

STAY SALTY!

Saturday, August 5

Reading: Mark 9:30-50

Mark 9:35 *Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all."*

Jesus again predicts His death this time adding the detail that He will be betrayed (the meaning of the word 'delivered'). The disciples had grown up believing Messiah would come to defeat Israel's enemies and set up His throne in Jerusalem. This is why they could not understand all His talk about suffering and dying. They were caught up in their own selfish ambitions to be great in the coming kingdom.

Here we have one of several passages where the Twelve argue about who is the greatest. To correct their selfish attitude, Jesus tells them that their call was not to privilege and honor but to service and servanthood. He then brings a little child into their midst. They had been acting childish; now Jesus wanted them to be childlike. A little child does not think in terms of being the greatest. Jesus' followers are to receive each other, not based on prestige, influence, fame, or power, but simply because they are children of God.

John apparently ignored everything Jesus had just said. He expresses jealousy over another person casting out demons in Jesus' name. He ordered the man to stop because "he was not one of us." John felt that only the Twelve had the right to use Jesus' name. Jesus reproves this selfish attitude by showing that discipleship is not about being part of a select group. It is a matter of living and acting the way Jesus would. This other man believed Jesus' power was from God and so was on Jesus' side. He could not use Jesus' name and then turn around a speak evil against Him.

To prevent having this wrong attitude, Jesus said the disciples must take drastic action. There can be no half-way in dealing with sin. He does not mean to literally maim yourself but that if what you do (hand), look at (eye), or anywhere you go (foot) causes you to sin, that action must be eliminated. To refuse to deal with sin is a sign that one is not truly saved and will end up in the fires of hell. Instead, believers are to be like salt which is used to preserve and flavor. Believers are to have an influence on our world. If they do not have a positive impact for Christ, they are like useless salt that is good for nothing. The disciples needed to concentrate on having a positive influence and stop arguing with each other about who was the greatest.

POINTS TO PONDER:

1. "Anyone Who Gives a Cup of Water in My Name." Being a servant takes a conscience choice. When we serve others in Jesus' name we are actually serving Christ. True greatness is measured in heaven and not by human standards. It is giving of oneself without expecting anything in return.
2. "Have Salt Among Yourselves." Jesus said that believers are "the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13). We are to have a preserving and positive influence on those around us. We must strive to "stay salty" – to eliminate sin from our lives and live for Christ in this decaying world. How salty are you? Can people sense your devotion to Christ through the way you live?