

STONE HARBOR

P.O. Box 4049
Monterey CA, 93942
831.655.5800
www.stoneharborchurch.org
Pastor Johnny Potter

May 10, 2009

Who Is Jesus & Why He Matters *What Jesus Taught His Disciples*

Mark 9:30-37

INTRODUCTION

This passage captures Jesus as The Teacher of His Disciples. His earthly ministry incarnate was coming to a close. His teaching would now focus on those who would be entrusted with His message. As Jesus' disciples in this generation, let's learn what our Lord taught us.

I. He Would Be Delivered, Killed and Raised (30-31)

A. The Fact of the Repetition of this teaching

1. Mark 8:31
2. Mark 9:31

B. Significance of the Repetition

1. Blind Spot for the Disciples
2. Crucial Importance to Jesus
What do you repeat to others?
What do parents repeat to kids?

C. The Meaning of Jesus' Teaching

1. "Delivered" – Betrayal (NIV)

a) The New Content in 9:31

The new content in 9:31 from 8:31 is that Jesus suffering would include His being "delivered over" or as some translations read, He would be betrayed.

b) Double Meaning of "delivered over"

(1) By Man – Sin

(a) Judas' Betrayal (14:41-42)

(2) By God – Sovereignty

(a) God's Handing Over of Jesus

- (i) To die for our salvation -- Romans 8:32

³²He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

2. "Killed" -- Crucifixion

3. "Rise" – Resurrection

How did the Master teacher do in getting this lesson across to His students? Verse 32 indicates that causing the learning of His disciples was no easy task. It will eventually move from confusing to clear, but not until they have seen Him betrayed, killed and risen.

D. The Significance of His Teaching

1. To Jesus Disciples Then, It Meant Nothing!

Obviously not a heck of a lot

2. To Us Now On This Side Of His Betrayal, Death and Resurrection, It Means Everything!

a) Paul

1 Corinthians 2:2 ²For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

b) This teaching is central to the Gospel

This is the gospel: that Jesus suffered and died and rose from the dead proving victory over even death that whosoever would believe in Him should not perish but indeed live forever in a restored relationship with God.

God has always required the death of the covenant son through whom He would bless all families of the earth. It was the way He showed us it must be when He told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac -- the very one through whom He would bring His blessing. In faith Abraham offered up Isaac and God wonderfully stepped in and provided Himself a ram to substitute for Isaac. But Jesus is the ultimate Isaac, Jesus is God's own beloved Son, there was not to be a substitute for Jesus, He Himself was our substitute. He was our Passover Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world.

There is no gospel without this teaching.

c) He knew and Went Anyway -- Leaving Us an Example to Follow

Jesus knew He would suffer, be betrayed, killed, and finally rise from the dead... and He went **anyway!**

He knowingly put Himself in harms way for us and was indeed harmed.

Remember the scene in the garden of Gethsemane: In intense prayer, "...if there is any other way let this cup pass from me, but not my will, Thy will be done...."

The Holy Spirit says to me, "Johnny, are you picking up your cross and following Jesus in this way of knowing there is suffering ahead and going for it anyway?"

I put it to you. Are you giving of yourself for the eternal good of others following the example of Jesus?

Preach it church! Preach the gospel in words and deeds. The work on the cross is done. The preaching of the gospel still remains!

What me preach? Yes you preach in that you first know and then effectively communicate this gospel as God gives opportunity. It is not about manipulating people with fancy words or slick presentation. It is all about accurately and

lovingly communicating the truth of Jesus suffering, death and resurrection. The rest is the work of God who ultimately gives ears to hear and understand the truth presented.

1 Cor 15:1-5

Last weeks exhortation was PRAY! This week we have a gospel to PREACH.

Let's do both in unison!

That's what Jesus was teaching. In contrast and distinction to the sequence of "humiliation" before "exaltation" Jesus was teaching His disciples He must endure, they were discussing their own high position, i.e., "which of them was the greatest." This is Jesus second point of teaching this morning... Let's look at verse 33-35 and see if we can learn from Jesus... [read 33-35] What is true greatness?

