

# IMPORTANT LESSONS FROM OUR LORD

**TEXT: MARK 9:33-50**

## **Introduction:**

1. Mark 9:33 says, “And he came to Capernaum,” a city in Galilee (9:30), located on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.
2. Our Lord and His disciples spent much of their time in Capernaum. Our Lord taught in the synagogue in Capernaum (Mark 1:21).
3. Our Lord had been brought up in Nazareth, but Capernaum was His adopted home town. He performed many miracles in Capernaum, and gave many discourses in Capernaum.
4. That is why He pronounced judgment upon them. “And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. (Matt. 11:23).
5. “And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell” (Luke 10:15).
6. These words were literally fulfilled. Today there is no more Capernaum – there is nothing there but ruins; it is completely desolate.
7. Mark 9:33 says, “And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house... The “house” probably refers to the house where our Lord stayed when He was in Capernaum (cf. Matt. 9:1, 7, 10).
8. It may have been Peter’s house (cf. Mark 1:29, 30).
9. In this house, our Lord “sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them...” (Mark 9:35).
10. The expression “called the twelve” signifies our Lord gathered them together to teach them some important lessons.

## **I. A LESSON ON SERVICE IN THE KINGDOM (9:33-37).**

1. Our Lord asked them, “What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?” (9:33).
2. Our Lord asked this question, not to gain information (He is omniscient), but to begin His lesson on service (9:33).
3. Mark does not indicate whether our Lord knew what they were arguing about because He overheard them, or because He knew their hearts and minds.

4. Luke 9:47 says, “And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart...”
5. Mark 9:34 says, “But they held their peace.” Our Lord’s question made them uneasy. They were now under conviction and could not speak.
6. Matthew’s account is a little different. Matthew 18:1 says, “At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”
7. So our Lord gave them an important lesson on service in the kingdom of heaven.
8. Notice the contrast – our Lord was concentrating on His approaching death on the cross (Mark 9:31), but they were thinking only about their future positions in the kingdom of heaven.
9. They failed to recognize the true character of the kingdom of God. They thought of it as a place for worldly advancement.
10. Peter, James, and John were allowed the privilege of accompanying our Lord up the mount of transfiguration (Mark 9:2). The disciples supposed that present privileges must mean a high rank in God’s kingdom.
11. Our Lord had to constantly warn His disciples about selfish, worldly ambition (cf. Luke 14:7-11).
12. By the way, this dispute proves that the other apostles did not consider Peter some type of “pope” (cf. Matthew 16:17, 18; 17:1; 18:1-4).
13. This false doctrine that our Lord made Peter a “pope” and put him in charge of the church was invented by the RCC hundreds of years later. The apostles knew nothing about it (cf. Galatians 2:11-14; I Peter 5:1-4), and there is not a hint of it in Scripture.
14. Our Lord taught them (and us) an important lesson: “If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all” (Mark 9:35).
15. “Any man” emphasizes that this was not just a lesson for the twelve apostles – it is for “any man.”

16. “Shall be last of all” (9:35) means the humble leader will gladly take last place. He will deliberately choose the lowest place of service and live for others instead of self (cf. Mark 10:42-45).
17. Our Lord equates greatness with humility.
18. “Servant of all” means he will gladly serve others. He will put others ahead of himself.
19. Andrew Murray said, “Jesus found His glory in taking the form of a servant, so when He said to us, ‘Whosoever would be first among you, shall be your servant,’ He simply taught us the blessed truth that there is nothing so divine and heavenly as being the servant and helper of all.”
20. Our Lord said in Matthew 20:27, 28, “And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”
21. By taking a child in His arms, our Lord was reinforcing His lesson on humility (9:36, 37). Children are friendly and trusting. The small child represents a humble believer who trusts in Christ.
22. Receiving “one of such children” in Christ’s name means they are receiving Christ Himself, because our Lord regards the act as if it was done to Himself (9:37).
23. By doing this they are not only receiving Christ, “but him (God the Father) that sent me” (9:37).

## **II. INCLUSION IN THE KINGDOM (9:38-41)**

1. Next, John spoke up, “Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbad him, because he followeth not us” (9:38).
2. Notice John did not say, “We saw a man trying to cast out devils in thy name...”
3. No. The man was successfully casting out devils, and he was doing it in Jesus’ name.

