

# THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

## MARK 9-10

I'm sure you've seen the TV show "[Undercover Boss](#)." A CEO disguises himself as a regular employee of the company, and interacts with his subordinates.

At the end of the show, the employee comes to a meeting where the Boss' true identity gets revealed.

Well, the Gospels are the ultimate episode of [Undercover Boss](#). Jesus is God in the flesh - or *the Boss incognito*. Nothing about His appearance tipped you off to His true identity - *until we come to Mark 9...*

*For tonight is the episode where the Boss' identity gets revealed.* On a mountaintop, Jesus' humanity was peeled back, and His divine nature radiated - so that three select disciples could see and behold His glory.

Chapter 9, "[And He said to them,](#)" (His disciples...) "[Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.](#)" Jesus isn't promising immortality, He's just referring to what happens next...

["Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves..."](#) Remember Jesus and His men were in the Golan Heights, near the town of Caesarea Philippi.

A little north was Mount Hermon, a snow capped mountain, 9200 feet above sea level. Today, the modern Israelis have built a ski resort on its peak.

This was probably the “*high mountain*” to which Jesus took Peter, James, and John - *and what they witnessed was more thrilling than snowboarding down the black diamond...* In fact, Peter talked about the experience for the rest of his life. As an old man, in 2 Peter 1:16, he recalled how they “*were eyewitnesses of His majesty.*” What Peter saw changed him forever.

Mark tells us, “*and (Jesus) was transfigured before them. His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them.*” *Not even Clorox Concentrate could bleach out Jesus’ robe as bright and as white...* The Greek word translated “*transfigured*” is the term from which we get the English word, “*metamorphosis*” - which speaks of “*an abrupt and dramatic change.*” We use it to describe the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly.

For three decades the deity of Jesus was under the cover of His humanity. Now the Boss is revealed...

And this was a preparatory moment for the disciples. They’ll need this reference point in the days ahead.

They’re about to see Jesus *bloodied*, and *beaten*, and *bruised*. *But before they see the gory... Jesus wants them to see His glory.* The light they see radiate from Jesus on this mountain will help them when they enter the shadows of another mountain called Calvary.

And we also need to keep this story in our hearts!

When folks mock our convictions, or snicker at our faith, let's return to this mountain and recall His glory!

There'll be crosses in our lives that we're called on to suffer. And in those shadowy moments that's when we need to recall the glory of Jesus on the mountaintop. For one day we too will share in His glory!

But the glory of Jesus was not all Peter, James, and John saw on the *"high mountain."* Verse 4, *"And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus."* Moses stood for the Law - Elijah the prophets. And their conversation with Jesus affirmed to the three disciples that He was greater than them both.

Actually, Luke tells us they talked about the cross.

The transfiguration confirmed Jesus' *identity*, but this conversation revealed His *destiny*. Jesus hoped His disciples would eavesdrop - apparently, they did not.

*"Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"* The Feast of Tabernacles was right around the corner. Perhaps Peter was suggesting they all just stay on the mountaintop and celebrate the upcoming feast.

And this is often our reaction when God meets us in a special way - in a church service or on a retreat. We want to stay and bask in His glory. We want to camp out on the mountaintop, rather than tackle the valley...

We really shouldn't spend much time speculating on what Peter was thinking, because Mark tells us he *wasn't thinking...* "because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid." Here's another example of Peter's tendency *to open mouth insert foot*.

It's been said, "Some people have something to say, other people have to say something." Peter was in the latter group. It's wisdom to realize not every situation calls for your commentary. I've heard it put, "Often, the best way to save face is to keep its lower half shut."

"And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!" The Father's message was *zip your lips and listen to Jesus*. Good advice for us.

Verse 8, "Suddenly, when they had looked around, they saw no one anymore, but only Jesus with themselves. Now as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept this word to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant." Despite His clear teaching, the disciples failed to grasp *Jesus' destiny* - His death and resurrection.

Verse 11, "And they asked (Jesus), saying, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"

Malachi 4:5 predicted that Elijah would return to earth prior to the coming of the Messiah in His glory.

