

Mark
Chapter 9:14-50
“All Together Now ...”

All scripture references are from the NASU unless otherwise noted

Calvary Chapel Fellowship of Enid
Matthew W. Thoms, Pastor/Teacher
January 2010

Announcement:

Teaching: Last week we looked at the Mount of Transfiguration ... an event that took place on Mount Herman, overlooking the town of Caesarea Philippi ... near the Northern Border of Israel. Jesus had taken Peter, James and John up onto the mountain with Him ... leaving the other nine disciples at the base of the mountain with some of the other followers.

But now that mountain top experience is over ... they now rejoin the real world and just as you and I generally experience after a mountain top experience ... life awaits them.

Verse 14: That is, the scribes (or lawyers) were arguing with and debating the nine disciples who had remained and a large crowd that had arrived to see Jesus was gathered around and listening in.

Verses 15-18: The Greek here indicates a young man old enough to work. So it's not speaking of a small child, but a teenager. A very ill teenager.

The boy was an epileptic who, as we'll see, was often thrown into the fire and the water. And in Matthew's record of this event (**Matt 17:14-21**), the boy's father describes him as also having a mental illness and, of course, he was mute.

But the most important thing, I think, is back in **verse 17**. It says there that this father had brought his son to Jesus. May that be a word to us parents.

Q. Have you ever heard the statement “I’m not going to push religion on my kids”?
“I’m not going to force God on my children”?

Most of the time when you hear such statements, those are the words that will be used -- “religion” or “God”, maybe “church“. That's because parents who would make such a statement either don't really know Jesus themselves or they have a serious lack of understanding.

Terms like “religion” and “God” are so generic. They're nice and clean. You wouldn't likely hear those parents say “I hate my children so much that I don't even care if they burn in Hell for all eternity”. That would be too personal. But in reality, it's the same statement.

If you're a parent or if you will someday be a parent, please understand what this man in **verse 17** understood; bringing our children to Jesus is the most important thing a parent could ever do.

We can't make them believe, but we can bring them to Jesus and to not do that is the greatest failure in parenting.

Verse 19: Jesus is not speaking to His disciples here ... He's speaking to the crowd that was still chasing Him down for temporal ministry rather than for eternal salvation.

Verse 20: The demon obviously recognized Jesus on sight and apparently knew what was coming. So he seeks to inflict one last injury on this young man, because that's what his father, Satan taught him to do.

Verses 21-23: Jesus is assigning some personal responsibility to this dad. As the father says to Jesus "**If You can ...**", Jesus responds "Oh no ... if you can but believe then all things are possible."

Verse 24:

Q. Doesn't this sound like us? – "I do believe ... well except for all these areas where I just don't get it and all these times that I doubt."

I'm sure Jesus considered this to be refreshing honesty and, as we'll see, this father's honest faith was more than adequate.

Verses 25-27: Beyond the power of Jesus ... what catches my eye is in **verse 25** ... where Jesus orders this demon not to enter this young man again.

Because, of course, we're told in ... **Matthew 12:43-45** as Jesus teaches on this subject, that there is a danger of a demon re-inhabiting a person if the vacancy in their soul and spirit is not fully occupied with God.

But this young man is set free forever by the spoken commandment of God.

Verses 28-29:

Q. So why couldn't the disciples cast out this demon? Jesus says "Because this kind cannot come out by anything but prayer." And in **Matthew's account** He prefaces that by saying to the disciples "**because of the littleness of your faith**".

I want to read the account of Jesus healing a man born blind in;

John 9:1 As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he

would be born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

If you haven't noticed it yet - take note that despite what Jesus calls "littleness of faith" in the disciples, the Lord expresses absolutely no anger or even frustration at them. No hint that He's angry with the disciples for having failed to cast the demon out of this boy.

Q. Why? For the same reason that man was born blind -- "**so that the works of God might be displayed**".

Someday, we should probably do an outright study on demons, but let it suffice to say this morning that there are clearly different types of demons ... some more powerful and more difficult to cast out than others.