4. This passage serves to remind us that our Lord's ministry was spreading beyond the circle of His apostles and other followers.
5. John said, "and we forbid him..." perhaps wondering if they were wrong to do so.
6. It is interesting that John said, "because he followeth not us" (9:38) – not, "Because he followed not Thee." In other words, this man did not belong to their fellowship or association.
7. HA Ironside said, "Such an attitude is common to many today who think more of sectarian affiliation than of carrying on of the work of the Lord. We are all prone to over-estimate the importance of our own particular group and to underrate others who do not see eye to eye with us. But the supreme test is the heart's attitude toward Christ. God is not dealing with any party to the exclusion of others. His presence, by the Spirit, is not confined to any one special company of believers, however sound they may be."
8. Our Lord responded to John by saying, "Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me" (9:39).
9. The Scofield Study Bible calls this, "The rebuke of sectarianism."
10. Scofield interprets our Lord's words this way: "For there is no man which shall do a *work of power upon my name, who will find it possible soon after to revile me.*"
11. Jesus said, "For he that is not against us is on our part" (9:40).
12. Our Lord made a similar statement in Matthew 12:30, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."
13. There are many weird and unscriptural people who identify themselves as followers of Christ. From them we must separate. However, there are some good Christians who are doing a great work for God who may not belong to our particular fellowship.
14. Again, I will quote Ironside: "The Lord never spurns anyone who is seeking to know Him and to do His will."
15. David wrote, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts" (Psalm 119:63).
16. The issue is not whether we belong to any particular church or group, but whether we belong to Christ. Jesus said, "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" (Mark 9:41).

### III. EXCLUSION IN THE KINGDOM

1. John and some of the others (John said, "we forbid him" – 9:38) were too exclusive, so our Lord had to teach them to be more inclusive.

2. But God can be very exclusive too. Our Lord said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).
3. Many people are excluded from heaven (Mark 9:43, 44).
4. Our Lord preached often about hell. He said to mislead or offend “one of these little ones that believe” in Him was a terrible sin. It would be “better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea” (9:42).
5. A millstone was a very large stone that required the strength of a mule to turn it at the grinding mill where they would grind out the grain.
6. What a strong warning from our Lord!
7. Our Lord used the word “offend” four times in this passage (9:42, 43, 45, 47). It literally means, “cause to stumble.”
8. “Hands” (9:43) represent the things we do,
9. “Feet” (9:45) represent the places we go.
10. “Eyes” (9:47) represent the things we see.
11. The hands and feet and eyes are instruments that can be used for the gratification of the evil desires of the heart. When our Lord says, “cut it off” (9:43, 45), He is not teaching us to mutilate ourselves, but rather to cut out the wicked desires that lead us to do wicked acts.
12. Cutting off the hand or foot or plucking out the eye would not stop a lustful heart or a dirty mind (cf. Mark 7:20-23).
13. Our Lord is calling for quick, decisive action against anything that would draw us away from salvation and into the pathway of sin.

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. The valley of Hinnom was a place near Jerusalem where human sacrifices were offered (cf. Jer. 7:30, 31).
2. In the NT, the Hebrew *Hinnom* is called by the Greek name *Gehenna*, and is translated in our English Bible as “hell.” The word is used 12 times in the N.T. and it always refers to eternal punishment in the fires of hell.
3. In the valley of Hinnom (or Gehenna) human sacrifices were offered up to the heathen god Molech (cf. II Chron. 28:1-4; 33:6; Jer. 19:1-6).
4. It was a horrible place known for its devil worship and idolatry. Under the reforms of good King Josiah, he defiled this terrible place and turned it into a garbage dump (II Kings 23:10). It developed into a cesspool for the city’s sewage and their refuse was burned there.
5. Because of the continual fires burning, the horrible memories of screaming babies and weeping and wailing and chanting, the abominable idolatry and human sacrifices, the terrible stench of burning garbage and sewage, and the unspeakable filth – our Lord used Gehenna as a picture of hell. When He used the word in this fashion, His listeners knew exactly what He meant.

6. Eleven out of the twelve references to *Gehenna* come from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Mark 9:43, 45, 47).
7. That our Lord was referring to literal torment is obvious if we take the Bible literally (cf. Mark 9:44, 46, 48). The worms (maggots) in the valley of Hinnom died and the fires eventually were quenched.
8. In fact, no one is even sure today of the precise location of the valley of Hinnom.
9. But the “worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” in hell. Unsaved friend, are you prepared to go there?
10. Do you realize the unspeakable horror that awaits you if you die in your sins? Unless you repent and turn to Christ you will be damned forever in the fires of hell (Mark 9:43-47).

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