



Lesson 39 – Who is the Greatest?

Based on Matthew 17:22-27; Matthew 18:1-20; Mark 9:30-50; Luke 9:46-48.

1) Where does our lesson begin today?

Mark 9:30 And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should _____ it.

Mark 9:33 And he came to _____: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?

On returning to Capernaum, Jesus did not repair to the well-known resorts where He had taught the people, but with His disciples quietly sought the house that was to be His temporary home. During the remainder of His stay in Galilee it was His object to instruct the disciples rather than to labor for the multitudes.

The events just before this were Jesus' transfiguration, an ugly run in with that Scribes and Pharisees, and a demon possessed child that the Disciples couldn't heal.

2) What did Jesus tell His Disciples on their journey?

Matthew 17:22-23 And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall _____ him, and the third day he shall be _____ again. And they were exceeding sorry.

3) Did they understand?

Mark 9:31-32 For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is _____ into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall _____ the third day. But they _____ that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

On the journey through Galilee, Christ had again tried to prepare the minds of His disciples for the scenes before Him. He told them that He was to go up to Jerusalem to be put to death and to rise again. And He added the strange and solemn announcement that He was to be betrayed into the hands of His enemies.

4) What question did Jesus ask of them later?

Mark 9:33 And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye _____ among yourselves by the way?

5) How did they react?

Mark 9:34 But they held their _____: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest.

Although the shadow of a great sorrow fell upon them, a spirit of rivalry found a place in their hearts. They disputed among themselves which should be accounted greatest in the kingdom. This strife they thought to conceal from Jesus, and they did not, as usual, press close to His side, but loitered behind, so that He was in advance of them as they entered Capernaum. Jesus read their thoughts, and He longed to counsel and instruct them. But for this He awaited a quiet hour, when their hearts should be open to receive His words.

6) Before Jesus could address this what happened?

Matthew 17:24 And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay _____?



7) What happened next?

Matthew 17:25 He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own _____, or of strangers?

8) Did Jesus owe the tax?

Matthew 17:26-27 Peter saith unto him, Of _____. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his _____, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

Jesus made it plain that He was under no obligation to pay the tribute, He entered into no controversy with the Jews in regard to the matter; for they would have misinterpreted His words and turned them against Him. Lest He should give offense by withholding the tribute, He did that which He could not justly be required to do. This lesson would be of great value to His disciples. Marked changes were soon to take place in their relation to the temple service, and Christ taught them not to place themselves needlessly in antagonism to established order.

9) What did Jesus ask the Disciples later when they were alone?

Mark 9:33 And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye _____ among yourselves by the way?

10) Did they answer him?

Mark 9:34 But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the _____.

11) What did Jesus do for them?

Mark 9:35-37 And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be _____ of all, and servant of all. And he took a _____, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever shall _____ one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

12) How did Matthew record it?

Matthew 18:3-4 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be _____, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall _____ himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

13) What did He add to that?

Matthew 18:5-6 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name _____ me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a _____ were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

14) What had Jesus tried to tell the Disciples earlier that day?

Mark 9:31-32 For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall _____ him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. But they _____ not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

Shame and self-condemnation kept them silent. Jesus had told them that He was to die for their sake, and their selfish ambition was in painful contrast to His unselfish love.



15) When they were ready to listen, what did Jesus teach?

Mark 9:35 And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and _____ of all.

That which Christ discerned they could not see. They did not understand the nature of Christ's kingdom, and this ignorance was the apparent cause of their contention. But the real cause lay deeper. By explaining the nature of the kingdom, Christ might for the time have quelled their strife; but this would not have touched the underlying cause. Even after they had received the fullest knowledge, any question of precedence might have renewed the trouble.

16) What did their arguing resemble?

Isaiah 14:12-14 How art thou fallen from heaven, O _____, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will _____ my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will _____ above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

Lucifer desired God's power, but not His character. He sought for himself the highest place, and every being who is actuated by his spirit will do the same.

17) How does that contrast with the life of Jesus?

Philippians 2:7-8 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a _____, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became _____ unto death, even the death of the cross.

Now the cross was just before Him; and His own disciples were so filled with self-seeking—the very principle of Satan's kingdom—that they could not enter into sympathy with their Lord or even understand Him as He spoke of His humiliation for them.

18) What did He tell His Disciples?

Matthew 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be _____, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the _____ of heaven.

It was not enough for the disciples of Jesus to be instructed as to the nature of His kingdom. What they needed was a change of heart that would bring them into harmony with its principles.

19) What did David say of the Lord?

Psalms 18:35-36 Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath _____ me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great. Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my _____ did not slip.

20) What did Isaiah tell us?

Isaiah 66:1-2 Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a _____ spirit, and _____ at my word.

The sincere, contrite soul is precious in the sight of God. He places His own signet upon men, not by their rank, not by their wealth, not by their intellectual greatness, but by their oneness with Christ. The Lord of glory is satisfied with those who are meek and lowly in heart.



21) What example did Jesus use?

Mark 9:36-37 And he took a child, and set him in the _____ of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever shall _____ one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

The Saviour's words awakened in the disciples a feeling of self-distrust. No one had been specially pointed out in the reply; but John was led to question whether in one case his action had been right. With the spirit of a child, he laid the matter before Jesus...

22) What did John ask?

Mark 9:38 And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in _____, and he followeth not us: and we forbad him, because he followeth not us.

23) How did Jesus reply?

Mark 9:39-40 But Jesus said, _____ him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not _____ us is on our part.

None who showed themselves in any way friendly to Christ were to be repulsed. There were many who had been deeply moved by the character and the work of Christ, and whose hearts were opening to Him in faith; and the disciples, who could not read motives, must be careful not to discourage these souls.

The fact that one does not in all things conform to our personal ideas or opinions will not justify us in forbidding him to labor for God. Christ is the Great Teacher; we are not to judge or to command, but in humility each is to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of Him. Every soul whom God has made willing is a channel through which Christ will reveal His pardoning love. How careful we should be lest we discourage one of God's light bearers and thus intercept the rays that He would have shine to the world!

24) How did Paul instruct us?

Romans 15:1 We then that are strong ought to _____ the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

No soul who believes in Christ, though his faith may be weak, and his steps wavering as those of a little child, is to be lightly esteemed.

25) What did Paul tell the Galatians?

Galatians 6:1-2 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering _____, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's _____, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

We are not to bear this great responsibility alone. Wherever His word is obeyed with a sincere heart, there Christ abides. Not only is He present in the assemblies of the church, but wherever disciples, however few, meet in His name, there also He will be. And He says, "***If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven.***"

Can you see your need of something better?

Are there things in your life that need laid at the foot of the Cross?

When is the time to become as a child?