Verses 30-32:

Q. When someone says "do you want the good news or the bad news", what's the first thing you do? If you're like me, and I'm sure you are, you begin thinking of all the possible "bad news", even before you answer them.

It's such a part of our fallen human nature, just as it was with the disciples. We key in on the negative and allow that to drag us down so much that we often miss the glories.

This is Jesus' final trip south. He is now making His way toward Jerusalem and the cross with some confused disciples in tow.

The Lord told them, very plainly, on three separate occasions that He would be killed and would rise on the third day. Yet it seems that they never really heard it, because after the crucifixion the disciples seemed to have no memory of these discussions.

Verses 33-34: Some very confused disciples. Jesus tells them that He's on His way to suffer and die on their behalf and they begin arguing about who among them is the greatest.

And by the way ... this is probably why they didn't ask Jesus for clarification on the whole death and resurrection thing ... it was their pride. They were all afraid of looking stupid in front of each others so they probably just each pretended to get it.

Verse 35: What a great lesson in discipleship!

The boys had seriously missed the mark here. They'd been engaged in this petty argument about who was the greatest at the very moment that they should have been ministered to Jesus and soaking up all that He had to say.

So Jesus would have been fully justified in coming down hard on them. He could have

condemned them, but note with me what He does instead.

Rather than coming down on them for arguing over who was the greatest ... He instructs them what it means to actually be the greatest. He helps them mature rather than beating them up for not being mature.

This verse really give us a standard (a flagpole of sorts), of Christian faith. The way the world does things is not the way God's people are to do things.

"To be first in the Kingdom of God, you must be willing to be last." To be prominent in God's kingdom -- seek servanthood.

A guy by the name of James Packer wrote a book called Your Father Loves You, and in that book he made a very profound statement; he said "You can tell if you have a servant's attitude -- by the way you react when you're treated like one."

That's powerful!

Q. How do you react when you're treated like a servant? Do you identify yourself with the title when it's used? When you're handed the broom or the trash do you feel "put-out", or do you accept it as the least you could do?

Verses 36-37: Remember that they are now back in Capernaum and it says that they had entered the house which is generally understood to mean Peter's house. So it is very likely that this child was related to Peter and known to the others. In fact, it may well have been Peter's own child.

Now the word used is paidion, meaning infant to young child. But **Luke 9:47** says he "**stood**", so we know then that this was a toddler. Perhaps up to five years old which would make him such a wonderful illustration of how Jesus wanted these disciples to be. Not childish, but child-like.

There are a few characteristics, in particular, that we should consider:

- 1.** Young children are uninterested in their own status. They're not clawing their way up the ladder of success.

Q. But they don't have to spend too much time in this world before they learn that do they?

This stands in contrast to what the disciples were doing. Children just don't really care about status or position.

- 2.** Little ones trust. When dad says, "It's OK" then it's OK.

Q. What about us? When our Heavenly Father says "It's OK", does

that bring you the same level of comfort as when an earthly father comforts his child? -- It should.

3. Openness and honesty!

Q. Anyone ever have their toddler be just a little too honest in the grocery store?

Q. When they get hurt do they hide it because of their pride?

When they're confused or unsure -- they ask for help. If they're scared you hear about it.

4. Eagerness to learn.

Q. Why's the sky blue? "Whatsat?" "Whatsat?" "Whatsat?" -- They're little sponges.

Q. What about you? Do you dive into the Bible with that same thirst? Do you approach a time of quiet prayer in that same way? -- Coming before the Lord and saying "Teach me your ways oh Lord".

Q. Are you a sponge for the things of God?

5.

Q. When a child's father is a car salesman or a truck driver or a doctor, what does that young child want to grow up to be? Children want to be like their dad.

Q. Do you want to be like yours? There's no higher goal than to be Christ-like and it should be the single-minded focus of every Christian.

Q. Do you wanna be like Dad when you grow up?

The Lord literally sets this example in front of the disciples and says "**to enter the kingdom of God you must be converted and become child-like (humble)**".

