The Good News told by Mark

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

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Jesus blesses the children

Mark Unit 8 of 12

Chapters 9:42-10:52

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Unit 8: Chapters 9:42 to 10:52

Jesus Warns Us Not to Lead Others into Sin

Jesus also warned the disciples not to lead children into sin or there would be severe punishment. He does not really want you to 'cut off your hand' or 'cut off your foot' or 'poke out your eye' when you are tempted to do wrong. If you do this, it may not stop you sinning nor make God forgive your sins. Instead, Jesus wanted us to know what a terrible thing it is if others do wrong because of us, especially children. It deserves severe punishment.

Jesus speaks here about Hell. If you don't believe in Hell, you don't believe what the Bible says! The prophet Isaiah spoke of Hell as everlasting fire. Jesus used these same words of Isaiah. Satan and all of his demons will be cast into the Lake of Fire.

The people knew what He meant. They threw their rubbish outside the city wall. Fires never burned out there. The valley was full of fires, flies and worms. Jesus probably spoke of this to show what Hell is like. He quoted from Isaiah 66:24, "The worms that eat the bodies will not die. The fire that burns them will not be put out."

Instead of giving in to temptation, Jesus wants us to bless others through what we say, think and do. Our faith will be tested by fire. Salt is essential in our bodies. Our lives will be "salted with fire" to make us strong and healthy when persecuted. We must also watchful and wise when tempted. This is why Jesus said we should be useful like salt. He said, "Have salt in your lives and be at peace with each other".

Mark Chapter 10.

Questions about Divorce and Families

Some teachers of the Jewish Law asked Jesus, "Does the Law allow a man to divorce his wife?". They wanted to test Him. "What did Moses command you?" He replied.

They said, "Moses let a man write a divorce note and send the wife away". "It was because of your stubbornness that Moses wrote you this law," Jesus said.

Jesus went on to say, "At the beginning of creation, God made male and female. That is why a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. The two of them will become one... so a man must not separate what God has joined together". His teaching is clear, for one man to be married to one woman, for life.

As sinners, we fail to love another person fully because we love ourselves more. So, when the hearts of men are hard or they are angry or bored with their wives, they are tempted to divorce them. Jesus said it was not this way in the beginning.

Where the love of God rules in men's hearts, men understand that God wants marriage to be a life-long union of one man with one woman until death separates them.

Later in Mark 10:11, Jesus said that to divorce in order to marry another is adultery. He also said that divorce is only allowed if a partner has been unfaithful. However, it is better to forgive.

At the time when Jesus lived on earth, men did not think that women and children were important. Jesus showed by His words and by what He did that He cared about women and children. Marriage should provide love and protection for both the parents and for their children.

Jesus spoke important words to His disciples, "Let the little children come to me... God's Kingdom belongs to people like them". He also said, "Anyone who will not receive God's Kingdom like a little child will never enter it". He then took children in His arms, put His hands on them and blessed them.

A child often quickly believes and trusts in the words of Jesus. Jesus said that the Kingdom of God is made up of people who believe and trust just like little children. We should respect and welcome all people who trust in Jesus, even if their faith is simple.

A Rich Young Man Meets Jesus

A rich young man ran up to Jesus. "Good Teacher," he said. "What must I do to receive eternal life?". He was a good man, but he felt he had to do something more to earn himself a place in the Kingdom of God. He obeyed the Ten Commandments.

Jesus loved this man but said to him, "You are missing one thing. Go, sell everything you have and give it to the poor. You will have treasure in Heaven. Then come and follow Me". These words made the young man sad. He loved his money and possessions. He could not easily give them up, so he went away sad.

Many put money and their selfish way of living before holiness. But Jesus said, "Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness". Jesus said to His disciples, "How hard it is for rich people to enter God's Kingdom!.

The disciples were surprised at these words of Jesus and asked each other, "Who then can be saved?".

"All things are possible with God," Jesus said. God can save rich men if they trust Him and obey Him. "Has anyone left home or family or fields for Me and the Good News?" Jesus asked. He said that God will give them much more than the things they give

Jesus and the rich young man

up, but they must be ready for hard times ahead. They will suffer persecution, as well as eternal life.

