

Mark: The Mysterious Messiah

Week 19: Mark 9:38-10:16

Introductory Exercise: What is the worst way that someone can refuse to show hospitality?

Looking back a paragraph, who is among the disciples in this scene who isn't normally among them? When the disciples ask Jesus about unauthorized exorcism, he turns the conversation back to hospitality. How do the two ideas connect with one another? What does 9:40 seem to mean in this context?

Both Matthew and Mark have episodes in which Jesus calls for the faithful to cut their hands off and pluck their eyes out rather than continue to sin, but Mark's context is by far the less-familiar. What is the context for Jesus's shocking counsel in Mark? Does your Bible have a Mark 9:46? How does this warning against causing the faithful to sin tie in with earlier teachings about hospitality?

Who faces the fire in Mark 9:49? What bit of chemical lore does Jesus use in 9:50, and how do the properties of salt tie in with what seems to be a teaching on hypocrisy? When Jesus turns from his illustration to straightforward ethical counsel, what makes up "salt" for the faithful?

How do the setting for the first several verses of Mark 10 connect to the question that the Pharisees ask to test Jesus? Who else in Mark has done some talking about divorce in the region of Transjordan, and how did that go? How does Jesus's public teaching about divorce conclude in Mark 10:9? Where does he go after he finishes that public teaching?

What does he add to that teaching when he's around his disciples in 10:10 and 10:11? What sort of relationship to the Torah of Moses does Jesus solidify with these moments of teaching, and what sort of relationship to the authorities of Palestine seems to follow?

When people bring children to see Jesus in Mark 10:13-16, what very important verb pops up in the disciples' response? How does Jesus's teaching about children here relate to his teaching about children earlier in Mark? How are the offering and the receiving of hospitality subtly related to each other in these teachings, and what does the setting of these teachings have to do with their timing in Mark?