

## Introduction

After I had been a Christian just a few years, the Lord spoke to me out of Ezra 7:10. Ezra set his heart on studying the law of the Lord, and to practice it, and to teach God's statutes and ordinances in Israel. I knew that God was calling me to be a teacher. I did not know God's word, and did not know how to teach, and at that time was not even interested in teaching, but God spoke to me out of this passage and said that I am going to be a teacher. I did not know He had given me the gift of teaching. I only knew from this passage that I was going to have to study the Word of God, apply it in my life and teach others. God was giving me vision for my life. Vision is knowing who you are, and I am grateful that God spoke to me about my identity. It is important to know who you are.

(Ezra 7:10) "For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice *it*, and to teach *His* statutes and ordinances in Israel."

For several decades I have had an interest and passion for church government and leadership. I think that God put these desires and this passion in me because He has called me to train and raise up leaders, and to plant and establish churches. In planting and establishing churches, you have to train and raise up leaders, and you have to have a good understanding of church government. The gift of teaching has played a part in doing what God has called me to do. My identity, gifting, and passion are all in alignment with my mission.

Not too long after God spoke to me about being a teacher, He also spoke to me out of Acts 20:24. Paul did not consider his own life of any account as dear to himself, so that he could finish his course and the ministry that God called him to do, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God. I knew that I had to preach the gospel. It was part of my calling and ministry. I also knew that I would have to live a life that was selfless. In fulfilling God's call, I could not consider my life of any account as dear to myself. The one thing that characterized my life before receiving Christ would be selfishness. I was all about my selfish desires and pursuits. I was going to be a professional golfer, and nothing was going to stop me from that. My life was all about what I wanted to do. But God said that I had to deny myself and take up my cross and follow Him. I could no longer take my own life into account as dear, but I had to lay my life down for others.

(Acts 20:24) "But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God."

So, I knew that I was to study and apply God's word in my own life so that I could teach others. God was communicating the principle of teaching and leading by example. God was teaching me about core values before I ever had heard of the term. Core Values are about how you are going to do things. I was to teach and lead by example, not just in word only. I was to be selfless and not take my life into account as dear. Selflessness is another core value. God communicated many other core values to me, such as love, integrity, honesty, prayer, faith, generosity, and servanthood.

Much later in life I was able to receive training from Christian leaders and also business experts. I was fortunate enough to get chosen to go through the Goldman Sach 10KSB program at Babson College. It was a wonderful program, and the things that were taught there confirmed

what I had already been learning. Both groups taught that Vision is who you are and who you are becoming. Vision is your identity. They taught that Mission is about your goals and what you are trying to accomplish. Core Values are how you go about doing things, and how important they are to an organization. I had already written out these things for the church I was pastoring and also for our company before I entered the program, so these were confirmations. As I studied the Scriptures, I also learned about Purpose, and the importance of knowing why you do things.

This morning I want to step back in our study of Mark and give an overview of what is going on in Jesus' life and ministry. We have come to Mark 9:30-35, and our passage today begins with Jesus telling His disciples that He did not want anyone to know that they were going through Galilee. Jesus was not looking for crowds; Jesus was wanting time to invest in His disciples. His departure was drawing nigh and He wanted to maximize the time remaining with His disciples. Mark goes on to say, "For He was teaching His disciples..." Jesus had some things to share with His disciples. They had some important lessons that they had not grasped yet, and He wanted to make sure they understood these things. I am going to call this Leadership Lessons in Capernaum. I am going to talk about Jesus' Vision. I am going to talk about Jesus' Mission. I am going to talk about Jesus' Core Values.

(Mark 9:30-31) "From there they went out and *began* to go through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know *about it*. {31} For He was teaching His disciples..."

1. Jesus' Vision (Who He Is) Mark 8:
2. Jesus' Mission (Goal) (Mark 9:30-32)
3. Jesus' Core Values (Mark 9:14-50)

1. **Jesus' Vision** (Is 9:6, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 4:18-21, Mark 8:27-30, 9:2-8)

Jesus knew exactly who He was. He was the Son of God and He was the Son of Man. God communicated who the Messiah was through the prophets. Jesus was Immanuel, God with us. Jesus was the Eternal Father, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God. These were all prophecies about the Messiah.

(Is 9:6) "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace."