II. What True Greatness Is (33-35)

A. *Explanation Of Passage*

See notes

B. *True Greatness Is Being:*

1. "Last of All" =

2. "Servant of All"

What a contrast to the disciples jockeying for position of greatest as they understood greatness.

In the economy of man, the greatest is defined as the one with the most power, wealth and influence.

In this teaching, Jesus turns greatness upside down.

In the economy of God, the greatest is defined as the one who serves the others.

- So, if you are looking to participate in a religion that gives earthly status to its leaders, Christianity is not for you, keep on looking.
- In the church of which Jesus is the head, we are all to be servants of one another.
- It is important to note that Jesus did not here command them to serve. This instead has to do with our beings more than our doings. The greatest of Jesus disciples ***is*** a servant himself or herself.
- If you aspire to greatness as Jesus defines it, BE the person God has recreated you to be. Serving someone for 1 hour on an organized church

outreach has some value. But what has greater value is being a servant who serves because that is his or her nature.

- What is our role in becoming and being a servant? Ultimately this work of transformation is the work of the Holy Spirit. Yet Paul calls us to “be transformed by the renewing of our minds...” So we are not to sit around and wait till this happens to us, but we are to respond in faith believing.
- If you want to become and be truly great in God’s eyes, submit your will to God’s will; ask for the Holy Spirit’s help in leading you into truth and changing you by it; with heart and mind fully engaged, pay careful attention to the teaching’s of God’s word, daily. If the believer in Jesus will do these things, God will do the work of transforming you into the likeness of Christ. And Christ of course is our ultimate example of a servant.
- Mark 10:45 “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”
- Our mission is to help people like you and me become people like Jesus Christ; that means we need to be all about helping you become Christ-like servants.

Towards that end let me praise you a bit. This church is full of servants. Did you know that there is only one person on the payroll at Stone Harbor and that person is only on quarter pay? Leslie serves as my administrative assistant in the office 4-5 days a week as a volunteer. Becky serves as the director of children’s ministry and teaches the ladies of our church as a volunteer as do all the teachers in the children’s ministry. Chuck serves as our worship leader as a volunteer as do all the worship team members. Marie makes sure we are well cared for every Sunday in the food department as a volunteer, as do all those who serve alongside her. Debbie Bradford serves by setting up the information tables and greeting you at the door as a volunteer. Debbie Fortune attends another church but serves 2-3 days a week in the office as a volunteer. Brad sweats with me every Sunday morning to set up and tear down as a volunteer as do others who help in that effort. Dave sweats with Brad and me and then runs the technology back there every Sunday and then serves as a board member meeting with me on Mondays as a volunteer. Dennis Shepherd likewise serves on the board and meets with me on Monday’s as a volunteer. Jeff and Rondell and Russ serve the body by opening up their homes for community groups as volunteers. You get the idea. You guys serve! Way to go!

Now towards the end of helping all of you become servants as this passage teaches let me exhort you a bit. This church needs more servants. In order to care for the needs of our youth we need to serve them on Sunday mornings so we are looking to build a team of people who can serve in that way. Becky will be putting her efforts into that ministry and will need to hand off some of the children’s ministry by the end of the summer. You can serve the kids by talking with Becky about an increased role there. You can serve by **coming to church every Sunday** so we can have enough folks to care for the kids and do the work the day demands **and** for visitors to feel comfortable with the number of folks in

the hall. Serve by coming alongside some of the people I mentioned and lightening their load. And in the church on Sunday is certainly not the only place to serve. Husbands serve your wives at home. Wives serve your husbands. Parents serve your kids. Kids, serve your parents. Serve your friends as they reach out to others with the gospel in ministries they may be conducting outside of the church.

First be a servant as we have talked about, and then serve your brother's and sisters in Christ. Greatness as a follower of Jesus is not about rank, but about being a servant to each other.

Having taught what true greatness is, Jesus now illustrates it with a living object lesson. Let's read our last two verses, 36-37.

