

Mark 8.22-9.1 — Pillars: Discipleship — Thesis: Is doing spiritual good to someone so that they become more like Jesus.

I. Intro of Series: Discipleship: where; Pillars: how; Scripture: why, mission/method.

II. Exegesis

- A. vv. 22-26: *Blindness*. Led out, avoid public excitement, give personal attention. Challenge for us, 1: spit's gross, but thought to contain life-force.¹ 2: Partial restoration, didn't fail. Enacted parable, a lesson, with clue in context. Teach spiritual good, to have a truly restored vision.
- B. vv. 27-30: *Confession*. Speculation: Elijah (Mal 3:1) Moses (Deut 18:15)? Even disciples after calming storm: **(Mark 4:41)**. Jesus asks, Peter answers: Messiah, set all things right. Like blind man, Disciples only partially see what kind of savior Jesus will be.
- C. vv. 31-33: *Confusion*. Tells of suffering. Peter rebukes! Jews expect hero to rescue like David **(Psalm 89:20-23)**. Ready for hero, but not suffering servant, still see trees. But how Jesus saves: **(Mark 10:45)**. Jesus counter: Satan offered kingdom w/o suffering (Mt 4:8-9). Spiritual good is not earthly power, divine power to save from sin and death. Restored vision is clear vision of Jesus, what discipleship aims to see.
- D. vv. 34-37: *Denial*. Restored vision changes us, like blind man, changes what it looks like to follow. Means path to the cross. If Christ lived and died for the gospel, so should we! Demands self-denial, e.g., psyche: identity, personhood, makes us distinct.² Why: **(Galatians 2:20)**. More than fire insurance, new way to live. A new Kingdom to be a part of. But worth it!
1. v. 1: *Promise*. Gives perplexing promise. We know the end of story, wonder: Resurrection, Pentecost, AD70? Think of them, then! Excitement, still had partial vision. Natural reading is transfiguration. Witness testimony: **(2 Peter 1:16)**. Renewed vision of reward: to know his power and glory. Down payment, promise that though Christ will come again!

III. Application

A. *What it looks like? (Thesis)*

1. A personal process. Vision of discipleship. A process: Why partial restoration. Spiritual good is not one-and-done. Personal: Jesus w/ blind man. Doesn't need to (Heals Cent's servant at distance in Mt. 8). Provoking faith in tangible, culturally relevant ways. Spiritual good is not commercialized programs. The beginning of doing spiritual good.
2. An exaltation of Christ. Spiritual good is vision of Christ. Comes to question: who do you say that he is? On his terms: not Jesus we expect/want, who we need. Suffers for our sins: **(Isaiah 53:4-5)**. This is ultimate spiritual good, and it transforms to be like him.
3. A lifestyle of denial. Must lead to cross-bearing life, struggle for apostles, even to end. Interesting that Peter in garden lops of Malchus' ear, but few hours later deny Jesus w/ a curse. Can be selfless in a very self-centered way. Bonhoeffer quote. Vision of following Jesus.
4. A promise of glory. Discipleship offers imperishable joy in the face of Jesus: **(2 Corinthians 3:18)**. Like disciples, we have hope seeing Christ glorified! Behold him to be like him.

B. *How we'll do it.*

1. Asking. Begin to ask questions: are we making disciples? It's the 'why' behind everything we do, and everything we do should contribute meaningfully to it. Not change what we do, but how we do it...
2. Doing. See picture of disciple making, more than events. Jesus came alongside the 12. Personal process, sharing lives **(1 Thessalonians 2:8 CSB)**. Friendly church vs. Friend. Community groups. Interested? Leading? Equipping?

2 Peter 1.12-21 — Pillars: Scripture — Thesis: God's word is formative for discipleship, understanding our experience.

Ministry Paradigm, Scripture defines vision, describes values.

Intro: St. Francis false quote 'Preach the word...' (**Romans 10:17**)

I. vv. 12-15: Making Disciples. Aim is to continue discipling.

'Therefore' points to v. 3ff.

A. *Established and stirred up.* Indwelling of Spirit teaches, equips. For life, godliness. Why Peter writes, eg. (**1 John 2:20-21**). Word, Spirit go together. Bible not textbook, learn once. Discipleship is continuously stirred up in word and Spirit!

B. *Reminded.* Peter knows he will soon die. Wants them to remember his unique, apostolic words. The gospel witness is passed on, entrusted to faithful ppl. Word vital to discipleship.

II. vv. 16-19: Knowing Truth.

A. *v. 16-18: Witness.* Problem: some questioned apostles, 2nd coming a fable. 'Coming' a technical term for 2nd.² More than opinion, is witness to divine truth (**John 19:35**). Peter gives example of transfiguration as evidence of 2nd coming. Caught glimpse of glory with own eyes, know it's sure. How sure?

B. *v. 19: Pay Attention.* OT "more confirmed" by this? Gk. "And we have more sure the prophetic word"¹ Not experience that validates scripture, it is scripture that validates experience. Why pay attention. After resurrection, points to Scripture (**Luke 24:25-27**). Jesus with Thomas, (**John 20:29-31**). Faith by hearing, scripture lights the way. Word is central to discipleship, used by Spirit to create faith, is supernatural.

