

# The Disciples Disputing

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 09 February 2020

Preacher: Rev RJ Campbell

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Seeking the Lord's blessing, let us now turn back to the portion of scripture that we read together in the New Testament in the Gospel of Mark and chapter 9 and we'll read from verse 33.

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

But they held their peace, for by the way they had disputed among themselves who should be the greatest. 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 servant of all.

And he took a child and set him in the midst of them. And when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me.

And he, and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me. And John answering him, saith, Master, we shall one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us.

[ 1 : 1 7 ] And we forbade him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not, for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name that can likely speak evil of me.

For he that is not against us is on our side. For whosoever shall give a cup of water to drink in my name, because he belonged to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hung about his neck, and he was cast into the sea, and so on.

As we continue our study of Mark's gospel, and chapter 9, we have already studied how the Lord helped a father after the disciples had failed to do so by healing his son, who was demon-possessed.

And we'll read that when he was coming to the house, the disciples asked him privately, why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, this kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting.

[ 2 : 3 4 ] Here Jesus is rebuking his disciples, for earlier he had spoken of the people as a faithless generation.

And then he spoke to the father of the boy in a more personal way, confronting him with his lack of faith. And now again he speaks to the disciples regarding their failure to heal the boy, that it was due to their lack of faith and their lack of prayer.

Prayer of course is a demonstration of faith. And as they departed and went through Galilee, Jesus again began to teach the disciples about his death.

But Mark tells us, but they understood not that saying and were afraid to ask him. The disciples did not understand any of what Jesus was teaching them about his death and resurrection.

This was now the second time that Jesus had predicted his death to all the disciples. Although he did make a prediction to Peter, James and John as they were coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration.

[ 3 : 54 ] As we see in verse 12. And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first and restoreth all things. And how it is written of the Son of Man that he must suffer many things and be set at naught.

But it didn't make any more sense to the disciples now than the first time that they heard the Lord speaking about his death and resurrection.

When he told them the first time, recorded for us in chapter 8. Peter took the Lord aside and he rebuked him.

Peter was confused about the whole business of a cross. It didn't fit in with his idea of what the Messiah should be.

And in turn, we know that the Lord had to rebuke Peter. Peter, get thee behind me, Satan. For you are not desiring the things that are of God, but that be of men.

[ 5 : 09 ] And then, of course, came the mountain of transfiguration experience. When the Father ministered unto the Son. And when Moses and Elijah spoke to Jesus of the exodus that he was going to accomplish at Jerusalem.

They knew that Jesus was the Messiah. And they knew that he was going to establish a kingdom. But they were thinking about an earthly kingdom.

A political and national kingdom. They could not grasp that the kingdom was going to be a spiritual kingdom. Made up of those who would be saved from sin through faith in Jesus Christ.

And that the kingdom was for all people. Not just for Israel. They could not understand that Jesus had come in order to lay down his life for sinners.

In order to establish this kingdom. Such a thought was just unthinkable to them. Matthew records for us that as Jesus spoke to them about his death on this occasion.

[ 6 : 30 ] That the disciples were exceeding sorry. They were grieved. However, their sorrow and grief didn't last long.

For as they continued on their journey. The disciples were disputing among themselves. Who should be the greatest in his kingdom that Jesus was going to establish.

And so we read that when he came to Capernaum and been in the house. He asked them. What was it that he disputed among yourselves by the way?

But they held their peace. For by the way they had disputed among themselves. Who should be the greatest? Luke tells us that Jesus knew their thoughts.

Mark records us for us here that when Jesus questioned them about their disputing or their arguing along the way. That they remained silent.

[ 7 : 36 ] Perhaps they felt guilty about their desire to be the greatest. According to Matthew they eventually confessed to Jesus what their arguing was all about.

And so they asked Jesus. Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Jesus knew all the time what they were disputing about.

And he sat down. Which would be the usual manner of a rabbi or a teacher. They would sit down. And those around them would be standing.

And he called the twelve. And he said unto them. If any man desire to be first. The same shall be last of all.

And servant of all. In other words he is teaching them. That if we desire spiritual greatness.

