



‘Now!’ Sermon Series

Sermon #34

‘Worried about the Wrong Things!’

Mark 9:30-37

Sunday, January 19th, 2024

This Past Wednesday in NOW Sermon Series:

- This past Wednesday we were able to look at the 4th and final situation in Mark’s Gospel where Jesus casted a demon out of a desperate Father’s son...
 - This past Wednesday I asked the question: *What specifically do we see in this text that shows us what we should **NOT** say to Jesus?*
 - **Truth #1: Faithless Wandering.** (v. 14-19)
 - **Truth #2: Faltering Words.** (v. 20-24)
 - **Truth #3: Fruitful Work.** (v. 25-29)

- Based on this past Wednesday, are you showing true faith in Christ Jesus no matter what you face or go through?

‘Worried about the Wrong Things!’

Mark 9:30-37

Sermon in a Sentence:

We can see in this text that as believers, we should not be worried about the wrong things in this life when we see the meaningful, the meaningless, and the message given by Jesus.

Intro:

- This morning in our scripture passage we will see that Jesus passes through Galilee and heads south to Jerusalem, as Mark 9:30 indicates.
 - *This is significant because in Jerusalem is where He will be murdered on the cross, for our sins.*
- At this point in Mark’s Gospel, we keep getting closer to the last week Jesus spent on earth, in which Mark will take a significant portion of his Gospel to discuss the events we commonly refer to as ‘Holy Week’.
 - *In this morning’s message, we really find two different narratives wrapped into one:*

- First, Jesus is going to expound upon the idea of His death and resurrection by foretelling it, again.
 - *As we will see, the Disciples will not yet understand this teaching, but one day when Christ has gone to the right Hand of the Father, His Words will come back to their minds.*
- Then, Jesus brings up the fact that the Disciples were having a conversation while making the journey to Capernaum about which one of them was the greatest.
- *I believe that in this text this morning we see what really matters, and what really doesn't.*
 - *The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus is what matters and just fundamental and foundational in our lives!*
 - *Who we are, what we've done, and how we compare against others, is certainly not what matters in this life, or the next.*
 - *Yet for most of us, that's what we care the most about and concentrate on...*
- This morning, I believe the Lord wants us to reflect on what and why we worry about many things pertaining to ourselves.
- **Illustration about being worried about the wrong things**
 - On April 15th of 1912 the Titanic hit an iceberg, and sunk in the north atlantic ocean.
 - *When this massive ship pulled out of the harbor of Southampton England the Titanic had an incredible reputation.*
 - It was a brand new ship and was the largest ship in the world at that time.
 - It was known by engineers and seamen alike as the 'unsinkable ship'.
 - *On the Titanic's first voyage there were 2,240 passengers on board, and by the time this tragedy was over, more than 1,500 people lost their lives in the freezing north atlantic ocean.*
 - *While the situation surrounding the Titanic is a tragedy and is still remembered today, I believe it was one that could've been avoidable, if those leading the ship weren't so worried about the WRONG things.*
 - During the night of April 14th there were six warnings that were given to the Titanic of sea ice and icebergs in the water.

- *Even with these warnings, the Ship's captain made the fateful decision to continue at the speed of 22 knots.*
- The pride and prestige of this being the largest ship in the world and the impossibility of sinking was at the forefront of the captain's mind, and many others.
 - *See, those in charge of the Titanic that night were more worried about upholding the reputation that the Titanic had earned, than they were the safety of it's passengers.*
- *That night, they were worried about the same things. If we aren't careful, we can destroy ourselves if we get too caught up and concerned about things that do not have anything to do with the Kingdom of God.*

Read Mark 9:30-37

Question to Ask:

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)

- The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most important thing in your life as a believer in Christ Jesus.
 - *Verses 30-32 of our text this morning is the second time that Jesus spoke to His disciples*

about His own prediction of His death, burial and resurrection.

