

RCC LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION (FACILITATOR)

MARK CHAPTER 9

Discussion Starter

- What is one of the biggest disappointments you have ever experienced in your life?
 - How did you recover or how are you recovering from this disappointment?

Opening Prayer

- Ask if someone wants to volunteer before leading the prayer

Tell the Story

Read the Story (Mark 9:1-50)

- Read out loud as a group, 5 verses per person. Let everyone know they can opt out if they would like.

Breaking it Down

- All questions should be utilized as appropriate based upon group dynamics to facilitate both understanding and discussion. Don't feel tied to the questions and don't feel like you have to get through every question. Follow the Spirit's lead! All questions are a matter of perspective in some way BUT there are specific questions that this is truer of and these questions have been indicated to be perspective/opinion questions.

Mark 9:1-13

- To fully understand, Mark 9:1-13, it is critical to both recognize and understand the impact of Jesus' words to His disciples in Mark 8:31-38. Not only do they not fully understand what Jesus, their leader and promised Messiah is saying about Himself, the kingdom, and them, they

also would have been emotionally crushed and confused about their leader, friend, and brother dying. This was not at all the way things were supposed to unfold. This extreme disappointment, confusion, and distress is the backdrop for the transfiguration that occurs in Mark 9:1-13.

- Why are the appearances and subsequent disappearances of Moses and Elijah significant?
 - In the Old Testament, Moses & Elijah were held in extremely high regard not only as men of God but also as leaders of God and heroes in God's story. Much of what was understood about the Old Testament and God in general hinged on stories that involved both Moses and Elijah. Jesus was frequently compared to both Moses and Elijah during His time on earth. Their appearance was not by accident, especially when we see what is said in verse 8 and that there was no one else around after the cloud incident. Their appearances and disappearances highlight the reality that what Jesus brings to the table is so much better than what they could ever bring to the table.
- Although the text lets us know in Mark 9:5-6 that Peter spoke because he just didn't know what else to say, what does the content of what he said indicate about His understanding of Jesus and His kingdom?
 - Peter had Jesus on equal footing with Moses & Elijah and the kingdom for him was still something that he could define and conceptualize rather than what God was going to establish. It was still very much about what He thought Jesus and the kingdom should be rather than what Jesus and the kingdom really were.
- Mark 9:7 is really the crux of understanding the transfiguration, the rest of chapter 9 (especially Jesus' frustration), and the entire book of Mark. When the cloud overshadowed them, this was not just a "cloud incident" for the disciples, especially in light of Old Testament history. This was the presence and glory of God, otherwise known as God's "Shekinah" glory (Shekinah means dwelling or one who dwells) spoken of in multiple passages in the Old Testament. One example of this is Exodus 40:34-38. In other words, "God's "Shekinah" glory was His presence dwelling

with and leading His people. It came and went in the Old Testament and often, the people weren't able to handle it. **SO, THIS WHOLE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS WITH PETER, JAMES, AND JOHN IS MEANT TO DEEPLY ENCOURAGE AND COMFORT THEM IN THE MIDST OF UTTER DISAPPOINTMENT AND CONFUSION. GOD IS SAYING, YES, THE CROSS IS COMING BUT THAT CROSS IS NOT THE END OF THE STORY AND WHAT WILL COME AS A RESULT WILL BE MORE THAN YOU CAN DREAM OR IMAGINE BECAUSE IT WILL MEAN MY "SHEKINAH" GLORY LIVING WITHIN YOU AND BEING WITH YOU FOREVER!!!**

- How can and should God's glory being within us as His disciples transform the way that we see the following?
 - Ourselves
 - Others
 - The Church
 - Suffering
 - Circumstances in general
 - These are perspective and opinion questions so just listen as the facilitator.

□ Mark 9:14-29

- Why do you think Jesus expresses His frustration so strongly in verse 19?
 - Consider the people that were there. His disciples. The scribes. The rest of the crowd. Of this entire crowd, His disciples and the religious people were at a total loss as to how to intervene in this situation and actually provide help and healing to this man and his son. They were actually arguing with the people. The people who should have gotten it were the ones who totally missed it and messed things up for themselves and others.

- What lessons if any can we learn about this in 2019 as His disciples?
 - This is a perspective and opinion question so please listen as the facilitator.
- What do you think the father meant in verse 24 when he says, “I do believe; help my unbelief.”
 - This is a perspective and opinion question so please listen as the facilitator.
 - In what ways/areas do you need to allow the Lord to help you in your unbelief?
 - This is a perspective and opinion question so please listen as the facilitator.
- Verse 29 would almost be laughable in some respects if it were not so sad on many other levels. Consider that the disciples of Jesus and the scribes obviously didn’t even attempt prayer. While it’s easy to rip them for their lack of belief, understanding, vision, how are we similar to them today?
 - This is a perspective and opinion question so please listen as the facilitator.

□ Mark 9:33-41

- While we don’t know whether Peter, James, & John were the “instigators” of this argument about who was the greatest, we do know that they were present. How does Mark 9:1-13 shed a new light on the disciples arguing about who the greatest among them was?
 - The disciples had the greatest of all time (the glory of God) among them and yet they were trying to choose which of them as a human being was the greatest. In essence, they were unintentionally putting themselves on the same level with God.

- What does it mean to be last of all and servant of all and how are disciples called to live this out in daily life?
 - This is a perspective and opinion question so please listen as the facilitator.
- Why does what happens in Mark 9:38-41 indicate that John and the other disciples do not get it yet again?
 - They are more concerned about the attention and focus being on them rather than being concerned that Jesus and His message are being proclaimed and spread.
 - Why is it easier for us as disciples of Jesus to be focused more on what other disciples of Jesus are or are not doing rather than being focused on Jesus and His message? What might this indicate about our walk with Jesus?
 - This is a perspective and opinion question so just listen as the facilitator.

□ Mark 9:42-50

- So far, at the end of Mark chapter 8 and in all of Mark 9, we see the disciples do the following...
 - Understand the kingdom of God on their terms
 - Craft the kingdom of God to what they want
 - Miss the simplicity of the power of prayer but also the tremendous power and authority of God
 - Argue about who's the greatest
 - Be self-absorbed in being concerned about who's paying attention to them
 - So, while Jesus' words in verse 42-50 are direct and rebuking, His words are also intended to cast a vision for

the disciples of what that type of mindset and attitude will lead them and others into. It isn't pretty and the disciples will lead themselves and others into destruction BUT notice what Jesus says in verses 49-50 about salt. Why does Jesus use the analogy of salt?

- Salt had and has a purpose and salt serves its purpose to preserve and enhance taste. However, this is more than Jesus just comparing His disciples to the preserving and additive natures of salt. He is recasting the vision for them about who they have been created to be. They have a purpose and have significance and it's not to be self-centered and self-absorbed.
 - What ways/times are easiest for you to forget who God has created you to be? What can you do in those times to bring you back to your senses?
 - This is an opinion and perspective question so please listen as the facilitator.

□ Final Application

- What does this passage teach us about God?
- What does this passage teach us about mankind?
- What is a command to obey in this passage?
- What has God revealed in your life that needs changing?
- What truth can be applied to your life about the gospel?

□ Closing & Prayer Requests

- Have a designated person to capture and share (as appropriate) within the life group.
- What happens in life group, stays in life group.
- Don't forget get to confirm the next meeting date and time
- Also recruit someone to do the story for the following week (Mark 9) if you haven't already done so.

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