

## Home Group Notes Testing Times 2

### Mark 9:30-41 Us and them?

#### Introduction

There is a tendency in humans to want to prove superiority over others. And also to label people as taking sides: 'us' or 'them'. These tendencies came out in the disciples as Jesus approached Jerusalem. Can you ever see these tendencies in yourself? When?

#### 1. Read w.30-32

Sometimes Jesus wanted to teach his disciples without others around. Why might that have been?

2. What was included in the issues that needed addressing? v.28, v.31  
Are these better addressed in the smaller group of followers?
3. Jesus had already told them the news of v.31 in 8v.31 and a bit in 9v.9,12. Why would Jesus repeat himself these times and more?
4. Why might the disciples have preferred to continue not to understand Jesus' words about what would happen soon?  
Did Jesus force them to understand? What did he do?

#### 5. Read w.33-37

Do you ever find yourself in arguments?  
What do you usually argue about?

6. Have you ever argued about something unimpressive like the disciples here?  
Why did they keep quiet when Jesus asked the question?
7. Those who are close to great people often think the greatness rubs off on them. Can you see how easy it might be for the disciples to think they were deserving of special favour and why?
8. How does Jesus tackle this issue? Does he see it as a problem?
9. What does Jesus say Christians should be like with anyone small or insignificant who comes along? How is this the opposite of 'greatness by association'? Think of three ways in which you can apply v.35 to your life at present.

10. Read vv.38-41 Being part of Jesus' inner circle seems to have gone to John's head again. After arguing with James about the best seat in heaven, he is now deciding who is and who isn't a true follower!

**Read v.38 again slowly** Which one is ok & two of these are wrong?

- 'Someone was casting out demons in your name' RIGHT/WRONG  
'We tried to stop him' RIGHT/WRONG  
'Because he was not following us' RIGHT/WRONG

11. Which one of the above does Jesus say is ok?
12. How might John have been motivated by jealousy in making this accusation (cf v.18)? How do we avoid such damaging motivations?  
Are you slow to welcome and affirm others? How might you be more open and welcome others who are seeking to serve the Lord?
13. Why is it not the disciples' job to stop him?
14. NOT 'Whoever is not following us is not with us'  
BUT RATHER 'Whoever is not against us is with us'  
How does Jesus draw the lines in a much better place?  
How will you put this into practice in your attitude to others?
15. How inclined are you to think church is about following us rather than following Jesus? How can we develop better attitudes to others?
16. Jesus proposes a good practical thing we can work on:  
Receiving help if offered in good faith.  
Are you good at receiving the help offered by newcomers or perceived outsiders? Jesus says it's valuable. How can we value it?

#### Prayer Points

*Pray for Peter Fraser and for his recovery after major medical treatment*  
*Pray for all undergoing difficult treatment*  
*Pray that we will follow Jesus' teaching on feeling no superiority because of our association with Jesus or his church*  
*Pray for someone for you to invite to the guest services on the 12<sup>th</sup> March*  
*Pray that we will be a church of Christians who welcome all other people who are seeking to serve the Lord, and who have no 'us and them' cliques*