

Martha

WOMENS CHALLENGE SMALL GROUP
February 13, 1994

Text: Gospel of Mark, Chapters 6 through 10
Mindset and Attitudes - How Jesus Exposed and Taught About Them.

- Mark 6 - 5,000 fed (boatride/walked on water/stopped storm :52**
Why? Mark 7:9, 13, 21*
- Mark 8 - 4,000 fed (boatride/ :16,17**
Peter confessed that Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of the Living God," then he turned around and told Jesus what he could and could not do. :33**, :34-38 (Gal. 1:10 attitude of acceptance of rejection)

Turning Point in the ministry of Christ. He turned His face towards Jerusalem and began teaching the disciples clearly about His death and resurrection (9:31)

- Mark 9 - The Transfiguration, 9:28, 29* Dependence on God
The disciples were arguing which one of them was the greatest, 9:34. :37* Jesus taught about humility, and importance of the ONE.
- Mark 10:33, 34 - Jesus carefully teaches about his death, his humiliation, his resurrection. (Keeping the law doesn't necessarily mean you love from the heart.)
- Mark 10:35 - James and John fought over having the highest seats in glory. :43-45. Jesus teaching on humility.
- Mark 11 - Beginning of week of Crucifixion.
- Mark 12 - Three days before Crucifixion.
- Mark 13 - Jesus teaching on the End Times.
- Mark 14 - Mary anoints Jesus for his death.
Last Supper
- Mark 15 - Crucifixion
- Mark 16 - Resurrection

Jesus knew that in order for the disciples to effectively attract people to the Kingdom of God, they would have to be able to communicate and live out in their lives the gospel of love and redemption. Also, they would have to be aware of (a) the effects of their sinful tendencies, (b) their weaknesses, and (c) where they lacked faith. These would be the things that would cause them to desert Him and to reject His authority. These would be the things that would cause them to refuse to accept from Him the life He chose for them. Because, the life He chose for them would require trust and humility.

God is always looking for a person "after His own heart." (1 Sam. 13:14) He is always looking for the person that will "stand in the gap." (Ezekiel 22:30). A disciple is a leader and that means we are able to show the way to others, the way we have successfully walked ourselves.

In Mark, we can see how Jesus is carefully, prayerfully, working with the secular mindset of the disciples. He was teaching them to "think spiritually rather than worldly. The disciples just didn't get it. (Mark 8). Their hearts had been so trained by formality and rules and time-honored traditions that they could not comprehend the incredible display of God's power right before their eyes. They were so used to being in control of their own lives that they could not comprehend how to depend on God. Their minds and eyes were so trained on the natural that they could not comprehend the supernatural.

This is the main issue. All disciples struggle with this. Unless we turn our lives, our minds, our hearts over to God for His use; to learn to walk by His power; and place ourselves under His authority...we will never be able to train our disciples to do the same. Luke 7:40 - we are going to pass on our beliefs and attitudes to our disciples.

We can know a lot about God and feel confident in that...but will we let Him have complete control? Will we let Him do with us as He wills? That's the question. We can be so "religious" (John 5:44) that we are blind to the ways that God is working. For me at this time, this is my deepest yearning. I want to be able to see the supernatural. I want to be able to see what God is doing. My heart tends to be cynical and hard. When I hear of reports from people about what God has done, I tend to think, "Is that really true?" Sure!

When we insist on being in control, there is no room to be surprised by God, or even recognize when He is working, or give Him the credit. We have "our work" to do and it has to be done a certain way, and in a certain time.

Read Romans 8:1, Archbishop Harrington Lee quote about meaning of "no condemnation." From *Spiritual Clinic* by J. Oswald Sanders (Chapter 7)

The Curious asked Jesus in John 6:29, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" How can we have this power? How can I be a disciple and still hang on to control of my own life?

