

Adult Sunday Bible Study Lesson

The Gospel According to Mark

Sunday April 14, 2019

From the Mountain into the Valley

Situational Context: Jesus, Peter, James, and John are returning from the mountain where Jesus met with Moses and Elijah. It was there that the Father spoke to be heard by these three apostles, **Mark 9:7 (NIV2011)** ⁷ **Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!” It was there that Jesus told them that He was going to rise from the dead, Mark 9:9 (NIV2011)** ⁹ **As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.**

The other nine Apostles were at the bottom of the mountain impotent to help. Things had previously gone really well when they were sent out two-by-two.

Lesson Theme: In a scene that replicates Moses coming down from the mountain only to be faced with unbelief, Jesus came down from the spiritual heights to see that the disciples He had granted the authority to drive out demons had failed in this instance, think that the power to do this rested in them. They failed to look to Christ.

Mark 9:25-29 (NIV2011) ²⁵ **When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, He rebuked the impure spirit. “You deaf and mute spirit,” He said, “I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.”** ²⁶ **The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, “He’s dead.”** ²⁷ **But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.** ²⁸ **After Jesus had gone indoors, His disciples asked Him privately, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?”** ²⁹ **He replied, “This kind can come out only by prayer.”**

1. Chaos: Mark 9:14-18 (NIV2011) ¹⁴ **When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them.** ¹⁵ **As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet Him.** ¹⁶ **“What are you arguing with them about?” He asked.** ¹⁷ **A man in the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech.**

¹⁸ **Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.”**

Interpretation: If the transfiguration took place on Mount Hermon, the presence of the teachers of the law so far north in the Holy Land would indicate their concern in monitoring the activities

of Jesus. Jesus is informed by a man that his disciples were not able to heal his son of demonic control.

Supporting Texts:

Matthew 10:1 (NIV2011) ¹ Jesus called His twelve disciples to Him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

Luke 10:17 (NIV2011) ¹⁷ The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.”

Discussion Starters:

How did the presence of religious leaders impact the situation and the disciples?

Why are the disciples’ failure surprising or not?

2. Disappointment Expressed: Mark 9:19-21 (NIV2011) ¹⁹ “You unbelieving generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.” ²⁰ So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. ²¹ Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been like this?” “From childhood,” he answered.

Interpretation: Jesus’ impatience with the disciples’ lack of faith, and frustration with the general scene of unbelief and impotence as He returns from the mount of Transfiguration, is reminiscent of Moses coming down from Mount Sinai to find unbelief and unfaithfulness in the Israelite camp and Yahweh’s exasperation at Israel’s continuing unbelief.

Supporting Texts:

Psalms 95:10 (NIV2011) ¹⁰ For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, ‘They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known My ways.’

John 14:9 (NIV2011) ⁹ Jesus answered: “Don’t you know Me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

Discussion Starters:

Did Jesus lose His composure?

Who was the main target of Jesus’ exasperation?

What did the son's reaction to Jesus indicate?

How did Jesus react to the display of demonic oppression?

3. A Good Prayer: Mark 9:22-24 (NIV2011) ²² “It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.” ²³ “ ‘If you can?’” said Jesus. “Everything is possible for one who believes.” ²⁴ Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!”

Interpretation: The father appeals to Jesus for help who assumed that Jesus was in the same boat as His disciples. Jesus' response is an indication of His own shock and He quickly corrects the father. The father's quick response and prayer indicate his own surprise at Jesus' answer.

Supporting Texts:

Luke 17:5 (NIV2011) ⁵ The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!”

Discussion Starters:

Was the father's questioning innocent?

What is the source of Jesus own incredulity?

What was the father's plea?

How is the father's request granted?

4. Apart from Christ, Failure: Mark 9:25-29 (NIV2011) ²⁵ When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, He rebuked the impure spirit. “You deaf and mute spirit,” He said, “I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” ²⁶ The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, “He's dead.” ²⁷ But, Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up. ²⁸ After Jesus had gone indoors, His disciples asked Him privately, “Why couldn't we drive it out?” ²⁹ He replied, “This kind can come out only by prayer.”

Interpretation: As much as possible, Jesus wanted to avoid further publicity. “This kind” seems to suggest that there are different kinds of demons. The disciples apparently had taken for granted the power given to them or had come to believe that it was inherent in them. Lack of prayer indicated they had forgotten that their power over the demonic spirits came from trusting in Jesus and His power.

Supporting Texts:

John 15:5 (NIV2011) ⁵ “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing.

Discussion Starters:

Why did Jesus act before the crowd could get to Him?

What did Jesus’ command to never enter him again indicate?

Why did the disciples wait until they were alone to ask for an explanation?

Why didn’t Jesus share this with the teachers of the Law?

What does Jesus’ words “this kind” indicate?