- Just as they did the first time, they are confused and do not understand it.
- Jesus is focusing on the cross and as He focuses on the cross, He is still instructing His disciples as His time with them is coming to an end...
 - *Though the disciples will not understand it the second time, Jesus there are 3 important aspects of what Jesus is going to share with His Disciples...*
- ***The Desire to Keep Teaching.* (v. 30)**
 - 'They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he did not want anyone to know,'
 - We must remember that Christ does not want anyone to know that they were traveling for several reasons I believe:
 - *#1: Jesus' public ministry in Galilee was now over.*
 - *#2: His focus was to prepare the disciples for what was to come with His personal and private instruction.*
 - *#3: He did not want the crowds to take Him away and potentially derail His current path and trajectory.*
 - *#4: The success of the Gospel and early NT Church would hinge on the training these few disciples received,*

not the empty ovations from the dumbfounded thousands that made up the crowds...

- *Jesus' desire to continue teaching until His mission on earth was complete shows us the great focus that Jesus had and maintained.*

- *You and I know what our mission from God is on this earth from scripture.*

- #1: To Glorify God with all our heart, mind soul and strength.
- #2: Fulfill the great commission.

- *Then why do we often focus on things and spend our time on things that have nothing to do with the Gospel and the Kingdom of God?*

- Of course we get distracted, our hearts may not be in the right spot, but we have to realize Church that our time on earth is limited. We have no option but to be focused on the things of God.

- *Whether you are in the 1st quarter, 2nd quarter, 3rd or 4th of your life it's time to focus because the reality is you don't know what quarter you are in.*

- *The Disposition of Jesus. (v. 31)*

- 'for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him.

And when he is killed, after three days he will rise."

- The word **disposition** can be defined as a quality of character, a preparation, and a state of readiness.

- *Jesus is ready to go to the cross, but He wants to prepare His disciples for what's to come as much as He possibly can.*

- *In Mark's Gospel there are three passion prediction statements by Jesus.*

- #1: Mark 8:31
- #2: Mark 9:31
- #3: Mark 10:33-34

- *In each of the three passion prediction statements by Jesus, they all have the common denominator with a three-part skeletal structure found in them all...*

- #1: The Son of Man must suffer.
- #2: The Son of Man must be killed.
- #3: The Son of Man will be resurrected after three days.

- What Jesus says here to His Disciples wasn't as meaningful as it should have been, but even many who claim Christ today don't view the Gospel and actions of Jesus as meaningful as we should...

- Jesus said in verse 31, *"The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands*

of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise.”

○ ***Word Study***

- The ESV doesn't do the greek justice in this particular instance. Look with me at the english word 'Delivered' in verse 31.
- It comes from the greek word **Paradidomi** (*παραδίδοται*) *Which is a very common greek word that occurs 118 times in the Greek NT. (This verb is passive. This is important because God is the subject of the verb, though God is not named, God is the one who handed over His Son for our sins). The Love of God on display in this greek verb.*
 - It literally means to be betrayed, to hand over to, or to give over.
 - *This same word **Paradidomi** is used of our Lord's betrayal by Judas in Mark 3:19, Mark 14:41, and Luke 24:7.*
 - This word is also used in Acts 2:23 and Romans 8:32 in reference to the Father delivering up His Son.

○ I believe Dr. Daniel Aiken shares some helpful light on this word and the meaning in this context: ***'The implied agent is God. We must not forget: God purposefully killed His Son in order that He might not kill us! They way to the crown is by the way of the cross. Salvation is ours by His suffering.'***

- Our faith and belief hinges on Jesus Christ coming through on what He predicted here and in Mark 8:31, and what He will predict concerning His death in Mark 10:33-34.

○ ***Imagine how many times we fail on what we SAY we are going to do, Jesus did not. He completely fulfilled it all.***

- Lastly, what Jesus said was very meaningful, but the disciples were still very delusional with what Jesus was saying and predicting would occur.

● ***The Delusional Disciples. (v. 32)***

- 'But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.'
- Mark continues to point out the fact that the Disciples were very dull in their understanding of what Jesus was saying.

- ***I can imagine Peter looking back on it as Mark wrote it all down thinking (man, why didn't we get it while He was here with us, teaching us?)***

- After the resurrection the puzzle pieces in the minds of the disciples will come together, for now, this is how they feel about what Jesus is saying.
 - *A dying Messiah doesn't fit into my opinion or worldview.*
 - *A Crucified Christ just doesn't fit into my theology.*
 - *How can the Son of Man of Daniel 7 simultaneously be the suffering servant of Isaiah 53?*
 - *This all just doesn't fit into my box of how God should do things.*
 - *Before we pass judgement onto the disciples, the way they thought prior to the resurrection, is the way many non-believers and even 'some' self professing Christians think.*
- We see the meaningfulness of the prediction of His own prediction of His death, burial and resurrection, now we must look at the meaningless...

