



Bible Study
2014-2015

Heart of a Servant

The Gospel of Mark

LESSON 9

Maybe when you were young, butterflies were more than just a fun coloring sheet at school. It seems at some point, every child learns that the butterfly is one of the most fascinating creatures on the earth. The changes that occur from an egg to a rubbery caterpillar are fun to observe, but it is the metamorphosis of the caterpillar into a butterfly which still has the most intelligent scientists dumbfounded.

Did you know that the caterpillar increases in weight 2,700 percent in 20 days? As a caterpillar that eventually will become a monarch butterfly, it begins with six eyes that only see in black and white, a chewing mouthpiece, and sixteen legs to help it crawl. Then it chemically decomposes and reconstructs itself to become a butterfly with two eyes that can see in color (each with 6,000 lenses), a sucking mouthpiece, six legs, four wings, and the ability to fly. The female can smell a male butterfly two miles away and navigate to a determined location that it has never seen before 2,000 miles away.

If our Creator God goes to this kind of length for a small insect, how much more mind-blowing must be the glorious transformation that occurs as written in 1 Corinthians 15:51, “Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed...” Metamorphosis! In a similar fashion, now that Jesus has come closer to the crucifixion in our chapter, we read how He continued to pour into His disciples the reality of an invisible kingdom and gave them glimpses into the resurrection and glorious transformations that await the people of God.

So no matter what our circumstances may be today, may we have hope in our future, encouragement in God’s power and faith that everything could change in a moment...in the twinkling of an eye....for the good (Romans 8:28).

Read Mark 9:1-13

1. Though the first verse would best be placed into the previous chapter, it begins with Jesus giving a prophetic word about the birth of the church on the day of Pentecost, when the power of the Holy Spirit would come upon the believers who met together in Acts 2.
 - a. Write out 1 Corinthians 4:20.
 - b. What did Paul write concerning this in 1 Thessalonians 1:5?

- c. Before proceeding further into the chapter, stop and pray that the power of the gospel and the Holy Spirit will do a mighty work in you and through you according to His will and good purposes.

“Many Christians estimate difficulty in the light of their own resources, and thus they attempt very little and they always fail. All giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on His power and presence to be with them.”
~ *Hudson Taylor*

2. If you can picture the scene, Jesus only chose Peter, James, and John to follow Him up a high mountain. As they were alone with Him, the invisible became visible, and the earthly became glorious.
- a. Briefly describe when you meet with the Lord and seek Him in prayer and in the Word (on average). Is it every morning or in the evening? Is it periodically when you have free time in the week? Is it when you go to church or a Bible study?
- b. There is a conditional promise in Deuteronomy 4:29. What does the Lord encourage us to do?
- c. The three disciples saw the Lord in a way they had never seen Him before. They also heard God the Father’s voice and were given a revelation of the kingdom of God. The phrase “seek the Lord” is written 31 times in the NKJV. Look up the verses below and write what is found or happens in His Presence.

Exodus 33:14

Psalm 97:5

Acts 2:28

Acts 3:19

Jude 1:24

- d. Though our times alone with the Lord may not include visible revelations of the invisible realm, what does Lamentations 3:40-41 mean to you personally?

*“O, let the place of secret prayer become to me the most beloved spot on earth.”
~ Andrew Murray*

Read Mark 9:14-29

3. Bible teacher Woodrow Kroll once said, “The God who dwells on the mountains also inhabits the valleys.” Though three disciples needed “alone time” on the mountain with Jesus, the other nine encountered a demonic trial in the valley.
- a. Who are the ones Jesus initially questioned in the multitude?
- b. Recall that the scribes were the ones who meticulously copied the scriptures and had a dogmatic lifestyle of religious observances. They would regularly pray and fast, offer tithes and sacrifices, as well as adhere to God’s divine holy days. Write out the Lord’s directions they **knew** and claimed to live by in Isaiah 58:6.
- c. The disciples asked Jesus “Why could we not cast it [the demon] out?” in Mark 9:28. The Lord did not tell **them** that it was because of their lack of faith, but because of what? (Verse 29).
- d. Though the scribes included regular prayer and fasting in their lifestyle, they did not cast the demon out or break his stronghold over this boy either. What did Jesus openly rebuke in verse 19?

“O _____ generation..”

4. So we see in this multitude, those who knew the Word of God in print, yet failed to have faith in Jesus, the Word made flesh (John 1:14). Then we also see the disciples, who may or may not have had faith to meet the need, yet definitely lacked in the area of prayer and fasting (Mark 9:29).
 - a. As Jesus appears on the scene, the distraught father says to Him, “IF You can do...” to which Jesus responds “IF you can believe...”. Write out the remainder of Jesus’ promise here.
 - b. There has come a dangerous theology out of these words that has vaulted “belief” to a place of near idolatry. To attribute the power to heal solely on the ability of a person to work up enough faith is to rob God of His sovereignty, undermine His wisdom and power and will in the situation. Where does true faith come from according to Ephesians 2:8?
 - c. Write out Romans 10:17 here and thoughtfully apply this truth to what Jesus is speaking to the father.
 - d. Through tears and from the depths of his soul, what does the father say to Jesus in Mark 9:24?
5. The father’s admission of his weakness in belief did not stop Jesus from doing the impossible. Since faith or belief comes by hearing the Word of God, reading the Bible and prayer are imperatives in a Christian’s life. But notice that fasting was also required to rid the enemy of a place he should not occupy.
 - a. Go back to Isaiah 58 and read the first 7 verses where the Lord contrasts His view of fasting versus His peoples. Are there any verses here that the Lord is speaking to you about? Share briefly.

