

Commentary on Mark Chapter 9 verses 28-50, by Chuck Smith 2.13.22

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February memory verse, Deuteronomy 6:5 (NKJV)

⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

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And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? ([Mar 9:26-28](#))

Good question. They were powerless in this case.

And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting ([Mar 9:29](#)).

Now, it would appear that there are rankings of demon spirits. And the Bible does definitely speak of the rankings, principalities, powers, which are all rankings; and there are some that are more powerful than others and are more resistant to exorcism than are others. And this was one of those more powerful demons; the disciples at this point weren't able to handle it. Jesus did. And His answer to them is that this kind can only come out by fasting and prayer.

And they departed from thence, and passed through Galilee; [and he tried to do it secretly] and he would not that any man should know it. For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is [to be] delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day ([Mar 9:30-31](#)).

Notice He's emphasizing this; He's trying to prepare them now. They know now He's the Messiah, but He's trying to prepare them for a different Messiah than what the people were actually looking for.

But they understood not that saying, and [they] were afraid to ask him ([Mar 9:32](#)).

They did not understand how He was talking about His death and resurrection. And they were just afraid to question Him about it.

And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? [What were you fellows arguing about back

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there on the path?] But they held their peace [they were ashamed to tell him: they were silent], for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest ([Mar 9:33-34](#)).

And they were embarrassed to say, "Well, we were, you know...Peter said he's going to be the greatest, and I know I am. And we were arguing about that." They were embarrassed to confess to the Lord the petty argument that they were in about who was going to be the greatest in the kingdom. Saying things, that when Jesus said, "What were you saying?" they were ashamed to tell Him; they were embarrassed to tell Him.

We have all been in that position. We've said things that we would be embarrassed to tell Jesus what we said. He should say, "Well, what did you say?" "Well, nothing Lord." We've all done things that we would be embarrassed for Jesus to know that we did them, as if He didn't. That's what we need to know; Jesus knows everything we say; He knows everything we do. The Bible says, "Everything is naked and open before Him with whom we have to do." You don't hide anything from Him. We need to be more aware of that. We need to be conscious of the presence of Jesus at all times, so that we know that we're not hiding anything from Him. And because He knew what they were arguing about, He said, "Come fellows, I want to talk to you." "And He sat down," which is the position that the Rabbi took whenever He was going to teach important lessons. And instead of rebuking them for arguing about who was going to be the greatest, instead of condemning them for this, He told them how they could be the greatest.

You know, Jesus so often has a different attitude towards me than what I anticipate. I've messed up, I've failed. I think, "Oh, man, He's going to wail on me now." Because the Lord says, "Come here, Chuck. I want to talk to you." "Uuuuhh." You're expecting Him to really lay it on you, and instead, He's so compassionate. He said, "Now look, this is the way you can be successful. Now you failed that time because..." And instead of condemning me for my failure, He only sits down and points out how I can avoid that failure the next time, how I can be successful the next time. I love the Lord because He has never condemned me. He's always so compassionate; He's always so helpful. Jesus said, "I didn't come to condemn the world, but that the world through me might be saved. And he who believes is not condemned." I believe in Jesus. Because I believe in Jesus, I'm not perfect. I do stumble, I do fall, but I'm not condemned. When I stumble and fall, He doesn't come and condemn me, He only shows me how to walk. So, they're arguing a petty argument over who's going to be the greatest; He doesn't condemn them for that and say, "What a stupid thing to be arguing about!" He says, "Look, you want to be the greatest? This is how: if any man wants to be first, let him be last, and let him become the servant." He said on another occasion, "If you want to be great in God's kingdom, then learn to be the servant of all." He had said before, "If you seek to save your life, you're going to lose it. But if you'll lose your life for My sake, then you'll find it; you'll save it." So, you want to be great? Here's the path to greatness. Not as you think. It's not through ambition and drive and pushing yourself ahead of the others and pulling others down that you might ascend above them; but the path of greatness is by taking

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the place of a servant and beginning to serve one another. Jesus said, "Whosoever would be the chief among you, let him be the servant of all."

Now, the real position of the pastor of the church is that of the servant to the church, the servant of all. I oftentimes tell the people back in the prayer room who come to accept Jesus Christ, "What are the fringe benefits now of your becoming a child of God is, you just picked up a bunch of servants." For we who are on the staff here at Calvary, the word *minister* actually means *servant*. And we are here to serve your needs, and we're available to serve you. That's what it's all about. And Jesus is saying, "Look, if you want to be great, then be a servant."

