

SURELY HE DIDN'T MEAN IT!

Luke 9:43-50

The disciples have just seen some of the most awesome displays of power they had ever seen in their lives:

- 1) Feeding of 10,000 + => satisfied all their needs, plus excess
- 2) Transfiguration => 2 Pet. 1:16-19
- 3) Deliverance of a young man from an enslaving demonic power

Everyone around them was amazed at the great things going on! **9:43**

It was easy to think that this was GREAT!

HE was GREAT

THEY were GREAT, because they were following Him

After reaffirming that Jesus is God's anointed One, . . .

and predicting His rejection by the people of God, . . .

He had to deal with three major misconceptions:

Clarification—three wrong ideas regarding Messiah and His plan

The evidences that Jesus is Messiah had already demonstrated that God is in control, but doesn't always do things according to the way *we* think best.

PREDICTION OF CHRIST'S DEATH REPEATED 9:44-45

Jesus' followers didn't understand that Messiah was to be rejected and crucified!

As His fame and influence grew, He had to keep reminding them of His coming death so that they would understand what God was doing when it was fulfilled

9:44

He began with an attention-grabber: **"Let this sink in!"**

"The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men"—

He's going to die

***Misconception #1: FOLLOWING JESUS MEANS A
CROSS—NOT A CROWN.
JESUS CAME TO DIE—NOT TO REIGN.***

The disciples weren't ready for this message.

It didn't make sense to them.

They were still looking for a hero-Messiah.

9:45

They didn't understand it because it was hidden from them.

God had blinded them to this truth up to this point.

It would be a while before they were ready for this kind of message.

They knew there was more to what He said than met the eye.

But at this moment **they were afraid to ask.**

They probably still feared that they might find out the answer, and not like what they were about to hear!

Rather than take the risk, *even that of asking our Lord*, they decided to just let the issue lie for now.

*Have you ever done that?
You know you need to talk to God about something.
But we stay away because we are afraid of what we might hear?*

[This backdrop, then, leads us into Chapter 2-]
GREATNESS IN GOD'S KINGDOM DEFINED 9:46-48

As if they had not heard, the disciples began to discuss who would be the greatest in His kingdom. 9:46

I suspect that in the light of the fact that three had just gone up on the mountain with Him and seen the revelation of His glory, there might logically be some thought that these were the greatest among them.

You don't have to know a whole lot about Peter, and James and John to know that they were capable of hoping for first place!

Jesus' followers did not understand that true **greatness is based on service which doesn't expect to be repaid.**

He had to remind them: He used a small child to demonstrate that greatness in God's kingdom is based on humility and service to others, *especially those unable to repay.*

9:47-48

Jesus is frequently surrounded by children in the crowd.
They seem to be drawn to Him.
He encourages them to come near.

The child is *helpless, dependent, unconscious of class or race, living by faith.*

Morris: "The child stands for the helpless and the unimportant. The test of loving service is that we receive such in the name of Christ. . . . True greatness is not earthly greatness but its antithesis. . . . True greatness consists in lowly service."

You want to become great in God's sight?

"Receive me"

How do you receive Him?

Receive a child

Why? Because the one who takes the spot of the lowly
 – who serves others without hope of being repaid
 – who becomes the servant of all
 – who makes himself least of the group

He is the One who becomes great in God's sight!

– **NOT** serving a "*stint*" as least

– **Doesn't become "greatest" – the *least* becomes *great*.**

This is not a comparison. God's servants don't have to compare themselves to one another – they just have to be faithful!

Liefeld: "The meaning then is that instead of seeking status for ourselves (out of pride as an associate of the Messiah) we Christians should, as Jesus did, identify ourselves with those who have no status at all, welcoming them to join us in the kingdom."

This was not the time – nor was the attitude the appropriate attitude – to fight over position in the kingdom.

Misconception #2: GODLY LEADERSHIP IS CHILDLIKE LEADERSHIP.

GODLY LEADERSHIP IS FOR THE LEAST – NOT FOR THE GREATEST!

[Third issue Jesus deals with:]

OPPOSITION TO GOD'S KINGDOM CLARIFIED 9:49-50

Three churches were located on different corners of the same intersection. Each began its evening meeting with a rousing song service. On a warm summer night, when all the doors and windows were open wide, one congregation began by singing, "Will there be any stars in my crown?" The strains had barely faded away when the folks across the street sang the familiar hymn, "No, Not One!" They had just finished when there rang out loud and clear from the third church, "O that will be glory for me!"

This isn't what Jesus was talking about – though it's close! **9:49-50**

Jesus' followers did not understand that the true nature of their opposition is based on *deliberate rejection of Jesus*.

He instructed them not to oppose others who minister in His name.

The issue is not orthodoxy, but association.

This is not a doctrinal difference; it is a membership issue – they don't belong to our little group!

JESUS IS NOT CRITICIZING A DISTINCTION BASED ON TRUTH!

(Cf. 2 Jn 9-11 (same John!) Gal. 1:8-9)

Notice, though, that it isn't Jesus that they aren't following along with; it's them!

Misconception #3: OPPOSITION TO JESUS ISN'T CASUAL.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BELONG TO MY CLUB [OR CHURCH!] TO BELONG TO JESUS.

DON'T START OPPOSING OTHER GENUINE BELIEVERS WHO DON'T HAPPEN TO BELONG TO YOUR CIRCLE OF FRIENDS!

The opposition to Jesus will be deliberate—NOT the result of failure to belong to their little group.

Ironside: "There is no such thing as neutrality in respect to Christ. We are either for Him or against Him. If for Him, we are not against Him; if not against Him, we must be for Him. . . . Many would die for His name's sake who might not agree with us as to some minor point of doctrine or church order. We may say we do not see why the Lord should use certain people when they do not belong to us, but He continues to use them just the same. Precious souls are being won to Christ through many with whom we might not fellowship."

Believers who think that their own little group is the only group God recognizes and blesses are in for a surprise when they get to heaven.

Ryrie: the greater the opposition to the gospel of Christ, the larger our circle of support grows.

It is interesting that those they try to stop are successfully doing what the disciples were unable to do! [Cf. 9:40 with 9:49]

In their context, whoever serves in Jesus' name is on the same side they are.

We shouldn't be fighting against ourselves.

*Team sports. Someone does poorly and everyone jumps on him.
Do we do that in the church?*

One of the hardest things to deal with is to get them to recognize who the enemy is and to concentrate their attacks on the opponent—NOT on their teammates.

—We are to beat the opponent

—And encourage our teammates—NOT the other way around!

Our Lord's response was that they should have rejoiced that the power of God was being manifested on earth by others also.

Check out Moses' attitude: Num. 11:26-30

Define one practical application for your life today derived from each of the three issues that Jesus had to clarify due to the disciples' three misconceptions:

1. *Like Him, we are to deny ourselves and take up our cross.
9:23*
2. *We are to consider our brother or sister in Christ as more important than ourselves Cf. Phil. 2:1-4*
3. *We are to stop excluding and criticizing those who aren't in our little club!*

*In short, our Lord didn't come to wear a crown
He came to bear a cross!*

ALL THREE MISCONCEPTIONS ARE RELATED!