Matt 23:12 "Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.

We can either exalt ourselves and let God humble us or we can humble ourselves and let God exalt us. "If you want to be the greatest -- be the least!" Jesus says.

Verses 38-41: John, I'm sure, thought he was going to get a pat on the back for trying to stop this guy.

They'd just been rebuked by God on the Mount of Transfiguration for talking and while that was going on ... the other nine had failed in their effort to cast a demon out of the young man and had then been verbally beaten up by the scribes.

And they get busted for arguing about who among them was the greatest.

So John was, no doubt, looking for some brownie points ... but ... oops!

1 Corinthians 3 (10-15) talks about the Bema Seat of Christ and how the rewards that God had foreordained for us to receive will be lost if the opportunity is passed up or accomplished with the wrong motive.

We are to be there to support and encourage our brothers and sisters in the ministries that God has called them to and what we learn here is that we will be eternally rewarded for that encouragement.

There's no time to be jealous over a brother's talents and gifts. There's no time to fuss about the accolades that a sister receives for her gifts from the Lord.

We are to rejoice with them and trust God. See it's our flesh that holds us back from rejoicing with them. We become fearful that they will receive more than we will. That they will be esteemed more highly than us and as we support them their pedestal will get even higher.

And guess what - in the earthly sense it will. But there's no room for jealousy or envy, but rather to promote what God has given them for His glory.

Verse 42: Remember, this is a warning that's being given, not to the scribes or to the crowd at large, but to the disciples. They were secluded in the house at this point.

Q. So what had they done to deserve such a strong word? – They were on the verge of becoming denominational ... and exclusive.

This man casting out demons in the name of Jesus Christ wasn't a member of their church so they sought to stop him.

Had this gone on ... we might have, literally hundreds of different denominations today.

We might have people saying "We are the true church ... you need to be a member of our church before God can really love you."

We might have churches insisting that people be baptized into their church or be baptized according to their exclusive recipe.

We might have churches splitting apart over things like the gifts of the Spirit or musical

styles or even over the name of God.

Q. Sad isn't it? – “It would be better for them to be tossed into the sea with a 300 pound rock tied to them” Jesus says.

Now it's interesting that Jesus says that this would be preferable. “To have 300 pounds tied around your neck and to be thrown in the sea would be better”.

Q. Better than what? What could possibly be worse than dying a terrifying and painful physical death? -- Two things:

1. Living outside of the will of God and under constant conviction from the Spirit and ...
2. Hell!

Do not cause a “child of God” to stumble.

* Now, the most classic example on this subject is alcohol. Obviously if I were to demand that I have liberty in Christ to drink alcohol and by my exercise of that liberty, I caused someone who struggles with alcohol to return to, or persist in, their sin -- then I'm guilty.

* But this can also include the clothes you wear -- and being willing to throw away those that might lead a brother or sister's eyes to stray.

* This includes being willing to cancel the cable or get rid of the X-box if it contributes to another person's slothfulness.

* It includes guarding the stories that you share about your “before Christ” days so as not to start a brother or sister's mind racing.

* Maybe it's curbing, even the spending that fits your budget, if it sets a tempting example for someone who's just learning Godly stewardship.

* Maybe it's forgoing that PG13 movie for the sake of your 12 year old -- or your 15 year old -- or your 35 year old.

God's truly serious about this.

Every parent exercises a certain amount of protectiveness when it comes to their children. When one of their kids is getting hurt -- better not be the one hurting them.

But if you want to see an angry parent become an enraged parent -- let their helpless child get hurt by someone who's not helpless. Let their wheelchair bound child get tipped out of their wheelchair for entertainment. Let their kindergartner get beat up by a couple of

sixth graders. Let their mentally handicapped child get teased to tears. Now you've got your hands full.

No matter why the weak brother or sister is weak -- they're weak -- but not you -- you're the mature one. You're the strong one. You're the one who has the upper hand. And even though you might be frustrated and fed up with that weaker sibling -- their Dad loves them very, very much. "Don't hurt My weak child!" He says.