Truth #2: *The Meaningless.* (v. 33-34)

- All throughout this journey with Jesus that the disciples have been on, time and time again Jesus has taught them about self-denial, denying to self, and losing their lives for the sake of the Gospel.

- *In these verses it is very clear what the condition of the hearts were...*
 - *Their desire for pride was greater than their desire to please God.*
 - I have seen this tendency in my own life that the Lord has had to correct, and I see it daily, up close and personal as a Pastor.
- *The meaningless in our own life is our own desires. Often what we are worried about the most is rooted in these desires.*
 - The disciples are just told of these important and meaningful words from Jesus, and as we see in these verses, all they are focused on is power, position, pride and prestige...
 - I believe there is **1** important thing to point out in these verses...
- ***The Danger of Dreaming.* (v. 33-34)**
 - 'And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?"' **34** But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest.'
 - While the Disciples should be worrying about who it might be that would betray Jesus, instead they would rather argue about which of them is the highest ranking disciple.

- *This is the last time in Mark's Gospel that Jesus returns to Capernaum, and once they get into the house (probably Peter's), Jesus wants to know what they were discussing on the road.*
- The question Jesus asked His disciples was met with the familiar sound of embarrassing silence.
 - **Keep in mind that this debate/argument about which one of them was the greatest would continue until the Lord's Supper.**
 - On the last night that they had with Jesus, still, all they could talk about or think about, was themselves.
 - *The Slippery Slope of Selfishness is not one that you want to go down.*
- To the Jews, recognition and 'rank' were very important to them.
 - And notice, not much has changed. People still are today.
- **One of the present problems of the Church today is that pride and the desire for a 'following' arise in people who follow the humble savior, Jesus. But we hardly imitate His humbleness.**
- Let me ask you a series of rhetorical questions to see if pride is in you in this morning:

- #1: Am I upset if I am not praised for my work?
 - #2: Do I like and even long to sit at the head table in the seat of honor?
 - #3: Do I seek credit for what others have done?
 - #4: Do honorary titles pump me up?
 - #5: Is popularity crucial to my sense of self-worth?
 - #6: Am I a name dropper of those I know (or pretend/lie about knowing?)
 - #7: Do I think I have something valuable to say about almost everything?
 - **If you answered 'yes' to any of those rhetorical pride test questions, then it is my prayer that God will break your heart for such issues of pride.**
 - 'When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom.' Proverbs 11:2
 - So far this morning we've seen the Meaningful, the Meaningless, now let's look at the message Jesus gives His disciples...
- Truth #3: *The Message.* (v. 35-37)**
- The disciples had just been told, for another time, of the foretelling of Jesus death, burial and resurrection.
 - **And what is the conversation that comes out of that?**

- *An argument between themselves about who is the greatest.*
 - How incredibly selfish we can often be when we are encountered with the truth and love of God and His Word, yet we still stay focused on ourselves.
- *In these verses, Jesus gives the disciples a message about their behavior and conversation that they think they had privately.*
 - Of course, Jesus knew every word that they uttered and He also knows every thought that we think.
- In this text, Jesus will even use a child to illustrate the exact message that Jesus is trying to get across.
 - *I think it is important for us to remember that when Jesus corrects our behavior and gives us a message that we really need, it's because He loves us.*
- There are **2** important things to point out from these verses...
- *An Obvious Truth. (v. 35)*
 - ‘And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.”
 - *Mark purposefully inserted the phrase ‘and he sat down’*
 - *What the disciples had discussed among themselves was important to*

Jesus. We know it was important because He sat down and called them to Himself.