"Then He answered and told them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and restores all things." Jesus doesn't contradict Malachi.

Elijah will come prior to His second coming. I believe He'll be one of the two end time witnesses in Revelation 11. But at His first coming John the Baptist served as the forerunner, *the Elijah*.

Yet Jesus gets their minds off of Elijah and refocuses them on His coming trials. “And how is it written concerning the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things and be treated with contempt? But I say to you that Elijah has also come, and they did to him whatever they wished, as it is written of him.” John the Baptist was not *THE Elijah*, but Jesus said he came “*in the spirit and power of Elijah*.” And sadly, the Jews rejected John, just as they'll later reject and persecute Jesus.

Verse 14, “And when He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them. Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to Him, greeted Him.” They come down from the mountaintop, *and guess what they encounter?* “And He asked the scribes, “What are you discussing with them?” Then one of the crowd answered and said, “Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit.

And wherever he seizes him, he throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid.” A classic case of demon possession.

And notice the symptoms of being seized by a demon. *The same things show up in our youth today...*

First, he's *thrown down* - there's an overnight decline academically or socially... Second, *frothing* like a rabid dog - an inexplicable anger... Third, *grinding teeth* - a debilitating

angst and frustration... Fourth, a *rigidity* - or complete unresponsive to parents and authority...

Sadly, Satan is still alive and well - and his motives haven't changed. He still wants to destroy our young.

From pop music, to movies, to video games the occult permeates today's culture. Let's beware. God gives us the mountaintops to prepare us for the valley.

The last sentence of verse 18 is tragic. The boy's father says to Jesus. "So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast him out, but they could not."

In verse 19, Jesus responds, "He answered him and said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me."

Notice in this story, the experts, the scribes, *dispute*. The parent *despairs*. And the disciples are *defeated*. But there's still hope for this boy... for Jesus *delivers*.

The boy's hope is summed up in four words. Jesus said, "Bring him to Me." This is our hope. Bring them to Jesus. When I talk to people I quickly ask if they'll pray, and I bring them to Jesus. He's greater than Satan.

"Then they brought him to (Jesus). And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth.

So (Jesus) asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood."

Imagine, the boy had lived his whole life under the sway of the devil. "And often he has thrown him both into the fire and

into the water to destroy him.” Satan’s goal is to steal, kill, and destroy. That’s what he’d tried to do to this boy. Imagine, this father’s desperation...

“But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” Jesus said to him, “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.” The man asks, “if you can do *anything?*” Jesus replies, “I **can** do anything.” The solution doesn’t hinge on Jesus’ ability. Jesus is always able. The only issue is our faith.

Verse 24, “Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” What honesty. He had faith, but it was a wimpy, skimpy faith. He cries out to Jesus to bolster his weak faith... *But at least he used what faith he had...*

“When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!” Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, “He is dead.”

But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he **arose.**” Obviously, it wasn’t the *strength of the man’s faith* that performed the miracle, but the *object of his faith*. Jesus delivered the boy despite fragile faith.

It’s not faith - but God that moves mountains. **What we need is enough faith to move the hand of God.**

Verse 28, “And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, “Why could we not cast him

out?" So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting."

The disciples had cast out demons in prior situations, and were dumbfounded that this time they'd failed.

Apparently, not all demons are equally determined. There are dogged demons who see through a façade of faith - and hang on. In this case "prayer and fasting" are keys. This life is *a battleground*, not a *playground*.

Our kids have a target on their back. Thus, parents in particular, should be armed with spiritual weapons.

Verse 30, "Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know it. For He taught His disciples and said to them, "The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day." But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him." They didn't get it.

"Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?" But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the *greatest*." This would've been an embarrassing admission. While Jesus speaks of His *cross*, they're debating who's going to be *boss*...

"And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." It's interesting, Jesus doesn't get angry with His men - nor rebuke their ambition.



There is nothing wrong with wanting to be great for God - as long as you know how to obtain greatness...

