



‘Now!’ Sermon Series

Sermon #35

‘The Kingdom is Bigger than You!’

Mark 9:38-41

Wednesday, January 22nd, 2024

This Past Sunday in NOW Sermon Series:

- This past Sunday, just a few days ago, we were able to study Mark 9:30-37 as we looked at Jesus giving His disciples the 2nd of 3 passion predictions, and then the disciples arguing about who was the greatest.
 - *This past Sunday I asked the question: What can we learn from the disciples in this text that the Lord may use to convict us that we may be worried about the wrong things in our lives?*
 - **Truth #1: *The Meaningful.* (v. 30-32)**
 - **Truth #2: *The Meaningless.* (v. 33-34)**
 - **Truth #3: *The Message.* (v. 35-37)**

- Based on Sunday’s message, how are you doing when it comes to the personal pride that may be present in your life?

‘The Kingdom is Bigger than You!’

Mark 9:38-41

Sermon in a Sentence:

We can see in this text that the Kingdom of God is bigger than ‘just us’ when we look at how the Gospel is not Exclusive, the Gospel takes Everyone’s Effort, and the Gospel is to be an Encouragement.

Intro:

- In our passage of scripture tonight we will find that the Disciples did not like the fact that others were casting out demons in Jesus name.
 - *By this time in Jesus’ ministry and in Mark’s Gospel, the Gospel was spreading across the region and more and more people were believing in the name of Jesus.*
 - *It seems that the Disciples were struggling with the idea that Christianity would be a Church, the Bride of Christ, and not an exclusive cult.*
 - In this text, Jesus is not advocating for the tolerance of sin, no. Jesus is letting the disciples

know that the Kingdom of God is bigger than just them.

- The Kingdom of God is bigger than First Baptist Church of Gaston, there are many Bible Believing Churches across the world that have the same goal that we do, **Matthew 28:19-20**.
 - *I think the main point in this text tonight that Jesus is trying to get across to His Disciples and to us, is this: **We are to do Kingdom Ministry with believers in Christ all across our community, state, country, and world, not just here in this Church.***
- **Illustration on Cooperation**
 - In my opinion there is no better example of Kingdom unity and cooperation among fellow Churches than the Southern Baptist Convention.
 - *Right here in South Carolina William Screven founded the first Baptist Church in the south when his congregation relocated from Maine, to Charleston SC.*
 - During Screven's Pastorate, he would begin to follow the NT model of planting Churches.
 - Up and down the Ashley river churches were planted from the ministry of FBC Charleston. And from those Churches, more and more Churches were planted across the lowcountry.
 - *Then in later years, Richard Furman and others would be instrumental in*

forming associations with 2-4 Baptist Churches in a single area.

- The main reasons for associations in the beginning:
 - *Training Preachers.*
 - *Providing Education.*
 - *Joint mission efforts.*
- **Through the early efforts of the SBC pioneers, this year the Southern Baptist Convention will celebrate 100 years of the Cooperative Program.**
 - The Southern Baptist Convention has over 47,000 Churches in the United States, and most of those Churches give to the cooperative program.
- *Meaning, that we can impact missions through the world and because of our giving the NAMB, IMB and State Mission Boards and our 6 SBC seminaries and hundreds of Baptist Colleges can thrive in reaching the nations with the Gospel.*
 - Yes, across the SBC not all Churches are the same and we don't all use the same methods. We don't all agree on every little thing. But we believe in the Gospel, the Word of God, and Christ Jesus as the foundation and Head of His Church.
- *Therefore, the SBC is a strong modern example that it's not about one individual*

Church, but the collective body spreading the Gospel.

- Truly, even in our own denomination, the Kingdom is much bigger than just us.
****Read Mark 9:38-41****

Question to Ask:

How does Jesus show His disciples in this text that the Gospel is broader than just ‘them’?

Truth #1: *The Gospel is not Exclusive. (v. 38)*

- ‘John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name,^[a] and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.”
- With the argument that the disciples just had about who among them was the greatest, at this point in Mark’s Gospel we are beginning to see that the Disciples (not just John), are beginning to think they are exclusive or ‘elite’.
 - ***Exclusive is defined as limiting or limited to possession, control, or use by a single individual or group.***
 - ***The disciples expose here a major problem of the human heart: satan will often tempt us to think that they WE are the only ones that matter and that can do certain things...***
 - What John comes up and says to Jesus after his short investigation, is quite ironic.

- ***David Garland said ‘The disciples only recently bungled an exorcism, yet they do not hesitate to obstruct someone who is successful but who is not a member of their team.’***
- Isn’t this how you and I act?
 - I have certainly been guilty of this before, sometimes we will pick apart, argue, and disagree with what and how other Churches are doing to reach people with the Gospel.
 - ***I’ve seen this for as long as I can remember.***
 - ***Church, this is not unifying for the Kingdom of God.***
 - ***When the lost world sees Churches arguing and bickering with one another, why would they want to come and join our team if we don’t even admit and recognize that we are on the SAME team?***
- John’s statement here certainly reveals that in his heart, he felt the Gospel was exclusive, instead of inclusive.
- ***It’s also important to point out that this is the only time in Mark’s Gospel where any action or saying of John is recorded.***
 - ***I believe there are 2 things that we need to look at to ensure we believe and***

follow that the Gospel is not Exclusive...

