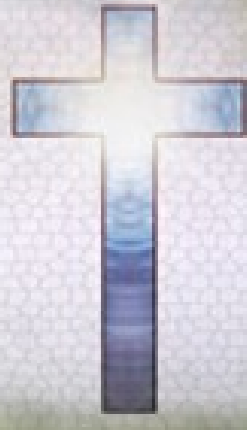
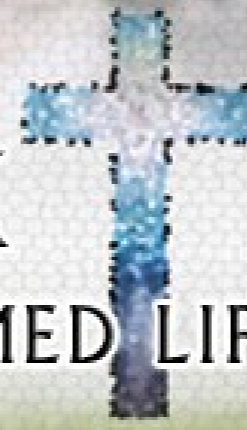




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Life Lessons for His Disciples

Mark 9:33-48

Michael Lim



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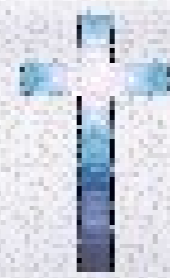
Introduction

• (From handout): Following Peter's moving declaration of Jesus as the Christ as well as Jesus' powerful teaching that true life lies in Jesus for those who would deny themselves and follow Him, we find Jesus giving us a series of practical ways in which we can live out that selfless, loving life that flows into and out of us through the blood of Christ. Yet, even deeper, these are teachings that are especially momentous in light of Jesus' appearance and forthcoming death and resurrection.

- More urgency!
- Of course, Jesus' work on the cross now has been completed!

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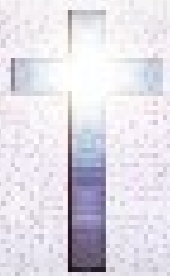
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33 They came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house, He began to question them, “What were you discussing on the way?” 34 But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest. 35 Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, “If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.” 36 Taking a child, He set him before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, 37 “Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me.”

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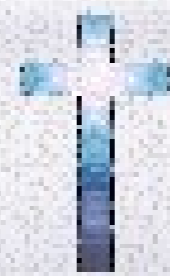
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38 John said to Him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to prevent him because he was not following us.” 39 But Jesus said, “Do not hinder him, for there is no one who will perform a miracle in My name, and be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me. 40 “For he who is not against us is for us. 41 For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as followers of Christ, truly I say to you, he will not lose his reward.”

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42 “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe to stumble, it would be better for him if, with a heavy millstone hung around his neck, he had been cast into the sea. 43 “If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire, 44 where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched. 45 “If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame, than, having your two feet, to be cast into hell, 46 where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched. 47 “If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell, 48 where their worm does not die

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Three Teachings/Warnings by Jesus

A) True Greatness/Warning Against the World (9:33-37)

B) Warning Against Division (9:38-41)

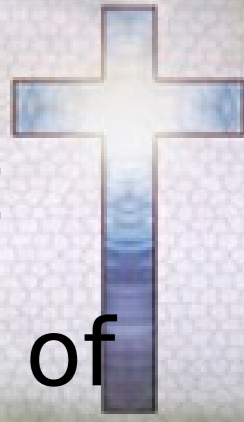
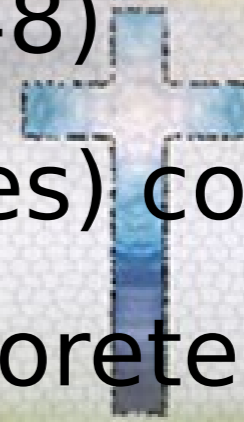
C) Warning Against Stumbling (9:42-48)

All three in eschatological (end times) context

- 'Passion Predictions' i.e. the foretellings of Jesus' death and resurrection

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A) True Greatness in God's Kingdom (9:33-37)

“If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.”