- [ 8 : 41 ] Then the way to accomplish that. Is to serve others. And to do that we must deliberately choose the lowest and the most humble place.
- Jesus himself was the greatest example of this. Because this was the key to his whole life. He came, he says, not to be served. But to be a servant. And to serve others. And this he illustrates.
- Because he took a child. And he set him in the midst of them. And when he had taken him in his arms. He said unto them. Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name. Receiveth me. And whosoever shall receive me. Receiveth not me. But him that sent me. The key teaching here is humility.
- [ 9 : 46 ] And that is not something that comes to us naturally. It is something that is very unpopular in our self-assertive world.
- By setting this child in their midst. Jesus is stressing humility. For that is the exact opposite.
- Of what the disciples were thinking at this time. They were only concerned about their social status. Who is the greatest in the kingdom?
- Matthew says. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child. The same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.
- And of course this is the teaching, is it not? Of the whole word of God. James writes in his letter in chapter 4.
- [ 10 : 49 ] God resisteth the proud. But giveth grace unto the humble. He goes on to say. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord.
- And he shall lift you up. Jesus says. For whosoever exalted himself shall be abased. And he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.
- Matthew records for us that as he sets this child before them. That Jesus said. Verily I say unto you.
- Except ye be converted. And become as little children. Ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.
- Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child. The same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.
- [ 11 : 48 ] Jesus is teaching that the surest mark of conversion is humility. But in the manner that he is here replying to the disciples.
- He is warning them. And pointing to them that really they are asking the wrong question. The question. The question.
- The real question. Is not who will be the greatest in the kingdom. But to make sure. That you are found.
- In the kingdom. Here Jesus is insisting to make sure that they are converted. That that is the most important question of all.
- He replies. By bringing that before them. By emphasizing that point. Verily I say unto you. Except ye be converted.
- [ 12 : 57 ] And become as little children. Ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child. The same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.
- To make sure that they belong to the kingdom. Is the most vital question of all.
- How can we be sure then. That we are converted. It is when we humble ourselves.
- And trust in Jesus alone. To save us. That we can be sure. That we are converted.

- When we humble ourselves. And come with our nothingness. And come to embrace.
- [ 13 : 58 ] Jesus Christ. And trust in him. Alone to save us. Then we can be assured.
- That we are converted. Because in the culture of this day in Palestine. Children was nothing.
- They were looked upon as nothing. They would always be in the background. And that is why Jesus takes this child.
- What people looked upon as nothing. He takes this child. And he sets him in the midst of them. Sets the child in the midst of them.
- And says. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself. As this little child. Who will come with nothingness.
- [ 14 : 55 ] Who will humble himself. As this little child. The same is greatest. In the kingdom of heaven.
- Now this humility. Does not come from ourselves. But comes from a changed nature. For in ourselves.
- We are boastful. And we are full of pride. We are a proud people. So it needs a changed nature.
- To come. To humble ourselves. And come with nothingness. Into the presence of Jesus Christ. And to trust him alone.
- To save us. Faith is a humbling grace. Remember the Pharisee.
- [ 15 : 55 ] And the publican. That went up to the temple. To pray. The Pharisee stood. And prayed thus with himself. God. I thank thee.
- That I am not. As other men are. Extortioners. Unjust. Adulterers. Or even as. This publican.
- He gives thanks. That he is. Different. As he. Compars himself. To this publican. You see.
- This is what is true. Regarding those. Who humble themselves. The humble. Do not compare. Themselves. To others.
- But they see themselves. As they are. Before God. Not as they are. In comparison. To others.
- [ 16 : 52 ] They know. What God sees. And they plead. For his. Grace. And for his. Forgiveness. And like the publican. Standing afar off.
- Would not lift up. So much. As his eyes. Into heaven. But smote upon. Expressing. God. Be merciful. To me. A sinner.
- And Jesus. Gives the verdict. I tell you. This man. Went down. To his house. Justified. Rather than the other. For everyone. That exalted.
- Themselves. Shall be abased. And he. That humble. Of himself. Shall be. Exalted. And another thing.
- Is this. That. As we. Humble. Ourselves. Before God. We become. More humble. Towards. Each other.
- [ 17 : 50 ] Jesus. Wants. His disciples. To be. Like. Little children. Here. After Jesus. Taught them. That they must be.
- Humble. Like. Little children. He taught them. How they should work. How they should work. That out. In their. Relationship. To. To one another. Jesus said.
- Whosoever. Shall receive. One of such. Children. In my name. Receiveth me. And. Whosoever. Shall receive.

