

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for June 25, 2017

Kingdom Allies and Enemies
Mark 9:38-50

I. Kingdom friends (9:38-41)

A. The confusion about Kingdom friends (9:38)

John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us."

-Jesus just taught them to receive even children in their service (9:37)

-John asked how far that spirit of service and welcoming must go

-It is almost as if John is searching for some vindication to affirm that he is in fact understanding Jesus

-John asked concerning some random exorcist

-We don't know anything about this exorcist

-He was simply casting out demons and he was doing it in the name of Jesus

-John and the disciples tried to stop this man based off an assumption

-They assumed that this man did not truly know or follow Jesus because he was not physically with the disciples following Jesus

-John and the disciples were like Joshua back in Numbers 11:26-29

-Numbers 11:26-29 Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. 27 And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." 28 And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, "My lord Moses, stop them." 29 But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!"

B. The clarification about Kingdom friends (9:39)

39 But Jesus said, "Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me."

-Jesus did not give John and the disciples any vindication for their actions

- Instead, Jesus surprised them by revealing that this exorcist was a Kingdom friend
- How do we know that he is a friend?
- “for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me”
- Paul uses a similar argument in 1 Corinthians 12
 - 1 Corinthians 12:3 *Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.*
- Therefore, as a general rule, people speaking well of Christ are Kingdom friends
- However, there are exceptions to this general rule
 - Matthew 7:21-23 *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ 23 And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’*
- How do we reconcile these two sayings of Jesus?
- The key is the time element
 - Jesus said, “no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me”
 - However, given enough time, the truth will come out

C. The criterion for Kingdom friends (9:40)

40 For the one who is not against us is for us.

- This simple axiom or principle is the positive way of identifying the friends of the Kingdom
- Jesus stated the reverse of this principle as well at other times in His ministry
 - Matthew 12:30 *Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.*
- Ultimately, there is no middle ground when it comes to following Jesus
 - No one can be on the fence about Jesus
 - His identity and requirements for discipleship demand an all or nothing response
- Thus, if anyone is not against Jesus at this point, they are for Him
- Jesus had many followers beyond the 12

- At one point, Jesus sent out 72 to preach (Luke 10:1-17)
- John needed to look beyond the 12 at this point and realize the many followers of Christ
- Paul had to do this same thing in his ministry while he was imprisoned
 - Philippians 1:15-18 *Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. 16 The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. 17 The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. 18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.*

D. The conduct toward Kingdom friends (9:41)

41 For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.

- The standard requires more than not interfering with Kingdom work
- The standard goes beyond and says that there must be support for the work of the Kingdom
 - Even if it is so small as a cup of water, it is still noticeable to God
- Jesus stated that there will be a reward for those who uphold and support the friends of the Kingdom
- This was the opposite of John's treatment of the random exorcist

II. Kingdom foes (9:42-48)

A. The enemy outside (9:42)

42 "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.

- Jesus has harsh words for those in opposition to the Kingdom
- How can this opposition look?
 - Causing or leading other believers to sin
- Jesus stated that it would be better for this Kingdom foe to be killed violently
 - How would this be better?
 - What would this be better than?
 - This violent physical death would be better than facing God's judgment for leading His children into sin

-Luke 17:1-2 *And he said to his disciples, "Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! 2 It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin.*

-Kingdom foes bring the temptation to the child of God

-Paul taught against this in very practical ways

-Romans 14:13, 21 *Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother... It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble.*

B. The enemy inside (9:43-48)

43 And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. 45 And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. 47 And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, 48 'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'

-Jesus then addressed an enemy that we can all relate to—the enemy of our own flesh

-Jesus gives three different examples: one's hands, feet, and eyes

-Why does he refer to these body parts?

-Hands refer to jobs or tasks

-In other words, what you do

-Feet refer to places or visits

-In other words, where you go

-Eyes refer to thoughts or desires

-In other words, what you think

-Jesus was not advocating self-mutilation in these verses

-Even if someone chops off a hand or a foot, it does not mean that they will stop sinning

-All sin is traced back into the heart of mankind because our hearts are evil and wicked (Jeremiah 17:9)

-Instead, He was revealing the radical approach one must have to removing sin from their own life

-To call yourself a friend of God and be comfortable with sin is contradictory

- A Kingdom citizen will fight relentlessly against their own flesh and passions
- Why?
- Because, a Kingdom citizen knows what is at stake with this foe—eternal life
 - Jesus mentions hell in all three descriptions
 - In fact, verses 44 and 46, which are in brackets or footnoted in your bible give the full description that is found in verse 48
 - While verses 44 and 46 are not found in the earliest manuscripts of the New Testament, Jesus’ description of hell still stands based on verse 48
 - He draws from the Old Testament (Isaiah 66:24) to give frightful color to the picture of eternal punishment
 - Isaiah 66:24 *“And they shall go out and look on the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against me. For their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.”*
- Jesus’ teaching is simple—sacrifice in this life, not in the next
- Do not tolerate the foe or enemy of your flesh, it’s not worth it!
 - Galatians 5:24 *And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*
 - Colossians 3:5 *Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*
 - Titus 2:11-12 *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,*

III. Kingdom fervor (9:49-50)

A. The motivation (for Kingdom fervor) (9:49)

49 For everyone will be salted with fire.

- Salt was known to do many things, one of which was purifying
- Old Testament references commanded that certain offerings be offered unto the Lord with salt, so as to purify the offering
 - Leviticus 2:13 *You shall season all your grain offerings with salt. You shall not let the salt of the covenant with your God be missing*

from your grain offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt.

-Ezekiel 43:24 You shall present them before the LORD, and the priests shall sprinkle salt on them and offer them up as a burnt offering to the LORD.

-Jesus here, is saying that you will be (salted) purified with fire

-Fire seems to refer to the trials, tribulations and persecutions that believers experience in this life

-1 Peter 1:6-7 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

-Thus, Jesus seems to be saying to the disciples that they will be purified (salted) with persecution (fire)

-The demands of living as a holy Kingdom citizen are high and demand sacrifice

-Some of these sacrifices might even be persecution and suffering unto death

-Even so, Jesus promises that this is for the sake of our sanctification and purity

-We can be motivated to Kingdom fervor because Jesus is purifying us through trials

B. The metaphor (for Kingdom fervor) (9:50a)

50 Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again?

-The impure salt of 1st century Palestine was prone to this deterioration

-The same spiritual deterioration could take place in the disciples

-They could fail to respond to purifying effects of persecution

-They could turn their backs and become bitter toward God

-Instead they rose up to meet the persecution head on

-They embraced it so that the sacrifice of their lives were still seasoned with salt as an offering unto God

C. The mandate (for Kingdom fervor) (9:50b)

Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

-Jesus ends with a final command for the disciples to respond well to suffering

- They must be purified by God's work and be at peace with one another
- They were not to rise against each other's ministries causing divides in the church
- Instead, they were to maintain peace and help each other in offering pure sacrifices of their lives unto God