Just before Jesus began His earthly ministry, He was baptized in the Jordan by John the Baptist. John did not want to baptize Him, but Jesus insisted. Before John baptized Jesus, God had spoken to John and told him that the One that the Spirit came down and rested upon like a dove was the Messiah. John declared that Jesus was the Messiah at that time. But when Jesus was baptized a voice came out of heaven and said, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased." Jesus knew exactly who He was.

(Mark 1:9-11) "In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. {10} Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; {11} and a voice came out of the heavens: "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."

When Jesus began His earthly ministry, He went to the temple in Nazareth, and He read from Isaiah 61, and said, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." He knew that He was the Messiah, and had come to preach the gospel and reconcile men to God.

(Luke 4:18-21) "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, {19} TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD." {20} And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. {21} And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

In Mark 8:27-30, Jesus and the disciples started traveling to Caesarea Philippi. On the way He questioned them about who people said He was. They said, John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the prophets. Then Jesus asked them who they said He was. Peter told Him, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Jesus replied to Peter that flesh and blood did not reveal that to Him, but His Father in heaven. The Father had revealed Jesus' identity to Peter and the disciples, but Jesus already knew who He was.

(Mark 8:27-30) "Jesus went out, along with His disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way He questioned His disciples, saying to them, "Who do people say that I am?" {28} They told Him, saying, "John the Baptist; and others say Elijah; but others, one of the prophets." {29} And He *continued* by questioning them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ." {30} And He warned them to tell no one about Him."

In Mark 9:2-8, Jesus took Peter, James, and John with Him up on a high mountain, probably Mount Hermon. While they were up there, they saw Moses and Elijah talking to Jesus. They also saw Jesus transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes were radiant and whiter than a launderer could do. God had spoken to Peter in Mark 8, but they all saw Jesus' glory and majesty in Mark 9. They were confirming Jesus' identity.

(Mark 9:2-8) "Six days later, Jesus \*took with Him Peter and James and John, and \*brought them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; {3} and His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them. {4} Elijah appeared to them along with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus. {5} Peter \*said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." {6} For he did not know what to answer; for they became terrified. {7} Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!" {8} All at once they looked around and saw no one with them anymore, except Jesus alone."

## 2. Jesus' Mission (Mark 9:30-32)

In Mark 9:30-32, after Jesus had cast out the demon from the boy, Jesus and the disciples went out and began to go through Galilee. They were in Caesarea Philippi, north of Galilee, and so they were going through the region of Galilee on their way to Jerusalem. On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus was teaching His disciples that the Son of Man was going to be delivered into the hands of men, be killed, and then rise from the dead. Jesus was on a mission.

(Mark 9:30-31) “From there they went out and *began* to go through Galilee, and He did not want 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.”

When Jesus was coming to John to be baptized, John had declared, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” John prophesied that Jesus would be the sacrificial lamb that was used to atone for our sins. Not only did John know it, but Jesus knew that this was why He had been sent by the Father. He was sent to reconcile the world.

(John 1:29) “The next day he *\*saw* Jesus coming to him and *\*said*, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac. God did it to test Abraham, but God was going to do that very thing for us. He was going to sacrifice His Son for us. Jesus knew why He had come and He also knew that His time of departure was at hand. Because His departure was near, it was weighing on His mind. He kept trying to tell the disciples about it. In Mark 8:31-33, just after Peter had this revelation of who Jesus is, Jesus began to teach them that He was going to suffer, be rejected, be killed, and then rise again after three days. Peter began to rebuke Jesus, and then Jesus rebuked Peter, saying that he was not setting his mind on God’s interests but man’s. Jesus is telling them this because it is on His mind.

(Mark 8:31-33) “And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. {32} And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. {33} But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and *\*said*, "Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."

While on the mountain, Jesus met with Moses and Elijah, and He spoke to them about His departure which was about to happen at Jerusalem. Jesus had gone to the mountain to pray about this, as it was weighing on His mind.

(Mark 9:4) “Elijah appeared to them along with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus.”

(Luke 9:30-31) “And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, {31} who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.”

After Jesus was transfigured and they were going down the mountain, what do you think Jesus was talking to them about? He was once again telling them that He was going to die and rise from the dead. They did not understand and began discussing what He meant.

(Mark 9:9-10) “As they were coming down from the mountain, He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man rose from the dead. {10} They seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead meant.”

We have not come to Mark 10 yet, but while they were going on to Jerusalem, what do you think Jesus was talking to them about. He was telling them that He was going to be delivered to the

chief priests and they would condemn Him to death and hand Him over to the Gentiles. He told them that they would mock Him, spit on Him, and scourge Him, and kill Him, and that three days later He would rise again. Jesus kept telling them over and over again what was about to happen.