III. vv. 20-21: Empowered by the Spirit

A. *It is inspired by the Spirit.* Spirit 'filled the sails' of the authors, speaking truth through personalities/circumstances. Two authors: man and Spirit. B/c God is the ultimate author, Word is true. (**Psalms 19:8**). It is the perfect word of God.

B. *It is confirmed by the Spirit.* He who inspires, empowers us to understand truth of the Word through our personalities/circumstances: (**1 Corinthians 2:13**). This is the Holy Spirit's spotlight ministry, he always points to Christ. Why the word if foundational.

IV. Application

A. *What it means.*

1. Scripture is sufficient. Saw in 1 Tim 3:16-17. Want to make discipleship about mountain top experiences (only 3 on the mountain), but is about the sufficiency of Scripture.

2. Scripture is transformative. Not merely informative: (**Hebrews 4:12**). Prime means Spirit uses to change us.

B. *How we'll do it.*

1. Expository preaching. Because word is sufficient, method: point of text is point of sermon.

a) For Biblical Theology: (**Acts 17:11**) Not just information accumulation: study to understand whole storyline of scripture, scripture in light of scripture.

b) For Biblical Community: People created by word, live in word, together. (**Acts 2:42**). We abide in this together.

2. Persistent application. Scripture calls us to actions: (**James 1:22**). Aim to do God's work, his way, for his glory. Scripture tells us how to do his way, this leads to blessing (**James 1:25**).

1 John 1.1-10 — Pillars: Fellowship — Thesis: Our fellowship with one another flows from our fellowship with God.

Easter's meaning beyond easter. Jesus' sacrifice beyond salvation. Created for community. Gen 2:18, not good to be alone. Yet, b/c fear: independence (hurt-self-absorbed) to dependence (alone-loss of self). Need interdependence, love fellowship. God brings us into community with himself, brings us into community with others.

I. vv. 1-4: In the love of God

A. vv. 1-2: *God's love*. Proclaims love of God. Is life, eternal life. Manifest: perceptible, experienced in senses. Not what, who: God shows how he loves in Jesus. Not celestial Santa: God loves us by sending Jesus to die for us (**1 Peter 3:18**). How God restores us, by faith, to fellowship with himself.

B. vv. 3-4: *Love's bond*. Result of restored fellowship with God is being bonded together (**1 John 4:11**). Completes John's joy. John's joy not independent. Why need to go to church when don't feel like it. Lewis Quote. Reason for fellowship is not our good taste: God has brought us together so that we would experience his love in our fellowship.

II. vv. 5-10: In the holiness of God

A. vv. 5-7: *God's character*.

1. v. 5: One of God's chief attributes is his holiness. It is his perfection, excellence, and complete otherness. Charnock writes: "Power is God's hand or arm, omniscience his eye... but holiness is his beauty."¹ Worth beholding (**Psalm 27:4**). God's beauty is light. Love to behold light, e.g., stars at night.
2. v. 6: Become what we behold. His holiness is transformative for us as individuals: (**1 Peter 1:15-16**).
3. v. 7: For fellowship: walk in light together (**Philippians 2:15**) interdependency: individual lights in fellowship, reflecting God's holiness. By the blood of Jesus.

B. vv. 8-10: *Our restoration*. Why don't experience this fellowship? Sin. Fall short, hide like Adam and Eve, from God and others. Fear rejection, so seek independence: 'I'm okay, I got this.' Say we have no sin, ergo no need: of forgiveness from God, assistance from others. We need renewal: (**Psalm 51:10**). Restoration of fellowship with God, with others.

III. Application

A. *What it means*.

1. Rooted in God's love: Any search for genuine fellowship will lead to shadows, if apart from God's love: (**1 John 4:10**). Swing for independence/dependence unless know unconditional love of God in Christ.
2. Expressed in brotherly love: This love must overflow in love for each other: (**1 John 4:20**). Knowing that God chose of for each other.

B. *How we'll do it*.

1. Meet to stir up one another: (**Hebrews 10:24-25**) See both aspects: Love of God, Holiness of God (good works) in community. True interdependence.

Lewis, *The Four Loves* "Christ, who said to the disciples 'Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,' can truly say to every group of Christian friends 'You have not chosen one another but I have chosen you for one another.' The Friendship is not the reward for our discrimination and good taste in finding one another out. It is the instrument by which God reveals to each the beauties of all the others." (p. 89)

Matthew 6.5-15 — Pillars Series Prayer — Thesis: Biblical prayer is a dance between God's will and our weakness.

Intro: Pray like Nora. Thesis.

I. vv. 5-8: Aimless prayer.

A. vv. 5-6: *The hypocrite*. Prayers fail not b/c of location, but motive. To be seen by others. E.g., KJV prayer guy. Purpose not to be seen by man, but God, through Jesus who intercedes for us (**Romans 8:34**). Ironic, get what they are truly asking for: recognition. But expense is relationship with God.