Jesus said, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." That's all. He told them He was the *Bread of Life* - they would have to take their life from Him :56. This is when :66 "Many of his disciples left him because the commitment became too difficult, and they walked with him no longer. They were the seed that had no *firm root in themselves*, but are only temporary - so when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, they fall away." (Mark 4:17). We have to really examine why those disciples "fell away." There will be disciples who leave because it is too difficult for them to take their life from Christ. They would rather keep control, and ironically this means that they depend on someone or something else for life. The Bible calls this SIN, because this is the deliberate claim to the right to ourselves and the equally deliberate refusal to worship God as God. (*Hope Has Its Reasons*, Pippert, pg. 81.) Now, we know that the root cause for every sin is unbelief. I remember when Hal Lindsey was teaching the Book of John and he described sin as "the insanity of unbelief." Pippert says,

"Sin has blinded and deceived us. Many thinkers have recognized this human bent for self-deception. Historian Barbara Tuchman, for example, has observed that we are even deceived about what is *best* for us, which shows how ruthless sin's intent is; its aim is to destroy us."

Like Pippert says, "The Bible is clear about why we are deceived. Our self-deception is a by-product of our *revolt* against God. We are not only enslaved by sin, we are even unaware that it is our condition."

Jesus said, 6:63, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life...but there are some of you who do not believe." This is the root cause for our lack of trust, for our need of control...WE DO NOT BELIEVE. The questions for the disciples were, :62 "What are you going to do when I leave?" What will your disciples do when you leave? Will they take their life from Christ?

The Convinced disciples, however, stayed. "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God." However, even though they were *convinced*, they still were in control. We know this because in Mark 8 after the 4,000 were fed, (:16) they were worried because they had no bread. Jesus asked them, "Do you have a hardened (dull, insensible) heart? Don't you see? Don't you hear? Don't you remember? Don't you understand yet? These were really good questions. Good questions for us to ask ourselves whenever we get worried or anxious. Even in Acts 1, when Jesus talked to them after his resurrection, they said, "Lord, now are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

I am not down on the disciples. They were clueless. But we have to remember that this was all new to them. They were in the process of having their minds changed - and the Holy Spirit had not yet been given. They didn't have the New Testament - their lives were *writing it*! We can see from the Epistles and extrabiblical books that the disciples became *Committed* to Christ, even unto death! Because of their faith, as well as the faith of the other writers of the Word, we have the written word before us; we have the living word within us, and we can be, like them, people from whom the Word gets sent out.

Some people will say that their biggest issue seems to be not able to Trust. How can I trust God? We can see from the Gospels that Jesus put his disciples in positions where they were totally out of control. They couldn't feed 5,000 or 4,000 people. They couldn't walk on water. They couldn't raise people from the dead or heal them. Neither can we do supernatural things. Only God can do those things. What we can do is believe...and pray, and allow God to do His work through us. Going to God with our requests admits our helplessness and recognition of His Authority and dependence on His Power to perform. So trust is not the problem - the problem is unbelief. Unbelief is always the root cause of every sin.

"Lord, I believe, help me in my unbelief." That's our prayer. As our disciples see us going before the Lord in prayer for His direction, for His power, for His work, they will have encouragement to do the same. This is the greatest gift we can pass on to our disciples. Admit our inadequacy, our weaknesses, our sin areas and let them see God work. That takes humility and submission. That is what will allow us to live out the life that God choose for us.

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1. Go over Curriculum for Discipling - Additions or Deletions?
2. Catch up where each is with their disciple
3. Assign: *Hope Has Its Reasons* by Rebecca Pippert
Les Miserables, Victor Hugo (Video)

Assign:

1. Read through the Gospel of Mark with your disciple in mind. Pray about her weaknesses and sin areas. Where is she spiritually? Pray for a vision for her. Then design a Lesson Plan that will help her through her weaknesses and sin areas and toward spiritual growth the vision. State your goals and objectives and the materials that you will use. Share this vision with your disciple. Be sure to keep your notebook up to date.
Inasmuch as your personal goals should be higher than those set for your disciple, state the vision for yourself, listing the objectives, goals, and materials you will be using.
2. Jesus had several controversies with the Pharisees and the Sadducees in which he was exposing their attachment to being "religious" and "traditional." Read Mark 7:1-13, Mark 12:13-17 and Mark 12:18-27. Write a paper identifying the controversies; the applications today, and how you would help your disciple think through these issues. Do any of these controversies affect you personally in your life today?
3. How would you respond to the statement, "No one has the right to tell me what to do unless they personally invest in my life."

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