(Mark 10:32-34) "They were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking on ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were fearful. And again He took the twelve aside and began to tell them what was going to happen to Him, {33} *saying*, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles. {34} "They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill *Him*, and three days later He will rise again."

In Isaiah 50:6-7, Isaiah had prophesied that the Messiah would give His back to those who strike Him, and He would not cover His face from humiliation and spitting. Isaiah prophesied the very things that Jesus was telling His disciples would happen to Him. Isaiah also said that the Messiah would set His face like flint. That is exactly what Jesus has been doing. He kept talking about this with the disciples because that was His focus. He had set His face like flint on finishing His mission.

(Isaiah 50:6-7) "I gave My back to those who strike *Me*, And My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting. {7} For the Lord GOD helps Me, Therefore, I am not disgraced; Therefore, I have set My face like flint, And I know that I will not be ashamed."

A mission is what you are going to do. It is your goal that you are going to reach. In Greek, there is a word called telos (Strong's G5056), and it means a point in the distance or a goal. In John 19:28-30, while Jesus was on the cross and knew that all things had already been accomplished, said, "It is finished!" The word accomplished is teleo (Strong's G5055), which comes from telos. Jesus knew that He had reached His goal. He had fulfilled His mission, which was to die for our sins. He knew that He was the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, and that His mission was now accomplished. Then, He said, "It is finished!" The word for finished was again, teleo. Jesus had accomplished His mission.

(John 19:28-30) "After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished (teleo, Strong's G5055), to fulfill (teleioo, Strong's G5048) the Scripture, said, "I am thirsty." {29} A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a *branch of hyssop* and brought it up to His mouth. {30} Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished! (teleo, Strong's G5055)" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit."

Two things are very important in our lives. We need to know who we are and what we have been called to do. We need to have vision for our lives, and we need to know our mission, the things God has called us to do. Knowing who we are and what we have been called to do keeps us on track in our lives. Jesus set His face like flint and did not depart from His mission. In Mark 1:38, people were looking for Jesus, and when His disciples found Him and told Him this, He said, "Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for." He knew that He came to preach the gospel and to give His life as a ransom, and He

did not depart from His mission. He set His face like flint to accomplish His mission, and when He was about to breathe His last breath, He said, “It is finished.”

(Mark 1:38) “He said to them, “Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for.”

### 3. **Jesus’ Core Values** (Mark 9:14-50)

Knowing who we are and what we are called to do are important, but knowing how we are going to do those things is very important. Our Core Values are how we are going to do things. Jesus was very clear about how He was going to do things. There are numerous passages that speak of Jesus’ core values. I am going to limit our discussion to just five that we find here in Mark 9.

#### a. **Love** (Mark 9:31, Eph 5:2, John 15:13, Eph 5:25, Col 3:14, John 13:34-35)

The first core value is not immediately evident. The word, “love,” is not mentioned in the text. Jesus said to His disciples that “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.” Jesus had come to give His life as a ransom for many. Jesus had come to pay the penalty for our sins. Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem to lay His life down for us.

(Mark 9:31) “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.”

In Ephesians 5:2, Paul exhorted all of us to walk in love, just as Christ also loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. What Jesus told His disciples that He was going to do was the ultimate demonstration of love.

(Eph 5:2) “and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.”

Notice what John wrote about it in John 15:12. He wrote, “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.” Jesus was on His way to demonstrate the greatest love possible. Love is the greatest core value that we can have.

(John 15:13) “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.”

Back to Ephesians 5, after telling everyone to walk in love, Paul addresses marriage. He tells husbands to love their wives as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her. Love is the most important core value in a marriage. The love that God gave and God wants us to give is a sacrificial love. It is this kind of love that bonds people together. Paul wrote in Colossians that love is the perfect bond of unity.

(Eph 5:25) “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,”

(Col 3:14) “Beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity.”

It is not just something that bonds us together; it is the ultimate witness to the world. Jesus commanded us to love one another, and that by that love all men will know that we are His disciples. Love is the ultimate core value, and what Jesus has been telling His disciples is that He was going to be rejected by men, mocked, spit upon, turned over to the Gentiles and to be crucified. Why? Because Jesus was demonstrating perfect love. It was a core value for Him, and it needs to be a core value for us.