Me. Receiveth. Not me. But him. That. Sent me. Here. He is. Telling them. Of how.

They. They should. Relate. To. One. Another. The test of. Humility. And. Loving service. Is that we. Receive. Each other.

[ 18 : 47 ] In the name. Of. Christ. And to receive. Christ. Is. To receive. The father. While later on. Jesus warns us. Against. Offending. Each other. But here. He is. Emphasizing. The fact. That we are. To receive. Each other.

In the name. Of Christ. In Galatians. Chapter 6. We read. These words. Brethren.

If a man. Be overtaken. In a fault. Ye which are. Spiritual. Restore. Such a one. In the spirit. Of meekness. Considering.

Thyself. Lest thou. Also. Be tempted. Bear ye. One. Another's. Burdens. And so. Fulfill. The law. Of Christ.

[ 19 : 41 ] For if a man. Think himself. To be something. When he is nothing. He deceiveth himself. But let every man. Prove his own work.

And then. Shall he have rejoicing. In himself alone. And not. In another. I think. That is an explanation. Of what Jesus means here.

When he speaks of. Us humbling ourselves. And of us. Receiving. One another. In the name.

Of Christ. He is teaching us. That we are to. Humble ourselves. And seek his grace. And mercy. That we are to.

Confess our need. And in childlike humility. Seek his forgiveness. And coming to him. With our need. And not with.

[ 20 : 36 ] Our merit. That is. The Pharisee. In the temple. He came to Jesus. With what he considered. To be his merits.

But the publican. Came with his need. And that is what. Jesus requires. Of me and you. To come to him.

With our needs. And not our merits. Jesus welcomes. All who comes to him. With his. Childlike. Humility. And he teaches us.

That if he receives them. And welcomes them. Then. So should we. The grace of God. Instills within us. A humility. That teaches us. To despise. No child. Child. That he has. That he has. Received.

[ 21 : 33 ] But in humility. To be. Mindful. Of. One another. In Romans chapter 12. We read. Be kindly.

Affectionated. One to another. With brotherly love. And honor. Perfering. One. Another. Peter exhorts us.

Be ye all of one mind. Having compassion. One of another. Love us brethren. Be pitiful. Be courteous. Not rendering evil for evil.

Or railing for railing. But country wise. Blessing. Knowing. That ye are there. Unto called. That ye should inherit. A blessing.

And so here then. Jesus. Exalts them. Whosoever shall receive.

[ 22 : 29 ] One of such children. In my name. Receiveth me. And whosoever shall receive me. Receiveth not to me. But to him. That sent me.

And then John. Records for us. That John said. Master. We saw one casting out devils in thy name. And he followeth not us.

And we forbade him. Because he followeth not us. It is not clear why John is raising this point.

Is he making a confession to Jesus. And acknowledging that he had failed to accept someone else's ministry. With proper humility. Or it may be.

That he is raising an objection. And claiming that the disciples surely. Are at least better. Than those who went round ministering in Jesus name.

[ 23 : 27 ] But were not part of their group. Of their fellowship. Jesus replied. Forbid him not.

For there is no man. Which shall do a miracle in my name. That can likely speak evil of me. For he that is not against us. Is on our part.

But look. What John's objection. To this man's ministry is. Twice brought before us. He followeth not us.

There is always a danger with us. That when we do the gospel work differently to others. That we file an objection.

I am not here speaking of. Important principles and matters of doctrine.

[ 24 : 31 ] This man wasn't teaching false doctrine. This man was not living an immoral life. He was just not following them.

And they just wouldn't accept this man. Because he wasn't one of their number. The man was casting out demons.

Something that the disciples were. Unable to do so. Recently because of their lack of faith. And he was doing so. In the name of Jesus. So that he was not.

Against their ministry. But he didn't belong. To their group. He didn't belong to. Their fellowship. And there is always a danger with us.

When others do gospel work. Differently to us. That we file an objection. Against them. J.C. Ryle says.

[ 25 : 32 ] That some. In every period of church history. Have spent their lives. Copying. The mistake of John. They have labored.

