

## The Disciple's Greatest Danger

Mark 9:42-48

## The Top 10 Fears of Americans

- 1. Public speaking
- 2. Snakes
- 3. Confined spaces
- 4. Heights
- 5. Spiders
- 6. Tunnels and bridges
- 7. Crowds
- 8. Public transportation (especially airplanes)
- 9. Storms
- 10. Water (as in swimming and drowning)

## The Larger Context

- Mark 8:33-50
- "Essential lessons for every disciple."

## The Essential Lessons for Every Disciple

- 1) True greatness in Christ's kingdom is defined by humility (33-37).
- 2) The kingdom of God is greater than your experience of it (38-41).
- 3) Sin is always our greatest danger (42-48).
  - 42 - Causing others to sin.
  - 43-48 - Tolerating sin in ourselves.

## A. Causing others to sin (42)

- What is the connection with the context?
  - 9:37, 41
- What is the extent of the warning?
  - "Whoever"
- Who is the subject of the warning?
  - "One of these little ones who believe"

## A. Causing others to sin (42)

- To whom is this warning addressed?
  - (i) Unbelievers
    - Matt. 18:7 - "Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes!"
    - Cf. [Matt. 25:41-46](#)
  - (ii) Believers
    - Cf. 1 Cor. 8:12 - And so, by sinning against the brethren...you sin against Christ.

## "Causes to stumble"

- One Greek word.
- Verb comes from Greek noun, *skandalon*.
  - Originally referred to the bait stick on a trap or a snare.
  - Came to refer to anything against which a person strikes.
  - Includes a trap, a stumbling block, or an obstacle.
- The verb form then came to mean...
  - 1) To obstruct someone's path, to be a stumbling block, to cause to reject or forsake.
  - 2) To cause pain or to displease, like our modern use of the word offend.
  - 3) To make someone stumble and fall morally; to cause to sin.



## What does Jesus' warning mean?

- 1) That the person who regularly causes believers to sin may very well not be a Christian at all.
  - Cf. Matt. 25:45-46 - "Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' "These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."
  - [1 John 2:9-11](#)
- 2) That the true Christian who causes another Christian to sin will face chastening for his sin [in this life](#).

## How do we cause others to sin?

- 1) By harboring provincial attitudes of spiritual superiority.
- 2) By ignoring or misusing the impact of our example.
  - 1 Kings 21:25 - Surely there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do evil in the sight of the LORD, because Jezebel his wife incited him.

## How do we cause others to sin?

- 3) By abusing or misusing the power of our influence on those under our authority.
  - Husbands to wives
  - Parents to children
    - 2 Ch. 22:2-4 – Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Athaliah, the granddaughter of Omri. 3 He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother was his counselor to do wickedly. 4 He did evil in the sight of the LORD like the house of Ahab, for they were his counselors after the death of his father, to his destruction.
    - Mark 6:24 – using them to fulfill your own sinful desires.
    - Eph. 6:4 – provoking them to anger.
  - Government to its citizens
    - Jeroboam (1 Kings 16:31; 2 Kings 3:3; 17:22)
    - Manasseh (2 Kings 21:16)
  - Spiritual leaders to those in their care
    - Jer. 23:9-11

## How do we cause others to sin?

- 4) By teaching error and false doctrine.
  - (a) Cults and their leaders.
    - Rev. 2:14 – church in Pergamum
    - Rev. 2:20- church in Thyatira
  - (b) Those within the true faith who by their teaching give believers permission to sin.
    - Aaron (Ex. 32:1-5)
- 5) By persuading others to sin with us.
  - Gen. 3:6 - When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.
- 6) By abusing our Christian liberty.
  - Romans 14:13ff