- What does Jesus mean by “first” and “last”?
 - Two standards: the world's and God's
 - Eschatological context: this is the crucial divide!
- What does the world value, and what does God value?
 - The World: material prosperity, emotional security, power, can do whatever one wishes, obtain whatever one desires, etc.
 - God: spiritual prosperity, spiritual security: a stable, trusting, humble relationship with God
 - Essential ingredient: reconciled relationship with God
 - From a reconciled relationship comes more stability, faith, humility, and love

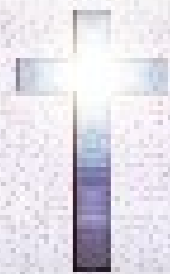
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A) True Greatness in God's Kingdom (9:33-37)

"If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."

- Last in God's eyes
 - Spiritual depravity, not reconciled, and still separated from God
 - Separated from His provision of love, mercy, and grace
- The outcome in the end is eternal separation and judgment
- Fundamental question: Are you reconciled with God?
 - Fruit of Reconciliation
 - Humble servanthood, attending to the needs of others
 - Spiritual prosperity can come with material prosperity, but both material prosperity and material poverty are to be used for God

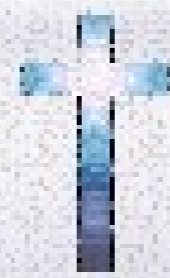
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A) True Greatness in God's Kingdom (9:33-37)

“Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me.”

- Illustration of True Greatness

- Children held the lowest societal rank in Jewish and Greco-Roman societies

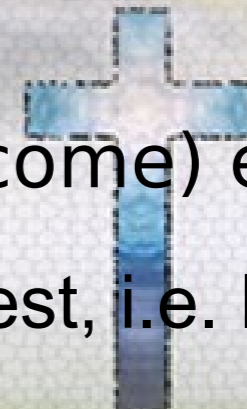
- One must receive (i.e. appropriately welcome) even a child

- Doing so humbles ourselves even below the lowest, i.e. last, as servants

- To do so is how we receive God and is evidence of our reconciled relationship with God

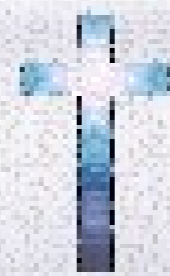
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A) True Greatness in God's Kingdom (9:33-37)

- Three Sequences Following Three Passion Predictions

- Passion Prediction #1 (Mk 8:31-38):

- Peter rebukes Jesus, Jesus rebukes Peter
- Jesus teaches about denying oneself, losing one's life (the world) to find it (God)

- Passion Prediction #2 (Mk 9:31-37):

- Disciples do not understand but afraid to ask; discuss who is the greatest
- Jesus teaches that to be first, one must be last of all and servant of all

- Passion Prediction #3 (Mk 10:32-45):

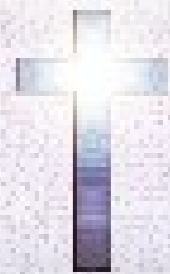
- James and John ask to sit at Jesus' right hand, disciples argue over position
- Jesus teaches that to whoever wishes to be great must become a servant, and whoever wishes to be first must be a slave
- Crucial Point: The cross is to create a humble heart and fruit of service

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B) Warning Against Division (Mk 9:38-41)

“Do not hinder him, for there is no one who will perform a miracle in My name, and be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me. “For he who is not against us is for us. For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as followers of Christ, truly I say to you, he will not

- Jesus: If one performs a ^{lose his reward} miracle in Jesus’ name (that is, by Jesus’ authority, person, love, and mercy), then that person is with me and with us.

