

MARK — Wrong Perspectives → Wrong Pursuits

Pastora Jovy Gamiao

It is so dangerous to not pay attention to Jesus' words because it would lead us to wrong perspectives which will indeed lead us to wrong pursuits.

Mark 9:38-50

“Teacher,” said John, “we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us.”

“Do not stop him,” Jesus said. “For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, for whoever is not against us is for us. Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward.

“If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, where

*“ ‘the worms that eat them do not die,
and the fire is not quenched.’*

Everyone will be salted with fire.

“Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt among yourselves, and be at peace with each other.”

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Mk 9:38–50.

John

He is no ordinary disciple; he is part of the inner three with whom Jesus shares most of his time, and witness to the transfiguration that happened earlier in the chapter.

And John tries to stop someone from ministering because they are not part of Jesus' crew. But Jesus makes it clear that even his own crew cannot act as gatekeepers for the power of healing and ministry, and marks out who the real enemy is.

So far, what is clear is that John doesn't fully get the picture of Jesus' mission. To the disciples, Jesus the Messiah is the one who would be out in front, leading their armies against Rome and all foreign oppressors.

Being part of Jesus' crew would include fame and celebrity status — or so they thought.

This wrong perspective has caused a potential fallout between them and another group of Jesus followers. This wrong perspective led John and the fellow disciples to be the gatekeepers of Jesus' mission. But Jesus corrects their perspective — if anyone causes them to stumble, it would be better for having a millstone hung around their neck and thrown into the sea.

Wow. Strong rebuke.

Serving

The incorrect perspective of Jesus and his mission has led them to serve incorrectly. If we are working in Jesus' name, it is not possible to then go against me. There is no neutral ground when it comes to Jesus.

Now, this is not God declaring war on us, but a result from us declaring war on God.

Hyperbole

Jesus' words are clear uses of hyperbole to make a point — so let's pay attention to what Jesus' point is.

Jesus thinks that the young ones, the children, but also the young in the faith are so important that anyone who draws them away from Jesus deserves harsh consequences.

In fact, it's better for us to take responsibility for what we are believing and meditating. He makes it clear that if something that we are a part of is causing us to turn away from allegiance to Jesus, we must take prompt and decisive action against whatever that is — to the point of denying our own bodies.



No sacrifice is too great to disrupt our allegiance to King Jesus. He is about to make his life a sacrifice for us, and he did not cause anything to disrupt his commitment to us.

And the incorrect perspective of Jesus is ultimately what leads us to make concessions to our allegiance with him. "Cut it off," says Jesus.

Jesus mission as he made it clear was to refocus our purposes toward serving others, not toward selfish gain, but toward advancing an upside-down kingdom of faith working through love, putting others above ourselves.

As Pastora Jovy first stated, any wrong perspective about Jesus and his mission will cause you to be wrong about yourself, others, calling, pursuit and everything. So it is my hope and prayer that we choose to be with Him and pay attention to his words more than ever before; serve with an eternal perspective; and pursue Him at all costs. This is who we are. This is our way of life as people belonging to Christ and as participants in his kingdom.