Greatness in God's kingdom isn't *climbing up* the ladder, but *climbing down*. It's *downward mobility*. It's *not standing, but stooping*. It's *not stardom - its service*.

I read of a Cincinnati pastor who wanted to serve the Lord outside his church, so he loaded his car with supplies and went to businesses and offered to clean their restrooms. At one truck stop the manager warned, "Pastor, I've got 20 toilets." The pastor said, "I'll just clean a couple." The gruff manager replied, "No, you'll clean all twenty or get out of my store." The pastor thought for a moment, and agreed to clean them all.

That's when the manager told him, "Pastor, I've really only have two toilets, but I wanted to see what kind of a Christian you are." And that's the test... it's not how many songs you sing, or sermons you preach, or boards you sit on... but whether you'll clean a toilet.

In God's kingdom **we descend into greatness.**

"Then (Jesus) took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me."

In the Roman world children had zero rights. They were considered property of their parents. Here, Jesus identifies with *the last, and the least, and the lowest*.

He ministers from the bottom of the pecking order.

That's why when you take the lowest place you walk into Jesus. He's among *the humble*, not *the haughty*.

A woman was shopping on a cold winter's day. As she exited the store she noticed a little boy staring into the window. She asked why he was out in the cold.

He said, "I'm asking God for a new pair of shoes."

Immediately, she whisked the boy into the store, and bought him new shoes and socks. He was about to leave, when he asked her, "Mam, are you God's wife?"

We are never closer to God - *of being the Bride of Christ* - than when we point a little child to Jesus.

Verse 38, "Now John answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us." But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me."

It's amazing how narrow and sectarian Christians can get, as if our group were the only legitimate believers.

But Jesus says in verse 40, "For he who is not against us is on our side." Jesus isn't downplaying legitimate differences in Christian doctrine. There are reasons various groups exist with different distinctives.

But we also need to realize that the body of Christ is bigger than any single church, or group of churches. What God is doing in our community is much bigger than just what He's doing through Calvary Chapel.

Christians should be magnanimous. Take the attitude (*until proven otherwise*), "*he who is not against us is on our side.*"

For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.”

Verse 42, "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea." Stumble or mislead a new believer, and it'd be better if the Jewish mafia put you in a concrete wetsuit, and threw you into the lake.

And “If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched - where 'their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.' And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched – where 'their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.' And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire – where 'their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’”

There is a hell! It's a literal place with eternal fire. And Jesus instructions are to keep us from going there.

Here, Jesus describes for us **true repentance**.

Sadly, over the years some Christians have taken these words literally. They've amputated appendages thinking that would give them victory over sin. But, *if you can sin with your right hand, don't you think you can do so with your left? If sin*

*is in your heart, you can chop off both hands and sin with your nubs! If you can lust with one eye you can certainly lust with the other!*

A physical amputation can't effect an inner appetite. Jesus isn't speaking literally. He's using a literary device known as **hyperbole**, or *truth by exaggeration*.

Think of a soldier wounded in combat. The only way he'd agree to an amputation is if his choice were *loss of limb* or *loss of life*. And sometimes the same choice has to be made in the war with sin. Either you *lose something precious to you*, or you *lose your very soul*.

If maintaining your integrity means losing a job - *so be it!* If the television or internet is your downfall - *lock it away*. If you can't handle your hormones - *stop dating for a while*. **Radical repentance does whatever it takes.**

Jesus is telling us we've got to treat sin by getting to the root of the issue. You pull up the weed by the root.

Once an old man stood in church and offered the same prayer every Sunday, "Lord, clean out the cobwebs. O Lord, clean out the cobwebs." One week a young fellow got tired of the man's prayer. *He prayed*, "Lord, forget about the cobwebs, just kill the spider."

In verse 49 Jesus says, "For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another." Salt is a preservative, and here Jesus encourages us to endure.

If you're elderly person be *an old salt*. If you're a young person be *a saltine*. But let's all be *salty saints*!

Chapter 10, "Then He arose from there and came to the region of Judea by the other side of the Jordan.