• There are only two groups: those for and against Christ

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- Division amongst us must not be a hindrance to the gospel
- In the end times, the gospel is what matters
- Through any relational, theological, political issues or disagreements, we are all on the same team in the end

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C) Warning Against Stumbling (Mk 9:42-48)

- Stumbling

- Within eschatological context, refers to falling away from allegiance to Jesus and its dire implication: judgment and eternal separation from God
- We must all come to grips with the fact that God has a place for judgment
- Place of judgment is for those whose sins against God have not been forgiven

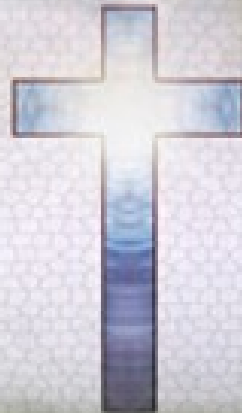
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- Called "hell" (here: "Gehenna")

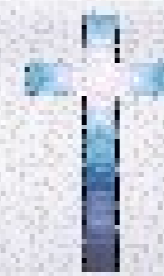
- Depicted by unquenchable fire and worm imagery (see handout for meaning of "Gehenna")

- Reflects eternal nature of suffering and torment when fully separated from the love of God and its manifestations in this world



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C) Warning Against Stumbling (Mk 9:42-48)

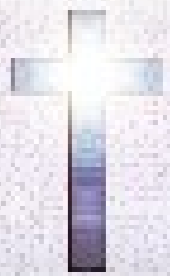
- Stumbling
 - Causing others to stumble (9:42) or us stumbling ourselves
 - Severity of consequences for either shown by the description of hell
 - But real hell, real consequences, and real judgment help us understand the urgency with which Jesus calls us to rid ourselves of all impurities
- Hands (what you do), Feet (where you go), Eyes (what you see)

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- What sins and temptations are we falling into? Take drastic action not to sin, not to put yourself in a position of temptation,
 - Eyes: Do your eyes see the kingdom of God or this world? etc. (e.g. John 3:3)
 - Larger scale:
 - Feet: Are you walking the narrow path or the wide path? (Matt 7:13-14)
 - Hands: Do your actions worship God or something/someone else?

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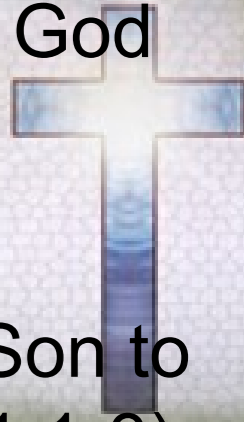
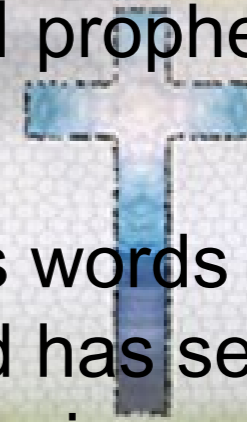
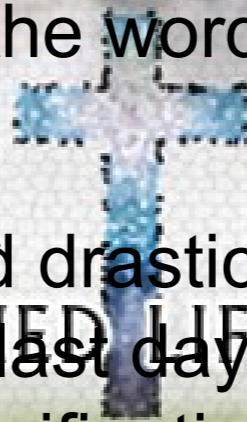
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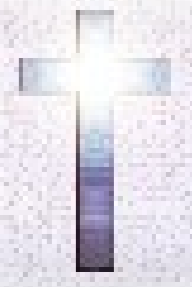
Conclusion- Jesus' Main Point: Turn around and repent

- If in sin, turn and repent, do not wait, do not be half-hearted
- Because the gospel is now reality
- Jesus on the cross is reality, His glorious return is reality, the judgment of God is reality and has confirmed the words and prophecies of God through the Law and the prophets
- This is why Jesus is so dramatic and drastic in His words for His disciples and for us: because in the last days, God has sent His Son to confirm the prophecies and make purification from sin real (Heb 1:1-3)
- Repent and take up your cross, deny yourself, be reconciled in full with the loving, merciful God of all

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Small Group Discussion Groups

OIF Stage

Michael

Calvin

Pastor Ridge

Pastor Paul

Josh

Johannes

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Discussion

Questions

1. How does the eschatological context help us understand Jesus' warnings here in Mark 9:33-48?

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2. Do you see fruit in your life? How does your reconciled relationship with God produce and grow the fruit that you bear?
3. How does either division or unity in the church affect our witness? Can you give examples of either that you see, either in the context of a local church, or on a larger scale