



“Th Problem Under All Our Problems”

September 26

Discussion Questions

1. What emotional reaction did you have when you first read this passage? Why? What role do you think hard passages of Scripture can play in our lives?
2. Why do you think we struggle to properly define the “problem underneath all our other problems”?
3. Read Mark 9:33-48. The disciples are a mess! What are the three problems that we see with the disciples in this section? (Hint: first problem in verses 33-37, another in 38-41 and the third in 42-48)
4. The disciples failed to understand that not only was Jesus going to suffer and die, but that they too were being called to suffer and sacrifice. How is our failure to grasp this the root of all our daily struggles? Why in the West, do we find it so hard to accept suffering and to see that it might have some positive purpose?
5. Think of a particular personal struggle you are having right now. How could understanding the role of suffering and sacrifice help you find significance and success?

Mark 9: 33-48

³³They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, 'What were you arguing about on the road?' ³⁴But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

³⁵Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, 'Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.'

³⁶He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷'Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.'

³⁸'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.'

³⁹'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, ⁴⁰for whoever is not against us is for us. ⁴¹Truly 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.

⁴²'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 round their neck and they were thrown into the sea. ⁴³If 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. ⁴⁴And 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. ⁴⁵And 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, ⁴⁶where

“the worms that eat them do not die,
and the fire is not quenched.”^[c]