

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Mark: Jesus The Perfect Servant Of God

Part II: The Perfect Service Of Jesus, The Perfect Servant Of God, Mark 1:1-10:52

HH. Christ's Teaching On Prayerfully Trusting God In Bearing One's Cross

(Mark 9:14-29)

I. Introduction

- A. We learned in our first lesson in this series that Mark's Gospel presents the perfect service of God's Perfect Servant, Jesus, with Mark's focus of having rebounded unto upright service from personal failure.
- B. Bible scholars agree that Mark faced a hardship that he did not properly handle, leading to his defection from missionary service in Acts 13:13 versus his faithfully continuing to serve the Lord, B. K. C., N. T., p. 388-389.
- C. Mark 9:14-20 presents Jesus' instruction on handling such hardships by prayerfully trusting God in bearing one's cross particularly as it relates to the angelic conflict (as follows):

II. Christ's Teaching On Prayerfully Trusting God In Bearing One's Cross, Mark 9:14-29.

- A. When Jesus and His three disciples came down from the Mount where they had glimpsed the crown that would follow the cross, they saw the other disciples in a state of hardship and spiritual failure, Mark 9:14-18:
 1. The other nine disciples were in a crowd arguing with the scribes, a stressful situation, Mark 9:14 NIV.
 2. Jesus arrived, a surprising, welcome event for the crowd, and He asked the nine disciples about what they were arguing, and a man in the crowd explained that he had brought his son to Jesus to be healed of a demon that had left the boy deaf and dumb, Mark 9:15-17, 25. The man said the demon "often convulsed him with violent seizures symptomatic of epilepsy," and had tried to destroy him, Mk. 9:18a; *Ibid.*, p. 144.
 3. The father had brought his son to Jesus' disciples who had exorcised demons in their past ministry under Jesus (Mark 6:7, 12-13), but that this time, Jesus' nine disciples had been unable to help, Mark 9:18b.
 4. At this report, Christ expressed a critique on the unbelief of all involved, Mark 9:19: (a) He critiqued "the scribes" who were guilty of "willful and persistent unbelief," (b) the boy's father who was guilty of "unwilling unbelief," (c) the boy who was guilty of "irresponsible unbelief" and (d) His "disciples" who were guilty of unconscious unbelief," G. Campbell Morgan, The Gospel According to Mark, 1927, p. 200.
- B. Jesus then solved the desperate situation created by such widespread unbelief in so many, Mark 9:20-27:
 1. When they brought the boy to Jesus, the demon reacted with rebellious hostility, trying to kill the boy by making him convulse, fall down and roll around on the ground, foaming at the mouth, Mark 9:20 NIV.
 2. Jesus asked how long the boy had been in such a state, and the father said it had been since childhood, that the demon had often tried to kill him, but that if Jesus could help, to have pity and help them, Mk. 9:21-22.
 3. The Lord reacted by mimicking the father's words in order to critique them by saying, "If you can!", and then added, "All things are possible for one who believes," Mark 9:23 ESV.
 4. The desperate father tearfully cried out, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief!" (Mark 9:24 KJV)
 5. Christ saw the crowd running together, so He immediately addressed the demon, saying, "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him," Mark 9:25.
 6. The spirit in violent rebellion against Christ "shrieked, convulsed" the boy "violently" and left, Mark 9:26a NIV. The boy looked dead, and many said he was, but Jesus raised him up to stand, Mark 9:26b-27 NIV.
- C. When the disciples later asked Jesus why they could not help, Christ told of their need to trust God opposite relying on their own human prowess or on their past ministry track record of exorcising demons, Mk. 9:28-29:
 1. Many manuscripts add "and fasting" after "prayer" in verse 29, but that is due to "the increasing stress in the early church on the necessity of fasting," Bruce M. Metzger, A Text. Com. on the Grk. N. T., 1971, p. 101. The manuscripts that omit the addition are key representatives of the Alexandrian, Western, and Caesarean types of text, a widespread testimony that argues strongly for the shorter reading, *Ibid.*
 2. Also, omitting the "and fasting" phrase supports Jesus' words on ministry success by faith, not self-help!
 3. Thus, Jesus taught the disciples that success in bearing ministry "cross" hardships, especially regarding the angelic conflict, comes from trusting in God by faith through prayer, not on one's track record or ability!

Lesson: Jesus taught that in facing "cross" hardships of life and ministry before reaching the "crown," His men were prayerfully to trust God for His help versus relying on themselves or their ministry track records for success.

Application: (1) May we trust in Christ for eternal life, John 3:16. (2) In living and serving God in life's "cross" hardships, may we address them by faith in prayer for God's help and not rely on our track record or ability!