Verses 43-48: For those of you who are wondering ... in **verse 44 and 46**, it says;

[where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.]

But in both of those places, the phrase should be either italicized or set off by brackets because in many of the most reliable, biblical manuscripts ... that phrase is not included. It is however, universally included in **verse 48** in that same form so we know that the message is accurate, we just can't be sure that it was meant to be repeated three times.

Now ... the disciples were doing what we too often do ... they were being harsher on others than they were on themselves and that's what Jesus is seeking to correct with this, attention-getting bit of counsel.

Jesus is specific in His choice of body parts here and singles out ... the foot or the places you go. The eyes or the things you see and the hand or the things you do.

"Cut it off" He says. "Oh but that's really hard!" -- Ya, but all things are possible to him who believes.

And we often do need to take drastic action to protect ourselves practically.

* If your television causes you to waste God's time - cut it off. If you need help plucking that thing from your living room and depositing it in the local dumpster ... let me know. I'm very pleased to say that we have some people in this body with experience in that very thing.

* If the internet causes you to look at things that are ungodly - cut it off. We've got some people that can remove that modem for you in 5 minutes or less.

* If that telephone causes you to pass along gossip - cut it off.

* If that relationship or friendship causes you to compromise ... cut it off!

Some of you may be thinking "That's a little too radical just to stop a little gossip". But these are Jesus' words not mine. He says "**Cut it off**".

And I'm reminded that it only took one little bite of one little fruit to curse the entire

universe. So ya ... God is serious about sin.

Someone paraphrased this passage by saying, "It is far better to go through life without the internet or that new dress or that relationship than to enter Hell for all eternity having enjoyed the pleasures of the flesh for a vapor of time".

So there are two words that summarize **these verses** -- **BE DRASTIC!** Be just as drastic as you need to be.

Verses 49-50: In **Matthew 5:13** Jesus says "[we] are the salt of the earth".

Q. So what are the things that salt does that would lead the Lord to use it as an analogy for us?

1. It affects and changes everything it comes in contact with - put one pinch in a whole glass of water and I guarantee that you'll know it's there.

If you want to give yourself a little Spiritual Walk assessment - see how long you can hang around non-believers without having some effect on them.

That doesn't mean that you get them to turn to Christ necessarily, but your presence should be a force, not because you're anything special, but because He who is in you is very special.

If you're not having an effect on those around you - you need to take a close look at your walk.

2. Salt stimulates thirst. The Christian who has a genuine walk with Jesus will create a thirst in others for Jesus. Just like those salty potato chips make you want a drink - so should the Christian make others want "a drink".

Jesus said to the Samaritan woman:

John 4:14 "... whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."

3. Some say that salt actually does three things.

They add that salt preserves. **Maybe** we Christians can postpone the pouring out of the wrath of God, but scripturally I find this teaching difficult to defend.

Because the pouring out of God's wrath in the flood on the sinful world in **Genesis 6** was not postponed because of Noah's saltiness, although it was postponed until he finished the construction of the ark ... that only preserved him

and his family ... not the intended recipients of God's wrath.

And the destruction of Sodom (**Gen 19**), was not postponed for the sake of righteous Lot, but rather, Lot was rescued and God's wrath was poured out as planned.

So I think that this idea of us "salty" Christians having the power to preserve might be giving us more credit than we deserve.

Conclusion: Be salty and be at peace!

You may have already noticed this, but if not let me point it out ... this entire passage of scripture deals with divisiveness.

If it's not the scribes trying to come between Jesus and His followers ... it's the disciples dividing themselves by arguing over who gets the credit and biggest chair. And if they're not dividing themselves, then they're dividing the body by refusing to recognize and rejoice in a ministry just because it wasn't THEIR ministry.

I've reminded you before ... the church is the body of Christ. All of His kids collectively make up His body so when we carelessly divide any portion of it, we are in effect, drawing and quartering our Lord.

So He says "Be salty and be at peace!"