

## 谦卑的功课——马可福音 9:30-41 The Lesson on Humility—Mark 9:30-41

### *Introduction*

- Scripture Reading: Mark 9:30-41; Philippians 2:1-8

Mark 9:30-41

30 From there they went out and began to go through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know about it. 31 For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, “The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later.” 32 But they did not understand this statement, and they were afraid to ask Him. 33 They came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house, He began to question them, “What were you discussing on the way?” 34 But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest. 35 Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, “If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.” 36 Taking a child, He set him before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, 37 “Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me.” 38 John said to Him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to prevent him because he was not following us.” 39 But Jesus said, “Do not hinder him, for there is no one who will perform a miracle in My name, and be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me. 40 For he who is not against us is for us. 41 For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as followers of Christ, truly I say to you, he will not lose his reward.

- Are you a humble person? Do you... 1. Speaks of others sins with bitterness, levity, or contempt rather than with grief or pity; 2. Always suspects others rather than one’s self; 3. Sharply critical of others; 4. A singular affected demeanor; 5. A certain stiffness and inflexibility in judgment; 6. A show of superior separation; 7. Takes great notice of opposition or injuries suffered with an air of bitterness or contempt; 8. A certain inappropriate and self-confident boldness before God and men; 9. Assuming false authority; 10. Treats others with neglect or disdain.
- *"The only person who cannot see the ugliness of pride is the prideful person himself. He may have many a lovely virtue, but the moment his pride comes out, there is instantaneously a stench around him. It makes him smell like hell to everyone around him, but he cannot smell it."* - A shepherd
- Outline:
  - Title: The Lesson on Humility
  - 1. Life of Humility: Serving to Death (vv.30-32)
  - 2. Problem of Pride (1<sup>st</sup> round): Destroying Unity Within (vv.33-34)
  - 3. Lesson on Humility (1<sup>st</sup> round) (vv.35-37)
    - 3a. Humility Expresses Itself in Lowly Service (v. 35)
    - 3b. Humility Is Illustrated with Childlikeness (v.36)
    - 3c. Humility Establishes Relationship with God (v.37)
  - 4. Problem of Pride (2<sup>nd</sup> round): Sectarianism Toward Outsiders (v.38)

5. Lesson on Humility (2<sup>nd</sup> round) (vv.39-41)
  - 5a. Humility Knows God's Kingdom Is Broad (v.39)
  - 5b. Humility Has an Optimistically Open Heart (v.40)
  - 5c. Humility Is Motivated with an Eternal Reward (v.41)

### **Life of Humility: Serving to Death(vv.30-32)**

- "From there they went out": A crucial moment. From here, Jesus would go all the way south to Jerusalem for the cross.
- "He did not want anyone to know about it": Because He wanted to make the most of the time to privately train His disciples.
- "For He was teaching His disciples": The main focus of the teaching was on His death and resurrection. The verb tense indicates this is continuous instruction.
- "To be delivered into the hands of men": The passive voice indicates Jesus would not resist, for He knew it was God's will. Acts 2:23 says He was "delivered over **by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God.**" Jesus wasn't passively obedient; He actively obeyed God's will. This is the ultimate example of humility. Perfect humility produces the life of faithful service even unto death.

**Mark 10:45** "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

- "But they did not understand this statement": The literal meaning isn't hard at all to understand, but they couldn't understand because they had wrong ideas about the Messiah, not believing the Messiah would undergo death. They were dreaming fancy dreams of the kingdom, wanting only to be the greatest in the kingdom.

### **Problem of Pride (1st round): Destroying Unity Within (vv.33-34)**

- "They had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest": They were not thinking how to serve one another and together to serve the Lord. All they wanted was to sit above the other eleven and be the greatest. That's how pride destroys the unity of the church.
- "When He was in the house, He began to question them": Jesus already "kn[ew] what they were thinking in their heart" (Luke 9:47). His question was to give them an opportunity to confess their sin. "But they kept silent" and confessed nothing.

### **Lesson on Humility (1st round) (vv.35-37)**

- "If anyone wants to be first": Jesus did not criticize their desire to be first; He even used this desire to motivate them to "be the servant of all." Jesus assumes we all want to "be first."