- c. Write down our oft quoted promise from Jeremiah 29:11 in response to your fear.

Read Mark 9:33-37

7. Reflecting back over the beginning of our chapter, we saw how some of the disciples were given a privileged revelation of glory with Jesus on a mountaintop, while others failed in a test of faith against the enemy. In our lives with Jesus, we will probably experience both of these things to some degree.
- a. We have a God that loves us enough to bring light to hidden things in our lives when they need correction. What was the topic which the disciples argued about from verse 34?
- b. In the Greek, the word “greatest” can also be interpreted as important, or exceeding others. Who do you think of, when you think of great people, or those who exceed others in importance? Also write down what makes them great in your eyes.
- c. How God uses a person, what He reveals to them, and how well they do in life can greatly influence our estimation of a person’s worth or value to the Lord, especially when we measure ourselves by high external standards. Write Jesus’ requirements of a person who desires to be a leader, first, or great in the kingdom (verse 35).
- d. Just in case they did not understand what they heard, He gave them a visual example of greatness. What did the child DO or SAY to be used by God?

8. The child was placed in a position not only to be seen (in the midst) but also to be held by the Lord. Isn't this a wonderful "place" to be? Turn to Matthew 18 and read verses 1-5.
- a. In order to see the kingdom, no matter what our biological age is, what must we become in heart and attitude?
 - b. If we are received by others when we are humble and childlike to the Lord, Jesus is also received. He shows His unity here. But what does Jesus say the judgment is for one who offends, causes to stumble or sin, according to Matthew 18:6-7 and Mark 9:42?

***"In the midst of our triumphs, let us cry to God for humility."
~ Spurgeon***

Read Mark 9:38-41

9. Jesus' words triggered a thought in John about others who were engaged in ministry, yet not with them in their group. This statement also reflects an attitude of pride that can creep in when a person is used by the Lord. A pastor once said, "In heaven, you will never find denominational splits. All the bickering over minor details that divides Christians will cease."
- a. What is the heart of Jesus according to His prayer to our heavenly Father in John 17:20-21?
 - b. What does Paul tell Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:14 and 23?

***"Division has done more to hide Christ from the view of men than
all the infidelity that has ever been spoken."
~ George MacDonald***

Read Mark 9:43-48

10. As we have said before, because the Lord loves us, He warns us. And in these verses, He is trying to stress the reality of hell in light of temptations that can stumble them to sin. When we are most tempted, the reality of heaven and hell are most dim, and the consequences of our sin most clouded.
- In these verses, what three body parts become instruments of sin?
 - With each of these examples, describe what kinds of things you use them for in life?
 - Jesus did not give this description to be literal in practice, but to illustrate the seriousness and severity that someone should take towards sin and the consequences of hell. How does Jesus describe hell in verses 44, 46, and 48?
 - Normally, when a person dies and is buried or cremated, the body will disintegrate. But in hell, the picture is eternal torment. Think about your home and its contents.
 - Is there anything in your home that causes you to sin? With your eyes, is there something that stumbles you on a computer? The television?
 - Is there a place you use your feet take you that you should not go? Is there someone you run to or turn to that causes you to sin before the Lord?
 - Is there something you pick up with your hands that causes you to sin? Something you embrace that you shouldn't? Some activity you engage in that the Lord would not approve of?

e. What does Deuteronomy 4:24 say?

12. This verse is also quoted in Hebrews 12:29 in regards to how we serve the Lord. It should be with grace and reverential fear because of this quality of our God. But ending with the words that Jesus is conveying to us in Mark 9:49-50, our lives will be tested in various ways by fiery trials. Fire can burn up the dross of sin in our hearts, purify muddied ambitions, test a staggering faith, and also produce a “saltiness” to our lives!
- a. Salt is very similar to fire in that it can destroy as well as purify. But salt also produces thirst when it is consumed. Fiery trials can produce a salty quality about a believer’s life, which in turn, provoke a spiritual thirst in others. End this lesson with a prayer concerning the issues Jesus warned about in verses 42-48, as well as His encouragement in verses 49-50. Maybe the fire of God needs to consume some things you listed in question 10d?

***“We are the salt of the earth, mind you, not the sugar.
Our ministry is to truly cleanse and not just to change the taste.”***

***“Salt seasons, purifies, preserves. But somebody ought to remind us that salt also irritates.
Real living Christianity rubs this world the wrong way.”
~ Vance Havner***