

Day 43 (Tuesday 16th October)**Read Mark Chapter 9 verses 2 to 8**

The Transfiguration

Having explained that He is going to suffer and die (8.31), Jesus now gives Peter, James and John a glimpse of the true glory to which He will afterwards return. The vision shows Jesus with Moses and Elijah - representatives of the Old Testament Law and Prophets which point forward to Christ. Peter wants to dwell here but a voice comes from heaven. The words are similar to those at Christ's baptism (1.11) but with the addition: "listen to him!" Then, seeing only Jesus once more, they go back to the crowds.

Questions to think about

1. It's easy to read the Gospels and just think of a *man* doing amazing things. Why might there be so few descriptions of what Jesus actually looked like?
2. Staying close to Jesus is important. What is important as well as this however? (verse 7)
3. When we pray, what picture of our God do we have in mind? Is it a good one?

A prayer you may wish to say

Our Lord and our God, forgive us for the smallness of our image of You. Help us to see more just how great You are. Help us to hear Your voice as we read your word and help us to do what you tell us to do. Amen

Day 44 (Wednesday 17th October)**Read Mark Chapter 9 verses 9 to 13**

The Coming of Elijah

Coming down the mountain, the disciples talked about two things: rising from the dead and Elijah returning. Jesus had said He would do the first after suffering and dying. In the Book of Malachi, it said the second (Malachi 4.5). John the Baptist had been similar in several ways to Elijah (compare eg. Mark 1.6 with 2 Kings 1.8).

Questions to think about

1. Which is more important? -To tell people that we personally have had an amazing vision of Jesus or to tell them that Jesus has risen from the dead and anyone can meet Him?
2. Which is more important? -To understand exactly how all the Old Testament prophecies were and are being fulfilled or to understand why Jesus had to suffer and die?
3. What do we want to get out of the time we spend reading the Bible?

A prayer you may wish to say

Loving Lord, show us what you would have us learn from your Word. Help us to take in just what you did for us in dying for our sins and just what it means to us that you are alive now. Amen

Day 45 (Thursday 18th October)**Read Mark Chapter 9 verses 14 to 29**

The healing of a boy with a Spirit

The disciples left on their own had got into problems. They hadn't been able to help someone, even though Jesus had specifically given them authority in such cases (Chapter 6 verse 7), and they had the scribes arguing with them. Christ uses the situation to increase the father's faith and show the disciples where they were going wrong.

Questions to think about

1. Have you ever felt that several problems have all come at once?
2. What three things are given as reasons for the disciples' failure? (verses 23, 29 and its footnote)
3. Can Jesus help our unbelief? What is needed on our part? (verse 24)

A prayer you may wish to say

Lord, we are sorry for our slowness to trust in you and the speed with which we forget what you have told us. Please increase our faith. Help us to pray better, deny ourselves and follow you. Amen

Day 46 (Friday 19th October)**Read Mark Chapter 9 verses 30 to 32**

Jesus again Foretells His Death and Resurrection

Jesus is taking the disciples now to Jerusalem where He knows He will be killed but rise again. This was not going to be the entry of a conquering political hero who would just give everyone exactly what they wanted. For a second time, He tells the disciples what is going to happen. The first time, Peter had tried to dissuade Jesus (Mark 8.32). Now they still don't understand it.

Questions to think about

1. What should the disciples have done when they didn't understand? (verse 32)
2. Is the only reason Christ died, the fact that Judas betrayed him? (See Romans 8.32)
3. Why did Christ have to die?

A prayer you may wish to say

Gracious Lord and Loving Heavenly Father, thank you that you came in your Son to die for us and for our sins. Thank you that we can put our complete faith in You and what You have done. Thank you that we can know that our sins are forgiven and that we will one day be with you. Amen.

Day 47 (Saturday 20th October)

Read Mark Chapter 9 verses 33 to 37

Who is the greatest?

Even as Christ is starting out on the journey to suffering and death, the disciples have an argument about which of them is the greatest. Possibly it arose because three of them had had a special experience (Mark 9. 2-8). Our pride so easily comes to the fore. (The Apostle Paul could actually see he had been given a 'thorn in the flesh' to *stop* him becoming 'too elated' (2Corinthians 12.7)). Jesus teaches the disciples that the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven are those who put themselves last and become servants to everyone else.

Questions to think about

1. Can you think of times when you have said things that made you rather than Christ look good?
2. If we seem to be gaining the good opinion of others, how could we use that to glorify Christ rather than ourselves?
3. Being a servant to all is not the same as being a doormat. Why would our being a doormat not be in other people's best interests?

A prayer you may wish to say

Lord, forgive us for the times when we have lost sight of following you because we have become too concerned with our own standing. Help us to see that all we have comes from you. Help us to use all you have given us to your glory and to build up other people.

Day 48 (Sunday 21st October)

Read Mark Chapter 9 verses 38 to 41

Another Exorcist

Having failed to cast out an unclean spirit themselves (verses 17 & 18) and having had their own self-seeking exposed (verses 33 & 34), the disciples now complain about someone else who *was* achieving results in Christ's name. John, one of the three who had been given the special experience on the Mount of Transfiguration, becomes their spokesperson. Christ disciplines His disciples, telling them any people who do even the smallest things (eg. giving a cup of water) for you because you bear Christ's name, will be rewarded. Christ's words "Whoever is not against us is for us" (v40) is sometimes compared with Matthew 12.30: "Whoever is not with me is against me." The second were said in the context of people casting out demons *in Beelzebul's* name.

Questions to think about.

1. What is our reaction to seeing Christians from other churches having more success than us? What should our reaction be?
2. How should we react when we meet Christians from other churches?
3. Whose name in reality is the most important to us: ours, our churches or Christ's?

A prayer you may wish to say

Heavenly Father, we are sorry for the times when we are slow to learn ourselves and quick to dismiss the work of others. Forgive us, teach us and correct us. Remind us we bear your name.

Day 49 (Monday 22nd October)

Read Mark Chapter 9 verses 42 to 50

Temptations to Sin

Possibly the exorcist of verse 38 had been badly affected by the disciples rebuffing him. Jesus may be using this to show the seriousness of our sin in verse 42. He is not literally telling people to cut off hands and feet. He had taught that sin comes from *inside* us (chapter 7 verse 21). He is telling us to not let sin stay and grow in our lives. Sin and what leads us into it, needs to be cut out of our lives. Undealt with sin leads to hell. Jesus does not mince His words. He even quotes Isaiah 66.24 to describe hell (verse 48). Things may get difficult in this life, they certainly did for the early Christians (verse 49). We still need to be 'salt' for others: a persistent flavour that holds out the good news that Christ died for our salvation (verse 50).

Questions to think about

1. People generally don't talk about 'Sin' and 'Hell' now. Should we?
2. Is there a temptation we have that we could remove by changing our daily routines?
3. Is there something we are doing that could be a 'stumbling block' to others? -something in our life that turns others away from following Christ?

A prayer you may wish to say

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139.23/24)