**【Motive】** There is no Christian who does not want to make more contributions to God's kingdom. God uses Christians to fulfill His kingdom, so if a Christian doesn't even want to be used

by God, something's seriously wrong in his heart. The key is not to compete with others, but to be used to the maximum by God. The disciples, however, completely missed the point. They thought that being first meant competing and getting above others.

- "Be last of all": Everyone else is ahead of me and my value lies in serving others. Everyone else is more honorable and important than me and it is my great honor to serve them. That's how Jesus served, in complete humility.
- "Be servant of all": Being a servant means to serve. The word "servant" is often translated as "deacon" in the New Testament, for deacons are those who serve. There are various ways to serve, depending on the needs and resources and gifts God gives to each person. All forms of service is valuable. There is no hierarchy.

【Principle】 Humility always seeks to serve others, while pride always seeks to get something for oneself. The world defines humility as merely self-debasing, but true humility is to see oneself as so unworthy that the only value one can find is to serve others.

【Application】 Try practicing humble service in marriage, always putting the other person ahead of you. Marital relationship should not be fifty-fifty, calculating what is fair; but rather, both parties should completely offer themselves 100% to serve each other.

- "Taking a child..... and taking him in His arms": While the disciples were competing to be the greatest, Jesus took a child in His arms. The point is, you've got it all backward – the kingdom of God is not about who has more power or ability; rather, the more humble you are, the closer you get to be to the heart of God.

**Matthew 18:3** "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven."

【Principle】 Children know they are weak, incapable of independent living, and that they must completely rely on their parents for provision and protection. Jesus used this metaphor to illustrate the basic humility before God needed for salvation.

- "Whoever receives one child like this in My name.....": The topic here is back on service; the disciples need to learn to serve even the little children. In the world, the higher in position, the more service one receives from others. In the kingdom of God, it is entirely the opposite – if you want to be great, go and serve the least disciple for me, even like this child.
- "Whoever receives Me... receives Him who sent me": When you receive the least of believers, you are receiving Jesus, receiving the Father, and receiving the triune, living God. Even the least believer has the triune God dwelling within them. If you proudly reject them, you are rejecting God (cf. Matthew 25:31-46).

【Application】 Apply this to church life. When you see a brother/sister coming to you, remind yourself immediately that God is coming to you in a unique way. See if this perspective changes your attitude and behavior towards your brothers and sisters.

**1 John 4:20** "If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen."

### **Problem of Pride (2nd round): Sectarianism Toward Outsiders (v.38)**

- "Prevent him because he was not following us": This person belongs to the same spiritual camp with the disciples; they are both citizens of God's kingdom. John just saw him casting out demons in the name of Jesus, but instead of receiving him, he wants to forbid him! Pride leads to sectarianism among believers.

**【Example】** These twin issues may show up in church like this: Other churches all have serious problems; our own church is fine, but everyone is worse than me so they must do things my way! Have you ever made such mistakes?

*"Men of all branches of Christ's Church are apt to think that no good can be done in the world, unless it is done by their own party and denomination. ... They make an idol of their own peculiar ecclesiastical machinery, and can see no merit in any other. ... To this intolerant spirit we owe some of the blackest pages of Church history. Christians have repeatedly persecuted Christians for no better reason than that which is here given by John." - A pastor*

### **Lesson on Humility (2nd round) (vv.39-41)**

- "Do not hinder him ...": Jesus acknowledges the fact that this man did cast out demons in His name and that he did not speak evil of Him.  
**Numbers 11:28-29** "... 'Moses, my lord, restrain them.' But Moses said to him, 'Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!'"
- "For he who is not against us is for us": We must have an optimistically open heart towards other Christians. Avoid narrow-mindedness and judgmentalism. Believe that they are genuine and here to help us, not to oppose us (cf. Matthew 12:30).

**2 Corinthians 6:11-12** "Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide. You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections."

- "For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink....., he will not lose his reward.": Serving one another in the church often entails the most menial tasks. As long as it is done with a sincere motive to serve the Lord, it will be rewarded in heaven. Setting up tables, cooking, cleaning, etc... Since those receiving the service belong to Christ, serving them is serving the Lord.