(John 13:34-35) “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. {35} By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

**b. Prayer (Mark 9:14-29)**

The second core value that I want to look at is prayer. In Mark 9:14-29, the disciples were not able to cast out the demon from the boy. After Jesus cast it out, the disciples asked Jesus why they were not able to do it. He told them that this kind only comes out by prayer. Jesus was going to carry out His assignment and mission by total dependence and reliance upon His Father. We saw in John 5 that He did not do anything that He did not see the Father doing. He did nothing on His own initiative. Jesus was always in synch with the Father, and prayer was a major part of that.

(Mark 9:29) “And He said to them, “This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer.”

We saw in Mark 1:35 that Jesus got up early in the morning, while it was still dark, and went to a secluded place and prayed. That was His pattern. That was how He was going to stay on course, and that was where He would find out what the Father was doing. That was where He was going to receive power and strength. Jesus spent daily time in prayer.

(Mark 1:35) “In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left *the house*, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.”

In Mark 9:2, Jesus took Peter, James, and John up to the mountain, where He was transfigured. Mark does not tell us why He went there, but Luke does tell us very clearly. Jesus went there to pray. He was burdened with His upcoming death in Jerusalem, and He went up there to speak with His Father about it.

(Luke 9:28) “Some eight days after these sayings, He took along Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray.”

The disciples finally got the message. They asked Him to teach them how to pray, so He taught them the Lord’s prayer, which was really a model prayer.

(Luke 11:1-4) “It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples.” {2} And He said to them, “When you pray, say: ‘Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. {3} ‘Give us each day our daily bread. {4} ‘And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.’”

We find that after Jesus had risen from the dead, the disciples were all gathered in one place in Jerusalem. What were they doing? They were praying. They were continually devoting themselves to prayer. They were not going to rely on their own power and strength. They were not going to do things on their own initiative. They had learned from Jesus to take everything to the Father in prayer and depend on Him. This was a core value for them.

(Acts 1:14) “These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with *the* women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.”

After Pentecost, there were now thousands of new believers, and we find in Acts 2:42 that they were devoting themselves to prayer. The early church was devoted to prayer. It was a core value and how they were going to accomplish their work on earth.

(Acts 2:42) “They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

The American church builds on a dynamic music ministry, a great Sunday School program, and with excellent preaching. The early church had great teaching from the apostles, but the primary way was not in programs, but in relationships. They had relationship with the Father through prayer and the word, and they had relationship with one another through fellowship and breaking of bread. I believe this missing element of the church will be restored to the church in these last days. The church will begin to realize that it needs more power. The church will realize that it needs more guidance and direction from the Father, and will stop doing things on its own initiative. There will be a restoration of the core value of prayer.

#### c. **Humility** (Mark 9:33-37)

When Jesus and the disciples came to Capernaum they entered the house. Jesus had moved from Nazareth and this was His home base, so they were probably in Jesus' house. Jesus questioned them, “What were you discussing on the way?” Jesus knew what His disciples were talking about. He knew what the Pharisees and religious leaders were thinking in Mark 2. It says that Jesus was aware in His Spirit what they were reasoning in their hearts. The disciples could not hide their thoughts or discussions from Jesus. And, neither can we. God knows all our thoughts. He hears all of our conversations. He sees everything that we do.

(Mark 9:33) “They came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house, He *began* to question them, “What were you discussing on the way?”

(Mark 2:8) “Immediately Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, “Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts?”

The disciples kept silent. They knew that they had been busted, and they were ashamed. The disciples had been discussing which one of them was the greatest. This was not the only time they discussed this matter. There are at least two additional occasions that they discussed this same thing. This lesson on humility and servant leadership was something that Jesus needed to address with them. It was a core value and they needed to get it right. God wants His leaders to be humble servants, not self-seeking opportunists. After sitting down, Jesus called the twelve and said to them, “If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.”

(Mark 9:34-35) “But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which *of them* was the greatest. {35} 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.”

The disciples were concerned about who was first, and who was the greatest. Jesus told them that they needed to learn to be last not first. They needed to put others before themselves. Paul wrote about this in Philippians 2. In verse five, he said, “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.” What was that attitude? Jesus did nothing from selfishness or empty conceit. Jesus had humility of mind, and regarded others as more important. Jesus did not just look out for His own interests, but He looked out for the interests of others. Jesus humbled and emptied Himself, and took the form of a bond-servant. Even though He existed in the form of God, as part of the trinity, He humbled Himself and became a servant. He further humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death on the cross. Jesus wanted His disciples to learn this lesson of humility, just as He wants you and I to learn this same lesson.

