

Seeing The Church Through Jesus' Eyes

Series: Following Jesus: Valuing God's Church

Mark 9:30-50 NLT (0925)

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C. S. LEWIS *When I first became a Christian, about fourteen years ago, I thought that I could do it on my own, by retiring to my rooms and reading theology, and I wouldn't go to the churches and gospel halls . . . I disliked very much their hymns, which I considered to be fifth-rate poems set to sixth-rate music. But as I went on I saw the great merit of it. I came up against different people of quite different outlooks and different education, and then gradually my conceit just began peeling off. I realized that the hymns (which were just sixth-rate music) were, nevertheless, being sung with devotion and benefit by an old saint in elastic-side boots in the opposite pew, and then you realize that you aren't fit to clean those boots.*

I. Focusing on the urgency of the kingdom (v. 30-32)

³⁰Leaving that region, they traveled through Galilee. Jesus didn't want anyone to know he was there, ³¹for he wanted to spend more time with his disciples and teach them. He said to them, *"The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies. He will be killed, but three days later he will rise from the dead."* ³²They didn't understand what he was saying, however, and they were afraid to ask him what he meant.

a. Jesus knew his time was short, and his mission was urgent

b. Somehow they missed even the clearest declaration of Jesus!

II. Choosing to be a humble servant (v. 33-37)

³³After they arrived at Capernaum and settled in a house, Jesus asked his disciples, *"What were you discussing out on the road?"* ³⁴But they didn't answer, because they had been arguing about which of them was the greatest. ³⁵He sat down, called the twelve disciples over to him, and said, *"Anyone who wants to be the first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else."* ³⁶Then he put a little child among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷*"Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not only me but also my Father who sent me."*

a. Jesus challenged the pride & worldly ambition of his disciples

b. Sadly, the same things plague us yet today

III. Living beyond our group identity (v. 38-41)

³⁸John said to Jesus, "Teacher, we saw someone using your name to cast out demons, but we told him to stop because he wasn't in our group." ³⁹"Don't stop him!" Jesus said. "No one who performs a miracle in my name will soon be able to speak evil of me." ⁴⁰Anyone who is not against us is for us. ⁴¹If anyone gives you even a cup of water because you belong to the Messiah, I tell you the truth, that person will surely be rewarded. (NIV in my name)

a. We love the privileged identity that our group name provides

b. But in the kingdom, only one name matters!

Acts 4:5-12 TM The next day a meeting was called in Jerusalem. The rulers, religious leaders, religion scholars, Annas the Chief Priest, John, Alexander—everybody who was anybody was there. They stood Peter and John in the middle of the room and grilled them: "Who put you in charge here? What business do you have doing this?" With that, Peter, full of the Holy Spirit, let loose: "Rulers and leaders of the people, if we have been brought to trial today for helping a sick man, put under investigation regarding this healing, I'll be completely frank with you—we have nothing to hide. By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the One you killed on a cross, the One God raised from the dead, by means of his name this man stands before you healthy and whole. Jesus is 'the stone you masons threw out, which is now the cornerstone.' Salvation comes no other way; no other name has been or will be given to us by which we can be saved, only this one."

IV. Nurturing faith in all who name the name of Jesus (v. 42-48)

a. Jesus takes seriously our call to nurture others!

⁴²"But if you cause one of these little ones who trusts in me to fall into sin, it would be better for you to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone hung around your neck. ⁴³If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It's better to enter eternal life with only one hand than to go into the unquenchable fires of hell with two hands. ⁴⁵If your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It's better to enter eternal life with only one foot than to be thrown into hell with two feet. ⁴⁷And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out. It's better to enter the Kingdom of God with only one eye than to have two eyes & be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸where the maggots never die & the fire never goes out.'

b. Seeing through Jesus' eyes means looking for the good to affirm

ROGER WILLIAMS We do not find in the gospel, that Christ has provided for the uniformity of churches, but only for their unity.

V. Passing the test of kingdom life (v. 49-50)

⁴⁹"For everyone will be tested with fire. ⁵⁰Salt is good for seasoning. But if it loses its flavor, how do you make it salty again? You must have the qualities of salt among yourselves and live in peace with each other."

a. Jesus assures us that the test of our kingdom understanding will come

b. Living as salt of the earth brings peace among Jesus' followers