To stop every man. Who will not work for Christ. In their way. From working for Christ at all. They have imagined. In their petty. Self conceit.

That no man. Can be a soldier. Of Christ. Unless he wears their uniform. And fights. In their regiment. And he goes on to say. Above all.

We must praise God. If souls are converted. And Christ is magnified. No matter who the preacher may be. And to which church. He may. Belong.

It is a great mistake. To have. This attitude. That. John. Was having. We are better. Than you.

[ 26 : 29 ] And the disciples. Displayed that. On so many occasions. And here is John. And he is displaying. That self same attitude.

On this occasion. The attitude of. We are better. Than him. The attitude of. My church. Is better than. Your church. Sometimes you can even.

Try to get an. Advantage over others. By being seen. To be more broken. For our sin. Than others. Jesus says to them.

Forbid him not. For there is no man. Which shall do. A miracle. In my name. That can likely. Speak evil of me.

For he that is not. Against us. Is. On our. Part. God. God. And then he goes on. And he says. For whosoever.

[ 27 : 27 ] Shall give a cup of water. To drink in my name. Because you belong to Christ. Verily I say unto you. He shall not lose. His reward.

In other words. Jesus is saying. Whosoever. Shall give a cup of water. To drink in my name. Because you belong to me. Verily I say unto you.

He shall not lose. His reward. What the Lord is doing here. Is emphasizing that the issue. Is not a question of whether. One belongs to.

A particular group. Whether it's the twelve disciples. Or. Another group. Or whether. Others do. The gospel work. In our ways. The great issue is.

Whether we belong to Christ. Not to which group. We belong to. But do we belong. To Christ.

[ 28 : 25 ] That is a tie. That binds. All believers. Together. Jesus calls us. To embrace.

All. Who truly. Belong. To him. Here in chapter 9. This man. Who didn't belong.

To the group of twelve. He was casting out. A demon. Maybe there was. A little resentment. Or maybe jealousy. In the heart of John.

Because as we have noted. Recently. The disciples failed. To do this very thing. But here is a man. That wasn't along. With their number.

Who didn't belong. To their group. Not in their circle. Of followers. And he was doing this. Very powerful thing. That they had failed.

[ 29 : 18 ] To do. He was casting out. A demon. In the name. Of Jesus. See. We must always.

We must always. Be aware. Of the great sin. Of resentment. And jealousy. When we may see. The work.

Of the gospel. Progressing in other places. Flourishing. In other places. And not among ourselves. We must.

We must. Be aware. Less resentment. And jealousy. Creeps. Into our hearts. And we do this. In the mistake. Of John. I think because.

They're doing it. Perhaps. In a different way. That it is not. A true work. Of the gospel. Because they're doing it. In a different way. To the way. We. Are doing it.

[ 30 : 16 ] Or. To come. To the point. Where. We have this attitude. That our way. Is the only way. We must be aware. Of all these things.

And not make. The mistake. Of John. Who said. We stopped. That man. Because. He wasn't. One of us. He didn't belong.

To our group. He didn't belong. To our. Fellowship. And Jesus says. Forbid him not. Forbid him not.

And. We must. Always. Remember. What is important. Is. Do we belong. To Christ. Not.

Putting out. Salvation. In the title. Or name. Of groups. We must not. Come to the point. Where we think. That because. We belong. To the free church.

[ 31 : 15 ] That the free church. Is salvation. It is not. Salvation. Is only. In Christ. And in Christ. Alone. Don't put your faith.

In a group. Don't put your faith. In a church. Put your faith. In Jesus Christ. Because. It is in Jesus Christ. Alone. That there is.

Salvation. And. And embrace. Everyone. Whichever. Whichever. Group. They belong to. Embrace them. If they are. In Christ. If they belong.

To the body. Of Christ. Embrace them. Here again. The Lord. Teaches. That. We don't have to do.

Great miracles. Like casting out. Demons. But that even a cup. Of water. Given to one. Of the. Least servants. Will not go.

[ 32 : 13 ] Unrewarded. See. Here we have another lesson. Of. True humility. Is. The acceptance. Of. Others. Who may not belong.

To our circle. Of fellowship. But who. Belong. To Christ. Remember what. Jesus said earlier. Whosoever shall receive. One of such children. In my name.