(Phil 2:3-8) “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; {4} do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. {5} Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, {6} who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, {7} but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. {8} Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

Then, Jesus took a little child in His arms. The child represented a humble soul. Little children are not concerned about being over other people. Little children are humble and impressionable; they are teachable. Little children are not usually boastful. Jesus was telling His disciples that they needed to repent of their pride and humble themselves like this little child.

(Mark 9:36-37) “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.”

Then, Jesus said whoever receives a child like this in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me.” Jesus was telling them that whatever kindnesses they extend to little ones, will be done unto the Lord. In Matthew 25, Jesus gave the parable of the separation of the sheep and goats. In verse forty, He said, “to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.” Jesus wanted them to stop striving to be first, and to humble themselves and serve others.

(Matt 25:40) “The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even* the least *of them*, you did it to Me.’”

#### d. **Peace** (Mark 9:38-41)

The first core value was love, and the second was prayer. God wants us to accomplish things through His leading, not our initiative. He wants us to accomplish things through His power, and not on our own efforts. The third core value was humility. God wants us to be humble and to consider others as more important than ourselves. The fourth core value is peace.

Then, John said to Jesus, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to prevent him because he was not following us.” Jesus told him not to hinder him, for there is no one who will perform a miracle in His name and then speak evil of Him. Jesus went on, “For he who is not against us is for us.”

(Mark 9:38-40) “John said to Him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to prevent him because he was not following us." {39} But Jesus said, "Do not hinder him, for there is no one who will 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.”

I believe that this is a great message for the church today. There are lots of people wanting to build their own little kingdoms. That was the mentality of John and the disciples. They wanted to stop anyone who was not following them and part of their group. Jesus told them not to hinder them from doing His work. We need a bigger kingdom mindset.

Our church is going to support a number of other ministries next year that are not part of our church. One of those is called “Project Defending Life.” Many of the people in the pro-life group are Catholics. They go out twice a week and peacefully protest the abortions. Last month they were able to turn eleven women away who were going to get an abortion. That means that they saved eleven babies from being murdered. That is a great ministry. Karen joins them every week to protest at the abortion clinics. There is another couple from Calvary Chapel East Albuquerque that also goes. This is a wonderful thing; different churches joining together for the common goal of saving innocent lives. Just because a group is not part of our church does not mean we should not support it. We should not hinder kingdom work.

Then, Jesus said, “For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as followers of Christ, truly I say to you, he will not lose his reward.” This falls right in line with Matthew 25, where Jesus said, “inasmuch as you have done it to the least of them, you have done it unto Me.”

(Mark 9:41) “For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as *followers* of Christ, truly I say to you, he will not lose his reward.”

Why have I called this core value, peace? I have called it peace because of the verse fifty, which states, “and be at peace with one another. Jesus wants us to be at peace with others, even if they are not following us or part of our group. We should not hinder them, but be peace with them. Jesus summarized the last two core values by saying that we need to be salty and be at peace with one another. In the last core value, Jesus talks about not giving offense to others through our lives. We need to live righteous lives that do not offend others.

(Mark 9:-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.”

e. **Righteousness** (Not Causing Others To Stumble) (Mark 9:42-50)

Sometimes the Bible is literal and sometimes it is figurative. In this last core value, Jesus uses figurative language. He talks about tying a heavy millstone around your neck and being cast into a sea would be better than causing a little one to stumble. Jesus talked about cutting off our hands or feet, or plucking out our eyes. This is all figurative language and the main thrust of the

passage is that we should be aggressive in the way that we deal with sin in our lives so that we do not cause others to stumble. The context of these examples is in causing others to stumble. When we stumble and sin, it can cause others to stumble, particularly younger, and less mature believers. Therefore, we need to do everything possible to keep from stumbling and from causing others to stumble.

(Mark 9:42-50) "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} "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} "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} "If your eye causes you to stumble, throw 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 said that it is better to cut off your hand than having two hands and go into hell. The Greek word for hell here is *geena*, and Jesus refers to it as a place of unquenchable fire. Many Bibles translate *hades* as hell, which I believe is a serious mistake. *Hades* refers to the place of death, not the place of eternal damnation. *Hades* is the same word as *sheol* in the Old Testament. So, Jesus is not referring to the place of the dead; He is referring to the place of judgment, which takes place after death.