And multitudes gathered to Him again, and as He was accustomed, He taught them again." Jesus never got tired of feeding God's Word to hungry hearts.

Verse 2, "The Pharisees came and asked Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" testing Him."

The Pharisees want to draw Jesus into a doctrinal debate raging at the time. As in our day, the subject of divorce and remarriage were hot-button issues.

"And He answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?" Jesus refers to Deuteronomy 24, where Moses gives procedures for divorce...

"They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss her." And Jesus answered and said to them, "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept." The Jews misinterpreted Moses' intent. He did lay out procedures for divorce, but to *discourage*, not *encourage* divorce.

Prior to the Mosaic Law all a man had to do to end his marriage was renounce his wife and send her away. Just send her away and let her fend for herself.

The Law protected the wife, and tried to prevent the divorce. The Law did so in three ways: **first**, by requiring a formal certificate... **second**, a cooling off period to get the

certificate... **third**, if the divorce was granted it became permanent - no remarriage later.

Malachi 2:10 tells us, “**The LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce.**” His stipulations in the Law were intended to *prevent divorce*, not *promote divorce*.

Jesus said, “**Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.**” Deuteronomy 24 was an example of divine damage control. The Greek word translated “**hardness**” is “**skleros**” - from which we get the term “**sclerosis**” - or *the hardening of the arteries*.

People blame divorce on a host of issues, but Jesus says divorce would not exist if it weren't for “**the hardness of your hearts.**” Trace the cause of *any divorce* back to *its source* - and you'll find a hard heart.

The couple stopped forgiving, sacrificing, loving...

Hearts can get so hard couples who once loved each other can now want to murder each other. And God made a concession. Rather than cold blooded killing, God tolerated divorce. This was an accommodation to *man's hardness* - it was not *God's will*.

In verse 6 Jesus takes us all the way back to God's original design for humanity. “**But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female.'**”

God made mankind in His image - but that image consisted of *male* and *female*. Both *masculinity* and *femininity* reflect God's nature. The divine nature is a blend of a *woman's sensitivity* and a *man's strength*.

This is why androgynous, gender-neutral thinking is an affront to God. Women should think, look, and act like women. Men should think, look, and act like men.

Gender differences are not the result of tradition's brainwashing, or a sexist culture's socialization, or a fluke of evolution. **"God made them male and female."**

And God's plan was for a man to leave his parents and be married to his wife. Verse 7, **"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, 'and the two shall become one flesh'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."**

Jesus quotes from Genesis 2, and reminds us how God ordered marriage. Step one, **leave**. Step two, **cleave**. Step three, **weave**. And step four, **conceive**.

You cut ties with parents and former allegiances...

You tie a knot of commitment with your spouse...

You learn to live in a practical, workable harmony...

Then you affirm it all with intimacy and fruitfulness...

In verse 10 the discussion on marriage continues, **"In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same matter. So He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."** Here's a heavy verse. Let's understand divorce and remarriage - and not make it either harder or easier than God intended.

Divorcees often live in condemnation. They assume God considers their second marriage adultery, and it keeps them from making the best of what they've got.

**Jesus isn't saying a remarried couple stays in an adulterous state. He simply says they committed an adulterous act.** If you divorced your spouse on unbiblical grounds - (and there are biblical reasons for divorce: adultery or abandonment) - and you remarry someone else - God considers your action adultery.

You've broken your marriage vow without God's sanction. In verse 9, Jesus tells us, and I quote it every time I officiate a wedding, **"What God has joined together, let not man separate."**

But adultery is not the unpardonable sin. God forgives unbiblical divorces. Even a marriage born in sinful circumstances isn't unredeemable - and it shouldn't have to remain under the stigma of adultery.

If the parties confess their sin, and learn from their mistakes, and make a permanent commitment to their new marriage, I believe God will bless that marriage, and use it for His glory! Here's a tremendous truth, **"God hates divorce, but God loves divorcees."**

I believe God is willing to bless you with *a brand new start* - if you supply Him *a repentant heart*.

