**Follow – Gospel of Mark - Wk 22 - Why it’s not working!**

**Walking in the steps of Jesus w/ his disciples - Gospel of Mark.**

**Written by John Mark, cousin to Barnabas – traveled with Paul & Peter.**

**Mark is proving that Jesus is God in the flesh – the messiah**

**Today, his last time in Galilee. Still in area of Caesarea Philippi**

**4 TYPES OF PEOPLE AND A MAJOR LESSON**

**(They are just walking off the mountain with Jesus – they saw the glory of Jesus revealed and they had to keep it a secret – where did you go? Nowhere) Mark 9:14 And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. (scribes arguing with the disciples)**

**1 - THE SCRIBES – The Cynics**

**Who are scribes? Torah caretakers. While the Pharisees added more to the law – the Scribes lived only by the letter the law of Moses - the ultra-fundamentalist skeptics of their day.**

**15 And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him. 16 And he asked them, “What are you arguing about with them?” (rhetorical - Jesus walks onto the scene and brings calm)**

**17 And someone from the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. (can’t speak - ancients considered most difficult demon to cast out - believed they had to learn the name of the demon before they could tell it to leave) 18 And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. (When this happens, it is not necessarily a demon - could be seizure or epilepsy- Jesus knew it was a demon) So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.” (that was the argument?? Peter, James, John just saw the glory of Jesus and had to come back to this - arguing debating doubters and fakers – eyerolls)**

**Mark 9:19 And he answered them, “O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? (rhetorical) How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me.” (was he talking about the scribes, crowd, or disciples – I think directed to the scribes)**

**The O’s have it! The O is in the Greek - expression of deep emotion – used for both good and bad. Here it is deep anguish. Like a heart break. How long will it take for you to realize who I am…?**

**The Scribes overestimated their own knowledge**

**They had grown arrogant and cynical.**

**This made them skeptical of anything Jesus was doing.**

**We are better than you – you don’t know what you’re doing.**

**We know the disciples were casting our demons before, Jesus gave them authority to. But they were having trouble this time… The scribes were mocking and provoking the disciple’s inability to help this boy.**

* **When we become arrogant and cynical, God stops showing up**

**\*We do the same thing - become arrogant in the word - cynical of what God is doing. Looking down on others. (Acts 18)**

**The scribes were mocking and provoking the disciple’s inability to help this boy. But ironically, they could not do anything either. They like to point fingers and belittle.**

* **When we become arrogant and cynical, we tend to only see others fault and miss our own flaws.**

**There will always be people who think they know everything and like to argue. Most the time they are guilty of what they are accusing.**

**\*We do the same thing… we are great at point out others flaws**

**Matt 7:3-5 Hypocrites – take the plank out of your own eye…**

**2 - THE (desperate) DAD – The Doubters**

**Mar 9:20 And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, (Jesus) immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. (remember demons know who Jesus is - demon was trying to do as much damage as possible before he’s kicked out) 21 And Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” (Rhetorical – for their sake and the disciple) And he said, “From childhood. 22 And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” (if you can do anything – please…) 23 And Jesus said to him, “‘If you can?’ All things are possible for one who believes.” 24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!” (Profound conversation. I think we can identify with that statement sometimes.)**

**The man said to Jesus, “If you can…” Jesus responds – “If I can?”**

**Some preach this verse and focus on and blame the man for a lack of faith – but they miss that - he did have faith…**

**He stepped out - brought his son = faith. Pushed thru the crowd = faith. Did not leave when the fights broke out = faith.**

**Said straight up, “I believe” But then, “help my unbelief”**

**The Dad overestimated his part in faith.**

**He could only see his doubt, not the faith he had.**

**“I must need more” “What else do I need to get results?”**

**Jesus gives one of the great responses of the bible – “All things are possible for one who believes” Misused as we need more faith.**

**Matt 17:20 If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you. \*\* You don’t need much faith – you just need me.**

**This is not - if you just believe all things are possible**

**There is an object of faith presented.**

* **Jesus says all things are possible if you believe IN ME.**

**Joh 11:25 “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”27 She said to Him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”**

**Where and what is your faith in? Yourself, job, family, boy/girl friend, politician, abilities, intellect, strength… or the LORD Jesus? (Jer 9:23-24)**

**We often think if we can just believe more and doubt less - visualize God’s promise more. We think - I want rain – I need to wear a poncho, bring an umbrella and think wet thoughts.**

**The power is not in believing, the power is what you believe in.**

* **When we honestly search for God and walk in humility, God meets us in our doubts.**

**Jesus did not tell him to get his act together do more positive confessions and come back later - but met him where he was in his faith. His grace patient is not looking for us to be perfect – but progress. Your sexuality, your marriage, your finances…**

