

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Mark: Jesus The Perfect Servant Of God

Part II: The Perfect Service Of Jesus, The Perfect Servant Of God, Mark 1:1-10:52

JJ. Christ's Rebuke Of Discipleship-Squelching Criticism

(Mark 9:38-42)

I. Introduction

- A. We learned in our first lesson in this series that Mark's Gospel presents the perfect service of God's Perfect Servant, Jesus, with Marks' focus of having rebounded unto upright service from personal failure.
- B. Mark had defected from service in Acts 13:13 due to some intolerance for an unpleasant issue, but regardless of the issue, he had failed to exercise longsuffering that is so necessary in discipling weak, fragile people.
- C. Christ rebuked the tendency to administer harsh, discipleship-squelching criticism in His disciples in Mark 9:38-42, providing us a great lesson in gentleness and longsuffering amid our intolerance for sin (as follows):

II. Christ's Rebuke Of Discipleship-Squelching Criticism, Mark 9:38-42.

- A. The disciple John spoke to Jesus in Mark 9:38a to report that the disciples had seen a man exorcising demons in Jesus' name, but that he was not following Jesus among His disciples.
- B. Concerned that he was functioning without Jesus' authority, John reported that they had forbade the man from exorcising demons in Jesus name because he was not following Him with the other disciples, Mark 9:38b.
- C. Jesus answered that they should not forbid him (Mark 9:39a), and added that people like this man were actually weak or immature disciples who needed to be encouraged and instructed rather than have their discipleship progress squelched by criticism for their being immature (Mark 9:39b-42):
 1. First, no one who does a great work in Christ's name is able right afterward to speak evil of the Lord, Mark 9:39b. He would not be relying on Christ's name to perform his work if he thought evil of Jesus!
 2. Second, if such a party who relies on Christ's name performs a great work, he is not against Christ, nor is he against Christ's disciples, but is actually for Christ and is a supporter of believers! (Mark 9:40) In other words, he is a believer, howbeit a very weak, immature one at best!
 3. Third, even if a party performs a very meager work such as giving a follower of Christ a cup of cold water to drink because he belongs of Christ is demonstrating faith in Christ of some degree, and will not lose his reward from God for that little bit of support, Mark 9:41.
 4. Each of these three factors being established, indicating such weak, imperfect, immature people are yet believers to some degree in Jesus, Christ's mature disciples must be careful not to cause them to sin in either enticing, provoking or discouraging them from following Jesus despite their immature expressions of faith, for causing such apostasy will be met by severe divine discipline, Mark 9:42:
 - a. The "large millstone" Jesus mentioned in Mark 9:42 was actually a "donkey millstone" (*mylos onikos*, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 147), a "heavy, flat stone turned by a donkey when it was grinding grain," not "the small hand mill (*mylos*) used by women (Matt. 24:41)," Ibid.
 - b. Secular Jewish historian Josephus records events where people were killed by drowning in The Antiquities of the Jews 14. 15. 10, an account that told of Galilean Jews drowning men of Herod the Great's party in a lake in Galilee, Ibid., p. 147; Josephus: Complete Works, 1974, p. 311.
 - c. Jesus thus taught that anyone who so critiqued a weak, immature disciple so that he was ruined as to his faith in Jesus rather than encouraged in it would receive the harshest of divine discipline, Mark 9:42; Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T.

Lesson: *Jesus taught that His disciples must encourage rather than discourage people who are not apostate, rebellious or opposed to Him, but who have a weak, immature or imperfect faith in Him, not destroying their discipleship by leveling unduly harsh criticism at them due to their imperfections, but building them up.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ to be saved, John 3:16. (2) On the one hand, may we be intolerant of willful deception, willful rebellion and willful apostasy, responding to it by practicing first degree separation from unbelieving apostates (2 John 9-10) and second degree separation from believers (2 Thessalonians 3:6-15). (3) On the other hand, if we see people who have an imperfect, immature or partial faith in Christ as discerned in Jesus' teaching in Mark 9:38-42, instead of critiquing their weakness so as to create a stumbling block their lives that deter them from following Christ, much to God's great anger, may we encourage them to grow in knowledge and their walk, coming alongside them as helpers, not hinderers!*