Verse 13, **"Then they brought young children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them."** His disciples thought Jesus was too busy to be bothered by snotty-nosed kids! **"But when Jesus saw it, He**



was greatly displeased.” The original says “*He was grieved greatly.*” One paraphrase puts it, “Jesus was irate and let them know it.”

Jesus “said to them, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them” Jesus loved children. He loved playing with them and spending time with them.

Pastor Gordon McDonald said he doubted a man’s Christianity if children weren’t found playing at his front door. Children always felt comfortable around Jesus. He was never too busy to make time for the children.

*But this doesn’t mean Jesus wants your kids in the sanctuary on Sunday morning at CCSM.* Folks use this verse to justify bringing their kids into the adult service.

But here’s the issue in this verse - *the disciples were keeping the kids away from Jesus.* And the surest way to keep your kids from Jesus is to bore them in church.

An adult service is the last place Jesus wants your kids. I’m sure He prefers to communicate with them on their level - in ways they can understand. Jesus will meet your kids in Sunday School, not just in here.

Of course, one reasons Jesus loved little children was the attitude He saw in them. He tells us in verse 14, “for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.”

Jesus saw in the nature of a child the attributes needed to embrace and be part of God’s kingdom.

Children are **honest**. They've yet to learn the art of hypocrisy and duplicity... Children are **dependent**. They lean on their parents... Children are **trusting**. They take you at your word... Children are **open**. They're receptive to the truth and eager to learn...

And we enter God's kingdom by having a child-like **honesty**, and **dependence**, and **trust**, and **openness**.

Verse 16, "And He took them up in His arms, put His hands on them, and blessed them." Jesus performed a baby dedication. He blessed the little children.

"Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

In verse 22 Mark mentions the man was rich. Matthew tells us he was young. Luke says he was a ruler - probably of the synagogue. Put it together and he was **the rich, young ruler**. He had wealth, health, and power, *but something was missing deep inside*.

"So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God." Realize, Jesus isn't denying His deity. Instead, He's saying, *God is the only One who is truly good - thus, when you called Me "Good Teacher" were you agreeing that I'm God?*

We're going to discover that Jesus struck right at the core issue. Jesus was not the man's god. The man worshipped money, and possessions, and wealth.

Jesus says to him, "You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'" Notice, Jesus only lists the second tablet of the Law - the commandments that deal with our fellow man. He doesn't mention the first five commands that dealt with our worship of God.

"And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these I have observed from my youth." He had no problem loving his brother, but greed was his god.

"Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him..." Jesus is about to speak a hard word to this man - a tough pill to swallow... He wants him to know that he's loved.

"(Jesus) said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me." Jesus wants this man's undisputed, unrivaled devotion. If he wants eternal life there can be nothing he loves more than Jesus. And Jesus knows that money is in this man's way...

Materialism has weaved its web around his heart. And he has to go cold-turkey! Jesus tells him to go to heaven, he has to liquidate and give it all to the poor.

*Will Jesus tell you to do that?* I don't know. What is it in your life that you love more than Him? For some folks the problem isn't money. It's fame, or pride, or sports, or career, or a relationship, or selfishness...

Jesus knows what's on the throne of your life - and you can't go to heaven until you replace it with Him!

This story ends on a tragic note. Verse 22, “But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.” This rich, young ruler was a moral man - a generous man - a religious man. If he had walked into most Calvary Chapels he would’ve been made an elder. But none of the stuff this man possessed was enough to get him into heaven...

Until Jesus sits on the throne of your life nothing else matters! Jesus doesn’t save those He cannot rule.

“Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!” And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, “Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!” The love of money and the lust for more and better stuff is never-ending and all-consuming. We need to beware! This is a trap that once you’ve taken the bait - it’s difficult to escape.

Jesus adds, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” A huge camel passing through the eye of a needle was an idiom used in NT times...

A huge camel squeezing through the narrow opening of a sewing needle spoke of an impossible situation.

