followers (the disciples and the crowds) that many people will live to see the things happen which God had already promised. He said, "What I am about to tell you is true." These things were written down in the Old Testament by the prophets. They made people ready for the "coming of the Kingdom of God with power" on Earth through the Messiah.

For 400 years God did not speak to His people through His prophets, so there was nothing new added to the Old Testament. The New Testament was written 50–100 years after the birth of Jesus.

God waited for the right time to send Jesus into the world. During the 400 years of waiting for their Messiah, Jerusalem was ruled by Persians, Greeks, Egyptians and finally the Romans.

It was a time of quick and safe travel by land and sea from one end of the Roman Empire to the other. Then God showed His power through the life and miracles of Jesus, His crucifixion, His resurrection and ascension and through the wonderful things that happened after that. The Good News of Jesus travelled quickly around the world.

In this way, the Holy Spirit built the Kingdom of God in the lives of those who followed Jesus. The final words of Jesus to His followers were, "You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem ... in all Judea and Samaria. You will be my witnesses from one end of the Earth to the other." This same Holy Spirit power is building God's Kingdom today through preaching the Good News sent out and received by many modern methods of communication and travel by land, sea and air.

God Speaks on the Mountain Top

The next thing that Mark tells us in Chapter 9 is how God spoke to Jesus and prepared Him for these great things to happen. Jesus took Peter, James and John up a high mountain.

The three disciples stared in amazement at Jesus because His face shone with a bright light from Heaven. His clothes shone brightly also.

Two other men were there, Moses and Elijah. They were shining brightly too. They had come down to talk to Jesus about His sacrifice and death in Jerusalem and His return to Heaven.

As the three talked, a bright cloud came over them. Peter did not know what to say. He tried to talk instead of listening.

Then God's voice came from the cloud and said these three important things: "This is My Son, and I love Him. Listen to Him!"

The disciples were afraid, and fell down with their faces close to the ground. They lay down on the ground until Jesus came and touched them. "Get up. Do not be afraid," He said. When they looked up, they were alone with Jesus. On the way down from the mountain, He ordered them not to tell anyone what they had seen, until he had risen from death.

From that time, Jesus talked openly about His death by crucifixion and His coming back to life, at His resurrection.

Jesus Heals a Boy with an Evil Spirit

Jesus, Peter, James and John came down from the mountain. They found the other disciples arguing with the Jewish leaders. A large crowd had gathered. A father had come to find Jesus and get help for his son who could not hear or speak. As a child, an evil spirit had taken hold of him.

"What are you arguing with the Pharisees about?" Jesus asked the disciples. The father of the boy answered, "I brought my son who is controlled by an evil spirit… I asked Your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not do it". "It has often thrown him into the fire or water to kill him. If you can do anything, please take pity on us and help us," the father said.

As followers of Jesus, we must expect to have difficult times when evil spirits attack us or those around us. This can be a test to see if we have faith to believe in the Holy Spirit power of