

As they pass back down through **Galilee** on the way to **Jerusalem**, Jesus will now have a **second conversation** with the disciples about **His Death** and **Resurrection**. **“30 And from there they went out and began to go through Galilee, and He was unwilling for anyone to know about it. 31 For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, “The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later.”** It is hard to imagine that Jesus could be any clearer about God’s plan for His **Death**, and the **miraculous event** to follow. And yet the disciples not only don’t understand, but are **afraid** to ask Him about it, **“32 But they did not understand this statement, and they were afraid to ask Him.”** It really is not such a wonder that they couldn’t grasp it, as they are rather **darkened** by their own **preconceived** ideas of the **glory** of the **Messiah** to seriously **consider** His own words to them. Calvin comments, *“The disciples had previously received several intimations on this subject, and yet they are as much alarmed as if nothing relating to it had ever reached their ears. So great is the influence of preconceived opinion, that it brings darkness over the mind in the midst of the clearest light. The apostles had imagined that the state of Christ’s kingdom would be prosperous and delightful, and that, as soon as he made himself known, he would be universally received with the highest approbation. They never thought it possible that the priests, and scribes, and other rulers of the Church, would oppose him.”* **End quote.** Let us learn here that we don’t always have a clear or a grasp of Scripture as we may think, and let us have ready and teachable hearts to always learn more and gain more light from the Lord.

**Mark 9:33-37** - 33 And 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 And 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 And 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."

In this section of **training** for the **disciples**, chapters **8-10**, they are learning many valuable **lessons**. Here is yet another massively important lesson about the way the Kingdom and its servants’ function. **“33 And 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.”** As all of us humans are so easily set upon self-preservation and self-exaltation, we see the

disciples **wallowing** in their own **pride**, thinking about rewards and accolades that they may receive from the Lord. And so often **we** are **like them**, rather than meditating on how we will **carry** our **own cross** and follow Jesus to our death, we would rather soon lay hold of a **crown**. O dreaded pride that runs through our veins! To this great darkness in our hearts the Lord would shine a bright light, **“35 And 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.”** Rather than the pride of self-exaltation and arguing about who will have the greatest place, the Lord reverses their whole direction and calls them to the **humility** of **service** to **all**. And how we want to **learn** this **lesson** and **continually devote** ourselves to the service of Christ and His blessed Church. So often the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. May the Lord continue to impress upon us the **call** to **humility**, and may He grant it to us in large measure, lest we be swept away in our pride. To this end He gives the disciples a beautiful example of the **kind** of **humility** He calls them to, **“36 And 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.”** Here the Lord uses a child as an example of the humility He calls them to. The passage in Matthew expands on the conversation.

**Matthew 18:1-6** - 18 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" **2 And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, 3 and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 "Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 "And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me;** 6 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea. NASB

Notice here, He speaks about becoming like children, **“Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven,”** and relates this as a fundamental virtue of **true saving faith**, for without **“becoming like children, you shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven.”** So strong and **important** is this call to humility, you **cannot** be **saved** without it. And so, this lesson does indeed loom very large upon the disciples who were arguing about **“who will be the greatest.”** Let us stop to **consider** and test our **own motives** as we **follow** the **Lord**. Are we moved by a desire to serve others out of the mere mercy of God in saving us from our own sin and eternal death, and would we **gladly** be the **least** in His Kingdom just for the shear joy of serving

Him? Let this be the solemn and genuine cry of our heart, and with the Psalmist cry out,

**Psalm 84:10** - 10 For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand outside.  
**I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God, Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.** NASB

See the great importance the Lord places on **humility**, and may He help us to “**become like children**” as it were. It seems He would have us receive even the least in His name, rather than have any other great pursuit that we might devise to make us great, “**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."** May the Lord open our eyes to what **true greatness** in His Kingdom really is.

**Mark 9:38-50** - 38 John said to Him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to hinder him because he was not following us." 39 But Jesus said, "Do not hinder him, for there is no one who shall 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 shall not lose his reward. 42 "And 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 "And 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 "And 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 "And if your eye causes you to stumble, cast 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, and the fire is not quenched. 49 "For everyone will be salted with fire. 50 "Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

Jesus continues with additional important lessons for the disciples. “**38 John said to Him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to hinder him because he was not following us."** Apparently the person was **really** casting out **demons** and this of course must have surprised the disciples since he was not **one of them** who had been given such **authority** by Jesus Himself. Jesus answer is surprising also. “**39 But Jesus said, "Do not hinder him, for there is no one who shall perform a miracle in My name, and be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me."** The Lord here teaching us all not to oppose those

who do such powerful work in the Kingdom, for unless they oppose Christ's **teaching openly** and **untruthfully**, they must be in some degree, on **our side**, or doing **legitimate** ministry. We who dwell in the intensely **Bible centered** camp could probably learn a little grace here, and the Lord's statement may even be a rebuke for us at times, "**40 "For he who is not against us is for us."** Those who **oppose Christ** do so with **lies** concerning His truth, not so much with mighty acts of faith. They are to be opposed and corrected, but for those who are not "**able soon afterward to speak evil of Me,**" should be allowed to continue **unhindered**. May we learn to see others in ministry with such acceptance and grace. Jesus also teaches us that some will even **help** the **disciples** and us, and He will not forget their reward. "**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 shall not lose his reward."** He doesn't say what the reward is, but nonetheless here we learn to appreciate **assistance** in the work of the Kingdom. But those who by **false teaching** lead Jesus own people **into sin**, are to be **opposed** and the Lord has harsh words of **warning** for them. "**42 "And 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."** Those who lead God's people **into sin** receive a most **severe warning** from the **Lord** and false teachers in Scripture receive the **strictest** condemnation (2 Peter 2:1-22, Jude 5-17). Moreover, the Lord teaches us the **radical** idea of **killing sin**, and with extreme metaphors instructs us to **be serious** about our **war** with **sin** in **ourselves**. "**43 "And 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 "And 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 "And if your eye causes you to stumble, cast 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, and the fire is not quenched."** The Lord uses the most **severe** language when speaking about our own **fight against sin** in our pursuit of holiness. And also in this, he shines a bright light on aspects of hell, and what causes people to go there, and **what it is like**. Hell is the word Gehenna in Greek and is here used to speak of the **eternal** place of **torment** for those who continue in sin and do not come to Christ in saving faith, which wars against sin. Jesus here describes hell as "**43 to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire, 44 [where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched,] and also "47 to be cast into hell, 48 where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched."** Jesus talked more about the reality of hell than any other biblical