Receiveth me. And whosoever shall receive me. Receiveth not me. But him. That sent me. That means that. Christ's presence.

Is in us. And with us. The presence of God. The father is. In us. And with us. And the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Is with us. So when we embrace. Another child of God. What are we doing? We're embracing God. And Christ. In them.

[ 33 : 12 ] Whatever accomplishments. They may have. Whatever. Whatever others. May. Think of them. Whatever rank. They may have.

Among others. We embrace them. As. A child. A child. Of God. It means. Embracing. God. In them. Embracing. Christ. In them. Embracing. The Holy Spirit. In them.

And then. He. Goes on. And he says. And whosoever. Shall offend. One of these. Little ones. That believe in me. It is better for him. That a millstone.

Were. Hanged about his net. And he were cast into the sea. And. If. Thine hand offend. They cut it off. It is better for thee. To enter into life. Me. Than having two hands.

[ 34 : 09 ] To go into hell. Into the fire. That. Shall. Never. Shall. Be quenched. Now. I am not going to go. Too detailed. Into. This part.

As time has gone. But. Just to note this. Not only. Is he exhorting. The receiving. Of.

The children of God. To. Uh. Uh. Uh. Uh. Uh. Uh. Uh. Uh. Uh. Uh. To whichever group. They may belong. If they are. Child of God. To receive them.

To receive. The child of God. Irrespective. Of which group. They belong to. But he is also. Emphasizing. The woe. That belongs.

To offending. A child of God. Not only. Receiving. A child of God. But he is laying. Emphasis here. On offending.

[ 35 : 03 ] A child. Of God. Now. What does he mean. By that? Well. He means. If we cause. A child. Of God. To stumble. If we put.

Stumbling blocks. Before. A child. Of God. That is why. He is. Going on. And.

And. He is saying. We must never use. Our hand. Or our foot. Or our eye. To make. Another. Stumble. We mustn't use. These.

Things like. The hand. The foot. Or the eye. In order to make. A child. Of God. Stumble. He is also.

Of course. Asking us. To deal. With our. To deal. With our sin. But. I just want to. To lay. The emphasis. On this point.

[ 35 : 59 ] It is not only. Prudent. Of us. To receive. A child. Of God. God. Irrespective. Of which. Group. He belongs to.

As long as. He is a child. Of God. Or she is a child. Of God. It is also. Important. For us. That we do not. Cause.

A child. Of God. To stumble. All. All. I think. The. Romans. Chapter 14. Really.

Explains. All this. To us. The whole chapter. But. Romans 14. And verse. 13.



Says. Let us not. Therefore. Judge one another. Anymore. But judge this. Rather. That no man. Put a stumbling block.

[ 36 : 54 ] Or an occasion. To fall. In his. Brother's. Way. He begins. This chapter. By saying. Him. That is weak.

In the faith. Receive ye. But not to doubtful. Disputations. For one. Believeth. That he may eat. All things. Another. Who is weak.

Eateth herbs. Let not him. That eateth. Despise him. That eateth not. And let not him. Which eateth. Not judge him. That eateth.

For God. Hath. Received. Him. Let us not. Put a stumbling block. Before a child of God.

In fact. It is. The biblical mandate. Never to put a stumbling block. Before anyone.

[ 37 : 49 ] In a general way. Whosoever shall offend. One of these little ones. That believe in me.

It is better for him. That a millstone. Were hanged about his neck. And that he was cast. Into. The sea. It just. Shows us. Shows us.

How it grieves. The Lord. When we. Put a stumbling block. Before a child of God. How it grieves God.

It is as if. The Lord is saying here. It would have been better. For that person. If he had never. Been born. So he is exhorting us.

To receive. That child of God. Irrespective of which group he belongs to. And not to put a stumbling block. Before.

[ 38 : 48 ] The children. Of God. And. In a sense. Not to put a stumbling block. Before anyone. Who may be seeking. The Lord.

How often. We do that. We do it. Perhaps not. Consciously. Unconsciously. We do it. Saying you must come.

In this. Sort of form. In this mold. This may be a stumbling block. And a person may. Stumble.

Over it. And fall. May we take these. Exhortations. Of the Lord Jesus. To heart.

This day. And may we not. Make the mistake. Of John. May the Lord bless.