And he took a child, and set him [the child] in the midst of them: and when he had taken him [the child] in his arms ([Mar 9:36](#)),

I love this picture of Jesus. He's takes a little child, and He holds the child. He's sitting there, and probably sets him on his lap and holding him there in his arms.

he said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, [actually] receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me ([Mar 9:36-37](#)).

Now, Jesus is saying actually, "What you do for a child is being done for me." Now, in that culture the children were considered almost non-persons until they came of age. No one would take time for a child. They were just allowed to grow up until they became of age, and then they lay on them the responsibilities of adulthood. But Jesus is saying, "Take time for the children. Whatever you're doing for a child, you're actually doing for me. If you receive a child in My name, you're receiving Me; and if you receive Me, you're receiving the Father, the One that sent Me."

Now, the disciples are always throwing in things that don't really relate to the situation that He's talking about, because they didn't always understand what He was talking about.

And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one [who was] casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and [so] we forbade him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly [actually] speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward ([Mar 9:38-41](#)).

Now, John has interjected this sectarianism, "Lord, he was casting out devils, but he didn't call himself a Baptist, so we told him to stop it." He said, "Hey, learn that you're working together. If he's doing it in My name, he can't be speaking evil of Me. Let him alone." God help the church that someday we might wise up to the fact that we're all serving the same Lord. May God help us to identify the enemy. It's not the church down

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the street. We should be working with them for the cause of Jesus Christ. But the church is so busy competing and fighting with each other, that we're really not doing much to damage the enemy's territory. God help us. May the church of Jesus Christ really get together and learn to love one another, and learn to get along with one another.

Now, Jesus has this little child in His arms, and He's talking about receiving a child and ministering to a child, "and you're ministering to Me," and John throws in this sectarian bit and Jesus throws it back out. But then He comes back to the child and He said,

And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones [these little children, whoever would offend one of these little ones] that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea ([Mar 9:42](#)).

I love the spunk of Jesus. "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, look upon this little child..." And He's saying, "Take a millstone, tie it around his neck and toss him out into the sea." Hey, that millstone...you ought to see the millstone there in Capernaum. It's about as big as this pulpit, with a round hole in the middle. And it is a round stone, sort of a lava stone. I mean, if that thing were hung around your neck and you're tossed into the Sea of Galilee, you're going to go down fast. How evil it is to plant doubt in the heart of a child. How evil it is to destroy the faith, that beautiful faith that children have. You know, whenever I'm sick, who do I call to pray for me? Children. I love the children to pray for me. I don't want any doubts. Call my grandkids, "Pray for Grandpa." The beauty of that faith, the simplicity of that faith that they have in God. What kind of a twisted mind would try to destroy the beautiful faith of a child? Whatever type of twisted mind it is, Jesus said, "It would be better for that person to take a millstone and hang it on his neck and toss him on into the sea, than to destroy the faith of one of these little children who trust in Me."

If thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched ([Mar 9:43-44](#)).

Now, this is Jesus talking, friend. There are a lot of modernists today who say, "Well, hell isn't hell. There is no hell."

But this is Jesus talking, and I am afraid to add to or to take away from His words. I think He knows more about it than does Herbert W. Armstrong, or the Jehovah Witnesses. And rather than listening to what they may say, it is better to just listen to what Jesus says. According to Him, it is a real place. A place to be avoided at all costs. "Better to live a life in a maimed condition than to go into hell whole, where the fire will never be quenched, where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched."

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And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life [into eternal life lame], than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched ([Mar 9:45](#)):

The word translated *hell* here is not the usual Greek word translated hell. The usual Greek word is *hades*, which does speak of a temporary abode for the unrighteous dead in the heart of the earth. But this particular Greek word is *gehenna*. This is not a temporary abode; this is the place of the final consignment of Satan and his angels. And it was prepared for Satan and his angels. And those who choose to cast their lot with Satan and his angels, God will grant them that choice. And this is where they are consigned for eternity.

And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell [gehenna's] fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. For every one shall be salted with fire, [or the salt was used as a purifying instrument, so purified by fire,] and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another ([Mar 9:47-50](#)).