

# 11

# The Jesus Identity

## Studies in Mark's Gospel

### Introduction: discipleship demands...

**Starter:**  
What does discipleship mean to you?

The reader of Mark's gospel knows Jesus has just been received by his closest followers as The Christ: the one who will be crucified (Mk 8:31-38), and yet, he is glorious beyond our grasp (hence, the Transfiguration in Mark 9:2-13).

Jesus says that those who acknowledge him as Christ must follow him-- in every way. This is the life of discipleship:

**Mark 8:34-35** ...“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.”

This focus of Mark 9:14-50 is the life of Discipleship. What will this self-denial, cross carrying and following of Jesus require of his disciples? How does one live in company with the Messiah?

### Read Mk 9:14-29

Describe the scene Moses met at the foot of the mountain after he saw the Glory of God in Exodus (Ex 32:1-10 cf Ex 24:15-18)

1. Jesus, Peter, James and John come down from the mountain where Jesus has manifested the Glory of God (cf Mk 9:2-13). Describe the scene they meet at the foot of the mountain.

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Another translation of verses 28-29 reads: Later, in the house, the disciples asked him, "Why did we not have the power to drive out the demon?" Jesus replied, "With this kind of demon no one [has that power], except by prayer." *Prayerlessness led to powerlessness.*

2. Jesus soon deals with the problem facing the disciples but our attention is drawn to the meeting afterwards in verses 28-29. Why couldn't the disciples expel the demon from the boy?

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3. How would you sum up Jesus' first lesson for disciples?

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4. In seeking to live for God, what is the relationship between our prayers and our actions? Do we merely need to pray and wait for God to do everything? What if we pray, roll up our sleeves and complete the work—but things don't turn out as we planned?

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**Read Mk 9:30-32**

- 5. What specifically did the disciples need to learn?  
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- 6. Hadn't the disciples already been told this? Why did Jesus teach them the same thing all over again?  
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- 7. How do these verses show the importance of being taught the will of God?  
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**Read Mk 9:33-41**

- 8. What do you think is the main lesson here that Jesus wants to teach his disciples about being a community of Christians?  
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- 9. What do you find 'challenging' when living closely alongside other Christians?  
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- 10. What do you find enriching when living closely with other Christians?  
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- 11. Giving someone a glass of water is surely the least amount of hospitality one might give a stranger. What kind of hospitality do you think befits the community of Jesus?  
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In the community of Jesus selfish ambition and personal glory are replaced by putting others first. How does John's response to the 'other exorcist' (v38-40) show that he is still grappling with this?

**Read Mk 9:42-48.**

- 12. John Owen, the 17<sup>th</sup> century Puritan author wrote, "Be killing sin or it be killing you." How might these verses lead us to this conclusion?  
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- 13. As disciples in the community of Jesus, what should be our attitude to sin?  
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Do you think Jesus means us to understand his words here literally or as hyperbole? Why?

### **Summary-- Mk 9:49-50**

These two verses appear to be an encouragement to stay loyal to Jesus as his followers. We should be ready to be different from the wider community. We are to be salty. And we must recognise that our difference may lead to persecution (fire). This passage has shown us what discipleship demands (Mk 8:34-35). We live as a community of Jesus-followers who:

- depend upon him in prayer (Mk 9:14-29),
- intentionally spend time being taught by him (Mk 9:30-32),
- put others first in humble hospitality (Mk 9:33-41)
- and who take sin very seriously (Mk 9:42-48).

In which of these areas will you be seeking change and growth? Specifically, what will you do?