When I think of our hands, I think of the things that we do or make. I do not think our hands cause us to stumble. I think that sin originates in the heart of man, not in the hands. The hands do what the heart directs them to do. But, we need to be careful about the things that we do, that they do not cause us to stumble or our brothers.

Next, Jesus said it is better to cut your foot off and enter life lame than go to hell with two feet. I believe the feet refer to where we go and our paths. Solomon wrote that we are to watch the path of our feet so that our ways will be established. We are not to turn to the right or to the left, and we are to turn our foot from evil. This is exactly what Jesus is wanting us to do. We need to make sure that our feet do not take us down the path of evil. Instead, we are to turn away from evil. We need to watch our paths, the places that we walk.

(Pr 4:26-27) "Watch the path of your feet and all your ways will be established. {27} Do not turn to the right nor to the left; turn your foot from evil."

Next, Jesus said that it is better to throw out one of your eyes than go into hell with two eyes. Our eyes speak of our vision, and also the gate to our minds and hearts. What is our attention focused on? What are the things that we are allowing to come into our hearts? Solomon wrote for us to let our eyes look directly ahead of us, and our gaze to be fixed straight in front of us.

(Pr 4:25) "Let your eyes look directly ahead and let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you."

The main point of all these examples is that we need to be radical in our response to sin in our lives. We need to do whatever we can to repent and live godly, righteous, and holy lives that do not cause others to stumble.

Our core values are the way that we live our lives and do the things that we do. We need to be very careful how we do what we do. Jesus had other core values, but I limited our discussion to the core values in our passage in Mark. Today, we are encouraged to lay our lives down for others, pray and place our faith and dependency on Jesus, live humble lives, and to consider others more important than ourselves. We are called to live at peace with one another. Finally, we are called to be the salt of the earth, to live righteous lives that give no offense to others.

### Conclusion and Applications

As we close this morning, I want to finish with Mark 10:45, where Jesus said, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” Jesus knew exactly who He was. He was the Son of Man and the Son of God. Jesus knew His mission; He knew why He had come. He came to serve, to be a humble servant and to give His life as a ransom for many. His core values were important. He had to live by prayer and dependence on the Father. He was tempted in all things, just as we are, yet He was without sin. Even when He was reviled, He did not revile in return. He lived a perfect, sinless life, and as a result of that, he could offer His life as a sacrifice for our sins. His core vision, mission, and core values were all important.

(Mark 10:45) “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

(Heb 4:15) “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin.”

(1 Pet 2:22-23) “WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; {23} and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously;”

This morning, do you have vision for your life? Has God revealed to you who He has made you to be? Do you know the gifts and abilities that He has given you? Do you know where you fit in the body of Christ?

Do you know your mission? Do you know what God has called you to do? Paul encouraged Archippus to take heed to the ministry that he had received in the Lord, so that he would fulfill it. Do you know your ministry? Are you taking heed to that ministry so that you can fulfill it? I want to be like Jesus who said, “It is finished!” I want to be like Paul who said that he had finished his course and completed his ministry.

(Col 4:17) “Say to Archippus, ‘Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.’”

Are you living your lives with God’s core values? Are you living a life that is characterized by prayer and dependence on God? Are you humbly serving? Are you being the salt He has called you to be?

**Introduction** (Ezra 7:10, Acts 20:24, Mark 9:30-31)

1. **Jesus' Vision** (Is 9:6, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 4:18-21, Mark 8:27-30, 9:2-8)
  
2. **Jesus' Mission** (Mark 9:30-32, John 1:29, Mark 8:31-33, 9:4, 9:9-10, 10:32-34, Is 50:6-7, John 19:28-30, Mark 1:38)
  
3. **Jesus' Core Values** (Mark 9:14-50)
  - a. **Love** (Mark 9:31, Eph 5:2, John 15:13, Eph 5:25, Col 3:14, John 13:34-35)
  
  - b. **Prayer** (Mark 9:29, 1:35, 9:2, Luke 9:28, 11:1-4, Acts 1:14, 2:42)
  
  - c. **Humility** (Mark 9:33-37, 2:8, Phil 2:3-8, Matt 25:40)
  
  - d. **Peace** (Mark 9:38-41, Matt 25, Mark 9:50)
  
  - e. **Righteousness** (Mark 9:42-50, Pr 4:25-27)

**Conclusion and Applications** (Mark 10:45, Heb 4:14, 1 Pet 2:22-24, Col 4:17)