Then Jesus said that in the Kingdom of God, "many who are first will be last and the last will be first". Jesus loved this rich man but he used his riches for himself and did not help the poor. His disciples, however, gave up many things to obey and follow Jesus (10:28).

The Troubles Ahead for Jesus

It was time for Jesus to go to Jerusalem for the last time. He wanted to do the will of His heavenly Father and not run away from the trouble that was coming. The disciples were amazed and those who followed Jesus were also afraid.

On the way, He told them how He was going to die and rise again from death to everlasting life. This time He said much more about the way He was going to die. He warned them that "the

people will make fun of Him and spit on Him and flog Him and kill Him". He also told His disciples that He would come alive after three days.

Jesus led the way. He was not afraid to go up to Jerusalem. He knew the chief priests and leaders would kill Him, but this was the will of His heavenly Father, and He wanted to finish what His father had sent Him to do.

His disciples could not believe that Jesus would be killed. They thought that He was going to set up His Kingdom on earth at this time. They had other questions on their minds.

The Suffering Servant

James and John wanted to be sure that they had a good place when Jesus sat on His throne.

"Let one of us sit at Your right hand in Your glorious Kingdom," they asked Jesus. "Let the other one sit at Your left hand," they added. The words went against everything Jesus had taught them. They wanted to become important leaders.

"You do not know what you are asking," Jesus told them. "Can you drink the cup of suffering that I drink?". Jesus meant that He had chosen God's way of suffering. "Can you go through the baptism of suffering I must go through?"

Jesus was going to die on a cross. Jesus knew that He would sink down under the pain and would suffer for the sins of the world before God raised Him up from death.

"We can," they answered. Jesus said they would share in His suffering. "But to sit at My right or left is not for Me to say". We can be sure there is a place for us if we remain faithful.

The other disciples were angry with James and John for wanting to be so important.

Those who try so hard to be first, hold others back. They are selfish and bossy and rule over people instead of serving those around them. Jesus spoke about many of the rulers of the world. They control people and tell others what to do. People find ways to rule so that they will gain power.

Jesus came to serve people. More than that, He came to die for them, so that through the sacrifice of His blood, our sins could be forgiven by God. It was God's will for Jesus to die as punishment for the sins of others. He gave His life knowing ahead of time the sins we will do. Because of this, we can confess and be saved and have everlasting life in Heaven with Him and in the Kingdom of God.

Jesus spoke to James and John and the other disciples. He warned them not to try to be important and not to give orders to other people.

Good leadership in the Christian life is about serving others. Jesus was the Suffering Servant whom God spoke about many years before through the prophet Isaiah. To follow Him, we too must be ready to suffer, and to give up whatever He asks for His sake. Jesus showed us how to lead by serving others.

Jesus said that He "did not come to be served. Instead, He came to serve others". He added these important words: "He came to give His life as the price [ransom] for setting many people free".

Jesus Heals a Man Who Has Much Faith

A large crowd followed Jesus. Near Jericho they heard a blind man shouting. "Jesus! Son of David! Have mercy on me". Beggars were a common sight at the entrance to cities. God, however, often gives blind and deaf people greater understanding. Blind Bartimaeus called Jesus "Son of David". He understood that

Jesus was the promised Messiah from the family line of King David. When the crowds told him to be quiet, he shouted the same words even louder!

Jesus stopped and sent a message to the blind man to come to Him. 'He threw his coat to one side. Then he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus'.

Jesus asked, "What do you want Me to do for you?".

The man answered, "I want to see."

"Go," Jesus said. "Your faith has healed you".

Jesus knew that blind Bartimaeus had faith. Even in a large crowd, Jesus could hear the cries or prayers of faithful people. Faith in Jesus means putting all our trust in Him. We cannot fool God. He knows when we are sorry for our sins. He knows when we have understanding and faith. Then when we receive an answer to prayer, we know that it has come from God.

Once again, the teaching of Jesus is made very clear by Mark. Faith in Jesus and faith in action bring answers to prayer. Bartimaeus understood these things. He shouted out and his sight was restored. Then, instead of going his own way, he followed and went the way of Jesus.

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