- (Mark 12:41, Matthew 5:1, Matthew 32:2 and John 8:2 reinforce this truth).
- Scholar James Edwards said *‘The ambitions of the twelve imperil their fellowship and following of Jesus.’*
 - *Mark uses an unusual expression in the greek text and sits down to show them, this is an important talk.*
 - **Illustration**
 - Maybe when you were younger, if you had come in the home and had done something wrong at school, your parents would ask you to come in and they’d be sitting down, ready to have a hard conversation.
 - *That’s what Jesus is doing with His disciples here.*
 - *The 12 disciples at this time, viewed their own personal ambitions more highly than spending time in the presence of Jesus and learning from Him.*

- Oh, how similar is this to us?
- **Jesus then says this truth in verse 35 'If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.'**
 - When Jesus first had a conversation with His disciples about suffering in [Mark 8:35](#), here is what Jesus said:
 - 'For whoever would save his life[a] will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.'
 - *And now, Jesus wants them to see that they must become last. They must become a servant!*
 - *Following Jesus is not about personal recognition, accolades, or compliments.*
 - It is literally and truly all about Jesus and He wants His disciples (and anyone who follows after Him to understand this).
 - *So if you are coming to Church for the wrong reasons, coming to Jesus expecting something, teaching a SS class for a self-serving reason, serving in the Church for recognition, then you*

need to repent of that today.

- *Our Churches would increase and our lostness would decrease if we would apply the servant mindset that Jesus gives us here and modeled through His life.*
 - The world will echo what the ancient greek philosopher, Plato, who believed when he said 'How can man be happy when he has to serve someone?'
 - **This is why the Gospel is so counter cultural and radical, the idea that Jesus says in order to find real and lasting happiness, we will serve someone else.**
 - Not because we have to, but we get to.
 - *Church family this is an obvious truth, but how often do we really apply it to our lives?*
 - Jesus takes this truth a step further when He gives the disciples an object lesson with a Child.
- *An Object Lesson. (v. 36-37)*
 - “36 And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.”

- Jesus picks up a child that would have been nearby, and uses a dramatized illustration.
- ***In order to rightfully recognize and understand this illustration that Jesus uses in the original context, we must grasp the placement of children in Jewish and greek societies:***
 - The greek and jewish societies of that day did not value or place children and youth on a pedestal like we often do today (and nothing is wrong with that).
 - For two specific reasons, the Jewish and greek societies did not treat children as modern society does...
 - ***#1: High infant mortality rate.***
 - ***#2: Great demand for human labor.***
- ***To most jews and greek, children were viewed as 'not having arrived' or as 'less than'.***
 - Which is why it is very significant that Jesus uses this example of the child.
 - ***It's not to show humility, but to show that the ones who m society deems as lowly and insignificant, are the ones that we are to serve!***
- ***Jesus uses the child in this object lesson to show that a child was viewed in that culture as***

the last or the least. And they we are to serve and love them.

- With this illustration, Jesus adds another important truth: ***"Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me."***
 - As scholar David E. Garland put it ***'When His followers serve those without any status, they receive Jesus and the One who sent Him.'***
- One of the strongest ways to show that we are not over infatuated with ourselves is when we serve those in our lives who are often forgotten and viewed as insignificant.
 - That can be those who have diseases, homebound, the unemployed, the hurting, those with mental illnesses, the physical disabled.
- ***So what all is Jesus saying in this text?***
 - Die to Self.
 - Serve others.
 - Care for those no one else cares for.
- It's time we stop caring too much about ourselves and focus on what Jesus cared about and loved while He was on the earth.

Conclusion:

- As I stated a few moments ago when we unpacked truth #2, if pride is an issue and an obstacle in your life today, I am praying that God will break you.
 - *I am praying that all of us in the room this morning will understand and comprehend that we are often just like the disciples. Too worried about the wrong things...*
- *This morning you have the opportunity to commit your life to Christ and be dedicated to Him and His Word.*
 - Not to be overly consumed with your job, money, accolades, recognitions and rewards...
- **Church, we don't serve King Jesus for what we can GET, we serve Him for what we can GIVE to Him.**
 - *Illustration*
 - While this happens in Churches all across the world, there once was a story of disgruntled volunteer.
 - *This volunteer joined a Church and got involved in serving.*
 - This person served in missions, sunday school, outreach and pretty much any ministry available.
 - *One day the person made an appointment with the Pastor, and asked why they hadn't received a 'thank you', a 'gift' or 'text'.*

- They went on to ask why they hadn't been taken in front of the Church for a standing ovation.
- The Pastor, with tears in his eyes, told this person: ***That's not why you should be serving. You should be serving because you love Jesus, not because you love the praises of man.***
 - May we not be this person. God is our gift, let's bless others with how He's blessed us.