- ***Attentiveness of others Actions. (v. 38a)***

- ‘John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name,’
- Now, we do not know whether John in the disciples came across this person or if they were looking for something going on...
 - ***Either way, they were attentive, the antennas were on, and keeping watch on what others were doing.***
- ***One of the chronic conditions of an exclusive mindset is constantly checking in and looking into what others are doing.***
 - Now, there was a practice in Jewish culture where Jesus' name would be used to cast out evil spirits like in Acts 16:13-14, but that was condemned because they were not believers.
 - ***One could and cannot call upon the name of Jesus to cast out demons if they did not actually believe in Jesus.***
- It was quite common for exorcists in the ancient world to use whatever name they thought would work.
 - But Jesus makes it clear in the verses that follow this one, because this person obviously was a believer because Jesus does not condemn it.

- ***But John and the disciples were obviously quite nosy.***

- They were seeing what someone was doing, to see if there was any fault in them or their practice. (Very similar to us and can show a symptom of having an exclusive mindset towards the Gospel).

- ***Action to the Situation. (v. 38b)***

- ‘and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.’
- ***After John and the disciples were attentive and assessing what was going on, they took action to go and put a stop to this.***
 - Yet another sign that you think the Gospel is exclusive is that you have the authority to stop and start things, when in reality, you don't.
- John is telling Jesus that they took the action to stop this individual on their own and with their own authority.
 - ***The sad reality here is that the disciples had just failed to cast a demon out in Mark 9:14-19 due to the lack of prayer.***
 - Here, they stop someone who is having success in the name of Jesus.
- ***When it comes to ministry and life in general, we will often try to stop or slow someone down if their methods don't make sense to us.***

- The message ‘in Jesus name’ was the same here, same team, but because it was a different group of people, the disciples are threatened.
- *Be so secure in your personal relationship with Jesus Christ that you are not threatened or offended when someone else has success in the ministry.*
 - **Root them on! Don't tear them down!**
- Notice also that John makes the clear distinction of saying that the exorcist was not following ‘us’ meaning the disciples.
 - Notice that John did not say ‘because he was not following YOU.’
- **Obviously at this point in Mark's Gospel we can already see that the disciples have an issue of the inflation of self importance.**
 - This is where we must be careful. Based on John's statement and the ongoing argument the disciples were having about who's the greatest, you can see that they are beginning to think that the Gospel needs them.
 - **Church, God doesn't need us, but He allows us to be apart of His Kingdom and work.**
 - This is a privilege and heavy responsibility, but it is not an entitled position.

- What's happening here, is the ‘Disease of me!’ and it has the potential to take all of us down, if we let it...
- ***Illustration***
 - In 1980 the Los Angeles Lakers, led by Magic Johnson won the NBA championship and entering into the 1980-1981 season they were predicted by most to win back to back championships.
 - But, a few weeks before the season opener Magic tore a cartilage in his knee and it would take a three month healing process.
 - Surprisingly enough, the other players on the team played as hard as they could and they were winning seventy percent of their games.
 - **Magic was set to come back on the court on February 27th of 1981.**
 - During the timeouts at every home game the announcer would countdown how many days until Magic was back in a Lakers uniform.
 - **The other LA Lakers players became disgruntled saying ‘we're winning now .What so great about February 27th?’**

- As the doors opened on February 27th the 17,000 season ticket holders were all handed a button that said ‘The Magic is Back!’
- Though Magic didn’t start the game, he was still recognized before the game (a tradition usually only for starters) .
 - ***The players on the team who had led the team for three months were ignored, and oozing with jealousy, resentment, anger and envy.***
- Eventually, the season spiraled out of control. They started losing games, the players turned on each other, the coach was fired, and they lost in the first round of the playoffs. A huge disappointment.
 - Pat Riley said *‘Because of greed, pettiness, and resentment, we executed one of hte fastest falls from grace in NBA history. It was the disease of me.’*
- John seems to have a small case of the disease of me here in verse 38.
 - If we aren’t careful, satan will try to pass the disease of me onto you and I as well...

Truth #2: *The Gospel takes Everyone. (v. 39-40)*

- ‘But Jesus said, “Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward

to speak evil of me. For the one who is not against us is for us.’

