

March 3, 2024

Steps—Mark, Chapter 9

Lessons for Disciples



It is time for the disciples to improve and apply what Jesus has been teaching them. They have witnessed his power and his authority. They believe that he is the Messiah. But they are not understanding what that means for themselves, for the world, and for Jesus' mission.

Transfiguration

Jesus takes the inner circle (Peter, James, and John) to a high place. Then something amazing happens. The curtain is lifted to reveal Christ in all his heavenly glory. He not only looks different, but Moses, representing the Law, and Elijah, representing the prophets, magically appear beside him. The disciples

are overwhelmed and speechless. Peter tries to show respect but instead reveals a total lack of understanding about what the transfiguration signifies. The Greek word translated as transfigured is *metamorphoo*, which literally means to change or transform.

Read Mark 9:2-13.

- Why do you think Jesus only took Peter, James, and John?
- What is wrong with Peter's suggestion? Read 2 Peter 1:16-18. What aspects of the transfiguration story in Mark does Peter emphasize in his letter? What has he learned?
- God commands the disciples to listen to Jesus. How does this apply to us?
- *Optional:* How is John the Baptist's situation with Herod and Herodius (Mark 6:17-29) similar to Elijah's situation with Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kings 19:1-10)?

A Teaching Moment

When Jesus, Peter, James, and John return to the rest of the disciples there is an argument going on. A man has brought his demon-possessed son to be freed from possession but the disciples are not successful even though Jesus gave them that authority (Mark 6:7). They are confused.

Read Mark 9:14-32

- Why do you think the disciples are not successful? Who is the unbelieving generation Jesus refers to in verse 19?
- The father wants to believe, but he is also aware of the weakness of his belief. What does his statement tell you about overcoming unbelief?
- Look at verse 29. Are there different kinds of demons that require different tactics, or have the disciples missed an important point, or have they become complacent? What is Jesus trying to explain here?

- Warren Wiersbe writes that “faith must be cultivated through spiritual discipline and devotion.” What does that look like for you? How can you “cultivate” better?

Five Lessons

Jesus is refining the understanding of the disciples. They understand the basics about who he is, his power, and his authority. But they are getting tripped up by their own egos. They are unsure about their role, their power, and their importance. They are being tempted.

Read Mark 9:33-50. Fill in the chart by putting the lesson in your own words.

Verses	Lesson
9:33-35	
9:36-37	
9:38-41	
9:42-48	
9:49-50	

- Solomon states that “In the Kingdom of God, the sinful ambition to rule must be transformed to the holy ambition to serve.” How does this connect to the disciples’ argument and Jesus’ response in the first lesson?
- The child in the second lesson symbolizes someone who is lowly, unimportant, or even an outcast, stranger, or a new believer. Considering that, what does it tell us about being welcoming to God?
- In the third lesson, the disciples decide that they have the authority to tell someone else not to cast out demons in the name of Jesus. They are deciding who is in and who is out. What does Jesus’ response reveal about their attitude? How can it inform your attitude toward other believers?
- What is the warning given about leading others astray? How does that affect the way you share the gospel with others?
- What sacrifices must you be willing to make in order to resist the temptation to sin? What was something you had to give up to remain faithful to Jesus?
- Salt is a very valuable commodity in Jesus’ time. *The NIV Study Bible* suggests that our saltiness is a measure of our allegiance to Jesus. With that in mind, if you lose your saltiness, how can you restore it?

Take Action

Which of today’s lessons stood out the most to you?

How can you apply that lesson this week?