III. What True Greatness Looks Like (36-37)

A. Jesus, Personally Receiving a Child

1. Let the image burn in as if you had seen it yourself

2. Who the "child" represented

a) Child-believers in Jesus (Gundry)

(1) See v. 42 "little ones who believe in Me"

b) Unassuming believers regardless of age (Potter)

Jesus brings a little child who believes in Him into this power huddle of Jesus and the 12, and He hugs him. I bet the move invoked some envy among the 12 who had just been jockeying for position. Jesus bestowed high honor on the little child and demonstrated intimacy with him that the 12 would have liked to have had for themselves.

c) All believers in that they are representatives of Jesus (Lane)

"...child like this" = disciple of Jesus

"...the emissary of the man is as the man himself." Lane p. 341

Lane translates v. 37: "...whoever receives you, receives Me and the Father who sent Me."

Lane cites Mark 6:7-13 esp. 11 where the disciples are sent out as representatives of Jesus and are to be received or not as such.

3. What Jesus' Demonstration Taught

a) Jesus Receives Believers Without Regard For Social Rank

B. Lowliness/Humility

Jesus may be sitting in the seat of the authoritative teacher, yet He at the same time demonstrates humility by embracing a child! It is a picture of strength bowed to pick up meek.

C. The Opposite Of The Exclusive Cliques Many Of Us Experienced In Our School Days

There is no such thing as a Christian clique; if it is a clique it is not Christian. Or if it is Christian, it is the very lowest form since greatness is all about welcoming in the least of the believers.

True greatness is not about edging others out of a higher rank but about welcoming others into the fellowship you enjoy with other believers and God.

1. Hollywood Picture - Jenny Accepting Forest Gump On The Bus

After giving us such an unexpected picture of greatness according to Jesus, He caps off His demonstration by explaining in v. 37...

D. How "receiving" a child is itself an act of "greatness"

1. Verse 37

2. Irony Stated

Ironically, in God's economy, doing the lowly act of receiving a child who believes in Jesus is actually receiving the Highest One of all. How is this true?

3. We can see it in a tough guy and his son

If you don't respect my son you are disrespecting me. 'You want a piece of him, you get a piece of me.'

4. We can see it in a nice guy and his son

In welcoming my son, you have welcomed me.

5. Union/Identification with Jesus & God

Believers are adopted sons and daughter in God's family. Jesus teaching of v. 37 implies what is taught explicitly elsewhere: All mankind is created in the image of God and is thus endowed by God with great value. But **believers in Jesus are united with Him and with God the Father**. Paul says nothing can separate us from the love of God. We have God the Holy Spirit dwelling in the heart of every believer. Jesus prays that the same unity He enjoys with the father would be shared by those who believe in Him. So, when we accept another brother or

sister in Christ into our inner circle, we are accepting Jesus in Him and God the Father who is in union with Jesus His beloved Son.

E. What is Unsaid by the Passage

I shudder to think about what is left unsaid in this passage. What is to become of any of us if we do not receive a little “child”, a meek believer in Jesus like this? According to the way Jesus presents it here, this would be the same as not receiving Jesus Himself. Can we who have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us do anything but receive such a one? It **is** the way of the world apart from Jesus. Could it be even a test of our own union with Jesus; or at least an indication of how closely we are listening to the Holy Spirit as He prompts us to remember this teaching of Jesus?

We can turn a deaf ear to Jesus voice just like we can turn a deaf ear to anyone who says something we don't want to hear. So since we have it in us it becomes a matter of choosing to listen carefully and submitting our will to His. I pray today you'd so choose....

Mat 25:31ff Describing Jesus when He comes again to judge: ⁴⁰"The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'

Mat 5: ⁴⁵"Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'

There is no room for not receiving little children or any believer as Jesus received this child. With each little child who believes in Jesus, **whether 2 years old or 92 years old**, they are receiving Jesus. Let's be on the look out for little children!

Conclusion

If we are to learn from Jesus we must know that His suffering, death and resurrection were necessities which He knew about in advance yet endured anyway, leaving us an example to follow. If we are to learn from Jesus we will abandon any pursuit of greatness according to the world and endeavor instead to be a servant of all like He was. If we are to learn from Jesus we must know that receiving any believer in Him is ultimately receiving Him Himself and even God the Father. Let's learn our lessons well and be the servants He has recreated us to be.

Let's pray.