- ***Living the Christian life and sharing/spreading the Gospel is not a solo gig. It takes all of us, working together.***
- In verses 39-40. Jesus responds to John, and it’s not what the disciples would’ve figured Jesus would have said.
 - *Simply because up to this point, they have been the ones doing ministry with Jesus and have not seen others.*
- With what Jesus says here, He is teaching them that the spreading of the Gospel takes all of us. And to also, mind your business!
 - The Apostle Paul seems to echoes Jesus teaching and response here, in Philippians 1:17-18...
 - ‘The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.’
 - ***In other words, we are not responsible for the actions or motives of there's, but we are responsible for ensuring that self-inflated egos don't affect our Gospel work and witness.***

- I believe Jesus shares with us two important things that we need to apply to our lives based on His response to John.
- **Let God Handle the Results. (v. 39)**
 - ‘But Jesus said, “Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me.’
 - **In the greek text, Jesus' phrase for ‘Do not stop him is quite emphatic.**
 - It seems passive when translated to English, but it certainly would have not been communicated that way to John.
 - ***Word Study***
 - The phrase ‘Do not stop him’ comes from the greek word **‘Koluo’** κολύετε which in verse 39, is the present tense of this word, and it is an imperative.
 - **This implies that Jesus’ response to John is not just limited to this instance but could be translated ‘Do not stop such people’.**
 - After this phrase, Jesus gives His reasoning ‘no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me.’
 - Jesus is telling them that this person must’ve been a believer.
 - Scholar James Edwards said **‘anyone so acting in Jesus’ name is empowered by God, and one**

so empowered cannot lightly discard or disregard his vocation.’

- The apostle Paul again echoes the truth conveyed in verse 39 when he wrote this to the Church at Corinth in 1st Corinthians 12:3.
 - ‘Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.’
- Here, the works and wonders done in Christ name are evidence of the call and commission of Christ.
 - Jesus is warning the disciples that they should be carefully not to stop and judge those whose ministries are bearing fruit.
- **What this really boils down to is the fact that you and I are not responsible for the results of the ministry.**
 - It’s not our call to say whether a ministry is bringing God Glory or not, but let Him decide that. Just because other Churches, Christians or organizations do things differently than us, does not mean that we’re right and they are wrong.

- Remember the Kingdom of God is bigger than you and you must let God be God.
- **Let Go of your need to always criticize. (v. 40)**
 - ‘For the one who is not against us is for us.’
 - Such a strong statement from Jesus here, and I think the main thing that it shows is that Christ is more inclusive than His disciples. They were exclusive.
 - **When Jesus makes the statement ‘for the one who is not against us is for us’, I think Jesus’ intentions are revealed: The making known of His name is more important than their distinctions.**
 - **Making the name of Jesus known to all the nations is more important than:**
 - Your preference of traditional or contemporary worship.
 - Your argument with Shirley Sue 30 years ago.
 - Your need to rant on facebook.
 - Your need to have the memorial of your loved one put on a wall in the Church.
 - Your need to always criticize others who are serving and living for Christ.
 - **Now, we must also be careful to see what Jesus statement here is NOT saying:**
 - Jesus is not taking a neutrality stance on how people view Him. There is no

neutrality when it comes to Christ. You are either with Him or you’re not.

- **So Jesus is clear with His disciples that there is no neutrality but they must be tolerant with those who differ from them from a standpoint of methodology.**
 - **Christians are much better when we cross denominational lines, racial lines, methodology lines and work together for the fulfillment of the great commission.**
- As one scholar put it ‘Sadly, few individual Christians and Christian groups throughout the history of the Church have followed this teaching of Jesus. Exclusiveness rather than inclusiveness has been the rule.’
 - **Since we are not God, we need to stop our constant need to criticize others and how they do things, though it may be different from us.**
- Remember, the Gospel takes everyone!

Truth #3: The Gospel is to be an Encouragement. (v. 41)

- ‘For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.’
- Verse 41 shows us that the Gospel is to be an encouragement not only to us, but those who are around us!

- *Jesus begins showing that this is an important phrase because Jesus begins it with ‘Truly I say to you’, which can be translated to mean ‘I assure you’.*
 - So, what is Jesus saying here? Let’s break it down.
- *Unlike human beings, Jesus notices the smallest of deeds.*
 - *The giving of water to someone in need who is proclaiming the Gospel will be rewarded by God Himself.*
 - See that’s just it, the Kingdom is so much bigger than us that we shouldn’t be worried about the verbal or physical rewards people may give us, but the rewards we are storing in Heaven.
- *Jesus is showing here that the ones who serve Him, give allegiance to Christ by serving those who are on the same team.*
 - It doesn’t just matter how we treat non-believers, but it matters how we treat those who are believers and on the same team as us.
- Jesus is saying, when you show allegiance to those who also serve me, you are reflecting the Love I (Jesus) have for the nations.

- Dr. Daniel Aiken said ‘*Allegiance to Christ will lead us to applaud and celebrate those on God’s team, even if they are different from us!*’

Conclusion:

- This morning it’s important for us to see that the Kingdom of God is so much bigger than just us.
 - It’s bigger than you to the point that we must remember:
 - **Truth #1: *The Gospel is not Exclusive. (v. 38)***
 - **Truth #2: *The Gospel takes Everyone. (v. 39-40)***
 - **Truth #3: *The Gospel is to be an Encouragement. (v. 41)***