

Sermon Series: Book of Mark
Sermon title: Kingdom Unity
Scripture: Mark 9:38-41
Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church
January 28, 2018
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There once was a dog, who for his afternoon nap, jumped into the Manger of an ox and lay there on the straw. Later that day, the ox, returned from its afternoon work, came up to the Manger and wanted to eat some of the straw. He was so hungry. The Dog, being awakened from its sleep, in a rage stood and barked at the ox, and whenever it came near attempted to bite it. At last, the ox had to give up hope of getting at the straw, and went away. Even though the dog couldn't eat the straw, he wouldn't let anyone else enjoy it.

The last few weeks, we have been looking at some of the attitudes and actions of the disciples and how Jesus needs to correct their thinking.

Two weeks ago, we saw they were **unsuccessful** at casting out a demon and Jesus showed them that they depended on themselves and should have prayed.

Last week, we saw them arguing about which one in their group was the greatest.

Jesus told them to be a like a little child...to be a servant and that even a little child in his name.. is GREAT.

Now, today we will see the disciples being like the dog in the manger. **Being against someone else, even while they were unable to do it.**

Let's read **Mark 9:38-41**

38 John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us."

39 But Jesus said, "Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me.

40 For the one who is not against us is for us.

41 For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.

So, here we have John speaking up. It's as if Jesus had just given them a gentle rebuke for thinking they were great and.... this gets John's wheels turning.

"Hey, maybe I should mention something good we have done. I mean....we haven't failed at everything."

So, he says, **"Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and (you know what we did...) we tried to stop him, because he was not following us."**

Maybe he was thinking they would be praised by Jesus, but instead..he shows them again how they are off....and how we can get off track, too.

First, A little about this person....

1. He was casting out demons in the name of Jesus.

That's a good thing.

Getting demons out of people is a good thing.

As **C.H. Spurgeon** said, **“If anybody can cast a devil out, by all means....let him do it.”**

2. This person, {though we don't know his name} is evidently a believer in Jesus.

Jesus has no problem with him. The disciples TRY to get him to stop and he doesn't stop.

3. He's not part of the 12. Jesus had sent out 70 in Luke 10 and they returned saying that the demons were able to be cast out in Jesus' name. Maybe he is one of the 70.

So, before...the disciples had competition with **'each other'**.

(“Which one of US is the greatest?”)

Now... it's competition with **'others'**.

(“This guy's not part of OUR group.”)

John seems to think this guy may give Jesus a bad name.

In the ancient world it was said that *“The representative of a man is as the man himself.”*

So John's thinking..., *“This guy is representing you Jesus and he may end up making you look bad.”*

Jesus' response is 'leave him alone'.

'Don't stop him.'

It's actually humorous and ironic isn't it.

Because they are telling someone to stop at something they failed at.

This passage is very similar to something that happened in the Old Testament in **Numbers 11:26-29**

The context is that Moses needs some help. So, God says he's going to take 70 elders and put some of the same spirit that is in Moses onto these men to help carry the load. They are to gather around the tent of meeting and wait.

Then, the Spirit rested on them and they started prophesying. But 2 men remained in the camp and didn't go to the tabernacle.

Let's take a look the passage in verse 26...

26 Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. 27 And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." 28 And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, "My lord Moses, stop them." 29 But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's

people were prophets, that they LORD would put his Spirit on them!”

Moses needs all the help he can get!

The disciples...in the days to come...will also need all the help they can get.

And we also need all the help we can get!

Now the key passage for us is **Mark 9:40** and it sums up all that Jesus is saying.

What does he say?

40 For the one who is not against us is for us.

What seems like a simple common sense statement is actually quite difficult to embrace.

Why?

Because of the human heart.

Because of fear of losing something.

Because WE want to succeed.

WE want to be great.

In **Matthew 12:30**, Jesus says it a little differently.

30 Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

As **D.A. Carson** says, **“In our relationship to Jesus, there can be no neutrality.”**

**Against us—or —-For us
Against me—or—With me
Gathers— —or— —Scatters**

Those are the categories of the kingdom.
2 categories.

But those aren't the categories of a lot of churches.
But those aren't the categories of a lot of people.

We have a 3rd category.

For Jesus—-with Jesus—-Gathering with Jesus.....

But not in our group.....

not in our theological camp...

not in our denomination....

not in our....race.....

not in our....style of music....

not with us.....

So, I am against them or at least not FOR THEM.

They're with Jesus.... but not with me.

This is a type of radical kingdom thinking that is still rare
in the world today.

This is **KINGDOM UNITY** and it exists all around the world and in our city.

Oh, we can meet together and have lunch together and be cordial, but real **Kingdom Unity** doesn't exist.

It is mere talk, mostly.

Sharing resources? "Get your own stuff."

Sharing people? "Don't take our people."

Sharing finances? "No way."

Sharing property? "Too much mafan."

And my heart is not free from this.

Just recently I got a message from my friend Chris Ponniah down at Resurrection Church.

He said, *"Hey, I just want you to know that we have an opportunity for me and a team to run a weekly worship and study at HKUST."*

And he said, *"Just wanted to let you know that we don't plan to steal your sheep or anything."*

I wrote back saying something like, "No problem at all. Go for it."

Guess what?

I didn't mean it.

I said that with my mouth, but in my heart I was not happy, even if for a few seconds.

“How dare they come up here on our turf!”

You know why I felt that way, cause I know we aren't doing a good job of reaching HKUST. So, I am like the dog in the manger. “If we can't reach this place, then no one can.”

God the Spirit quickly brought the Word of God to my mind. God the Spirit quickly rebuked me.

Do you know what passage came to my mind?

This one.

What if instead of thinking like John, we thought like Jesus?

What if we really went radical in Kingdom Unity?

What if we really humbled ourselves and worked together with other churches to reach people?

You know why we don't think that way?

You know why we don't do it?

FEAR OF LOSING SOMETHING.

Guess what the answer is?

Mark 9:41

41 For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.

Don't be against other believers. Give them water.

Give a cup of water to a brother.

Don't resist.ASSIST.

Don't lock horns....Lock arms.

DON'T THINK CHURCH.

THINK KINGDOM.

In order to do that, we must humble ourselves.

In order to do that, we have to Go Down!

We must pray and ask the Lord to give us hearts to be the last, be a servant, to labor for the kingdom without fear of losing something- as we rejoice that the kingdom of God is coming in Hong Kong....even if we don't get the glory.

Do you rejoice in the success of others or growl?

Do you have a heart to work for the kingdom with others?

Are you gathering with Jesus or scattering?

Are you for Jesus? If you're not, you're against him.

Let this passage today call us to repentance. AMEN.