**Jesus meets us in our struggle and doubt**

**Mark 9:25 And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” 26 And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, “He is dead.” 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.**

**THE CROWD – The Selfish**

**He saw the crowd coming and quickly healed the son. The crowds became a distraction to his work. (Why he said don’t tell people - yet)**

**The crowd overestimated their own importance.**

**They could only see their own needs not others.**

**Crowds are great – but it is never about the crowd – it is about the individuals. It is never about the numbers or size. It’s about the person. They came in thinking only of themselves.**

**We sometime make the same mistake… making it about us…**

* **When we make it about ourselves, we distract and even miss what God is doing in others. (my music, the volume, the clothes…)**

**Mark 9:28 And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” (I love the honesty of the disciples) 29 And he said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but by prayer.” *(and fasting)* \*\* Fasting is not in older manuscripts**

**THE DISCIPLES – The Powerless**

**Mark 3 – Jesus had given then the authority to cast our demons and heal the sick – why could they not do this? What were they lacking?**

**The disciples overestimated their own ability.**

**They relied on their own power and competence.**

**Their faith was in their own ability. “stand back, I am a disciple of JC, I got this.” Leaning not on Christ – but on themselves.**

**We live in a day when ministers & pastor overestimate their own ability. Walk to the pulpit in their own power and skills. A great teacher- communicators – great businessmen – great at getting crowds – cool and effective – filling buildings and gaining riches. Selling millions of albums, books, and downloads. Thousands of likes on social media – acquired fame and fortune.**

**But many are unable to deal with their own demons of pride and sin. They look good on the outside – given a great charge from Jesus – but still lack true power!**

**2 Timothy 3:5 – talks about those who… “Have the appearance of godliness but deny true power: from such turn away.” (Acts 19 – Sons of Sceva. They had a formula, a routine – but they lacked the power to get it done.)**

**It might not be evident that they are in the flesh for a while – because it is still producing results.**

**We see fallen leaders living secret lives. How did we not know? How did they produce so much fruit still? Because gifts are given by God, but they started using them in the flesh.**

**We sometime do that too… We start off strong, then settle into trusting our own ability = flesh. We see this in churches of Rev 3.**

* **When we start moving in the flesh - the fruit will eventually dry up**

**Perhaps the disciples were resting on their past experiences – Jesus sent 70 to cast out demons and preach the kingdom. And they did it, it was powerful!**

**Many rest on the glory days - pray 5 min prayers and think people set free. They did it before…**

**God has a different standard for determining spiritual success.**

**The most important ingredient for a follower of Jesus is prayer.**

**Not just words and formulas, but an intimate exchange.**

* **A powerless disciple / church (like the disciples at the moment) causes confusion in the crowd and ammo for the critics.**

**Perhaps that dad came in faith (I believe) – but saw disciples lack of power (triggering fights with the skeptics) and then began to doubt his own faith in Jesus. (help my unbelief!!)**

**\*\* Powerless disciples were the source of the chaos.**

**A MAJOR LESSON**

**“This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.” *(and fasting)***

**What is fasting? A focus on God – an exercise of submission**

**What is prayer? Communion with God**

**This is not positive energy, positive vibes, or positive thoughts**

**The word prayer - is both a place and a personal exchange.**

* **Truth is there will be no power capacity without prayers intimacy**

**Total dependence and reliance on God through prayer is the remedy for most spiritual problems.**

**Prayer is not just a chat with God – it is communion and dependence on God. It is a letting go and a picking up.**

**It is not that P&F make us more worthy, powerful, or closer to the God, they draw us closer to the heart & mind of God.**

**We don’t need more programs – we need prayer. The result is a deep heart for God with boldness and power to help others.**

**Like the disciples at that moment – we will become dry and powerless without intimacy with God.**

**Maybe You’re Like:**

* **The scribes – growing skeptical and arrogant**
* **The dad - I believe you are able, but I don’t know if I am able to trust you. Apply the 9:24 principle – Help me in this unbelief.**

* **The crowd – you have made Jesus all about yourself**

* **The disciples – walking in your own ability – time to develop intimacy with God – and walk in power.**

**Good news, as that boy lied there lifeless and exhausted this happened**

**Mark 9:27 But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.**

**He can lift you out of your stupor, slumber, & sleep – from that trance, daze, & numbness. He can lift you up from cold and powerless religion. He lifts us from our sin and complacency – into new life and power in his Spirit.**

**Mark 9:30 Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know it. (this ends the Galilean ministry – Next week he travels to Judea – a different approach – as he takes steps closer to the cross)**