Or the eye of a needle might’ve referred to a smaller door built into a city gate. A camel can pass, but only on its knees. And that’s the point Jesus is making to this man. You enter God’s kingdom through surrender.

“And they were greatly astonished, saying among themselves, “Who then can be saved?” But Jesus looked at them and said, “With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.”

Salvation for all folks - rich or poor - takes a miracle. Without the Holy Spirit’s intervention it’s hell for us all.

“Then Peter began to say to Him, “See, we have left all and followed You.” “So Jesus answered and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time - houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions - and in the age to come, eternal life.” Peter was impressed with his sacrifices, *but it’s impossible to sacrifice for Jesus.*

God rewards our sacrifices a hundred-fold. He more than makes up for the little we sacrifice. And a big part of His compensation is His Body. Follow Jesus and get rejected by family or friends, He’ll provide new family.

If my house burned down tonight, tomorrow I’d have a hundred houses to live in. I have brothers and sisters in Christ who would come to my rescue. *Heaven is my eternal blessing. The Church is my blessing on earth.*

Verse 31, “**But many who are first will be last, and the last first.**” In God’s kingdom the pecking order gets turned topsy-turvy. The humble are moved to the front.

“Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed. And as

they followed they were afraid. Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him: "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again." This is the third time Jesus speaks of His destiny. It just never registered with His disciples.

And the proof is in verse 35, "Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask." And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory." Jesus is talking about the cross, and these two disciples are worried about their own advancement.

"But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Can you drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Jesus is about to down a cup of suffering - *a double shot, no less*. He'll be baptized in waters of pain and rejection... And when He asks if James and John can drink the same cup and endure the same baptism they're so presumptuous, "They said to Him, "We are able."

They haven't even entertained the idea of Jesus' cross, *but now they're ready to bear one themselves?*

So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared." In Acts 12 James was the first disciple martyred. Later John was arrested by Domitian, and boiled in a cauldron of oil. *How's that for a baptism?*

Both brothers suffered for Jesus's sake - but who ends up sitting in the exalted seats is God's choice.

Verse 41, "And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John." The brothers were trying to climb the apostolic ladder, and their political maneuvering ticked off the others.

"But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you, but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all." Worldly leaders *push people around*. Godly leaders *serve people*.

Jesus says, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." Jesus is the ultimate example. He was God in the flesh, but on earth, He came not to be served, but to serve. It's been said, "Life is like a game of tennis; the player who serves well seldom loses."

Verse 46, “Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out...” The Greek phrase translated “*cry out*” was also used to describe the screams of a woman in labor. It was an agonizing cry.

And he said, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Blind Bartimaeus had no *eyesight*, but he had tremendous *insight*. He calls Jesus, “*Son of David.*” This was another name for the Messiah. Bartimaeus believed Jesus to be God’s promised Savior.

“Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

I love this guy. He’s blind as a bat, but spiritually he has 20/20 vision. If anyone can help him, it’s Jesus!

Bartimaeus hears that Jesus is on the road, and he starts screaming... People tell him to shut-up, but no amount of peer pressure is going to silence Bart.

When you need Jesus, don’t let anybody intimidate you - keep screaming His name until He answers.

“So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, “Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you.” And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus. So Jesus answered and said to him, “What do you want Me to do for you?” The blind man said to Him, “Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.” Then Jesus said



to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight..."

Notice, "*immediately.*" There were no surgeries, lazar treatments, corrective glasses... It was a miracle.

And notice what Bartimaeus does after his healing, "(he) followed Jesus on the road." Jericho was 18 miles from Jerusalem. In the next few days Bartimaeus' new vision will take in history's most monumental events...

He sees Jesus ride triumphantly into the city, cleanse the temple, be arrested, tried, crucified, resurrected.

A week earlier he was blind, now he'll see it all.

Everyone who walks with Jesus starts out like Bartimaeus. Jesus brings us from darkness to light.

But like Ole Bart we don't stop there. Jesus has wonders He still desires to show us. He has truths about Himself He's yet to reveal. Keep following!

The grandest sights are still ahead!