B. vv. 7-8: *The gentile*. Failed not b/c repetitive/long (Jesus prayed all night, asked 3x for cup to pass), but assumption. Have to get God's attention, like pagan. E.g., Pliny.² Fails to treat God as God. Knows request better than us: (**Romans 8:26**). Are prayers more effective if prayed more often by more people? Not why we pray. Calvin: "that they may declare that from Him alone they hope and expect, both for them selves and for other, all good things."³

II. vv. 9-13: **Purposeful prayer**. Provides a model. NT Wright calls a scaffolding around the tower of prayer.⁴

A. vv. 9-10: *Divine*. - Purpose is to pray for God's will.

1. God's love. Recognition of dependence. That we didn't start convo: (**Romans 8:15**). A relationship that's personal, caring.
2. God's holiness. Recognition of character. Old word, response to holiness with awe, veneration: (**Isaiah 6:5**).
3. God's Will. Only then, right recognition of purpose. God's reign, at center, Jesus. Goldsworthy quote.

B. vv. 11-13: *Human*. No denial of need (**Psalms 103:13-14**).

Purpose: to pray for physical, relational, spiritual weakness.

1. Daily needs. Yet needs, not greeds.⁵ Invitation to experience God's faithful provision, and cultivation of humble attitude: (**Proverbs 30:8-9**).
2. Relational needs. In shame honor culture, debt metaphor sin.⁶ Need for relational reconciliation with God and others.
3. Spiritual needs. Gk both tempt/test. Jesus led by Spirit to temptation, here to reveal character. (**1 Corinthians 10:13**). Hungry, broken, sinful, pray from deep need. Yet Pray rooted in character of sovereign loving God, who's will shall be done, who is coming to set all things right. This is purpose.

III. vv. 14-15: **Effective prayer**. Gives additional commentary on forgiveness. Connection b/t relationships and worship (Mt. 5:23 leaving gift to reconcile). Clear in: (**1 Peter 3:7**). Cannot have brokenness in one and not others. Relationship with God connected with relationship with others. Why we must pray together.

IV. Application

- A. Responsive reading.
- B. Guided prayer.
- C. Prayer for one another.

Pliny the Elder — *Natural History*

"The highest officials pray in fixed forms of words, and to make sure that not a word is omitted or spoken in the wrong place, a prompter reads the text before them, another person is appointed to watch over it, yet another to command silence, and the flute-player plays to mask all other sounds."

Graeme Goldsworthy — *Prayer and the Knowledge of God*.

"Christians at prayer have only one option: to pray towards the fulfillment of God's revealed purposes for the whole universe. Anything else would be an act of idolatry or of total rebellion."

Acts 8.26-40 — Pillars Series Missions/Evangelism — Thesis: Be sent, tell the good news (ie., be disciple-making disciples)

I. vv. 26-29: **The Spirit guides us.** Context, 7 chosen to serve (6), Stephen stoned (7). Philip has successful ministry in Samaria (**Acts 8:7-8**).

A. v. 26: *To a place.* Context, 7 chosen to serve (6), Stephen stoned (7). Philip has successful ministry in Samaria (**Acts 8:7-8**). Sent by angel (often in connection with Spirit in Luke).¹ Spirit sends to locations, e.g. Paul to Macedonia. To Gaza, destroyed in ~97BC.² Personal desire important, Yet (e.g., Bahamas), Place is incidental if people in view.

B. v. 27-29: *To a person.* Ethiopian: from Meroe (modern Sudan). 1k miles south, 5 month journey home.³ Significant b/c symbolic of ends of the earth. Treasurer for 'Candace' (did civil work for divine son).⁴ God-fearer: from Jerusalem, reading Isaiah. Eunuch: But excluded (Deut 23:1). Significance? (**Genesis 17:9-10**). Promise is for Abraham, offspring, symbolized by circumcision. Is not a son, can have not offspring: someone traditional excluded from family of God. Gospel is changing that! Why Philip compelled...

II. vv. 30-35: **The Gospel compels us.**

A. 30-31: *To action.* Compels to action, hear of great commission. Passive approach doesn't normally work b/c people lack natl capacity to understand: (**1 Corinthians 2:14**). Spirit works not in Word alone, but acts explaining Word..

B. vv. 32-34: *To the word.* Compels us to the Word. Spirit works through the word. Isa 53:7-8 tells of a God's servant, innocent and willing but unjustly humiliated and murdered. Most jews thought Israel. Yet who? (**Isaiah 53:10**). This man was God's way to pay the penalty for sin and rescue his people from death.

C. v. 35: *To Jesus.* Compels us to point to Jesus: how Jesus is the lamb offered in our place on the cross. Wonder, did he point to (**Isaiah 56:3-5**), how Jesus made a way to God.

III. vv. 36-40: **Response.**

A. 36-39: *Rejoicing.* Assume a presentation evidenced in response. Biblical faith finds expression in baptism by immersion, commanded by Jesus. Is public profession. Signifies

our appeal to Christ: (**1 Peter 3:21**). Signifies union with Christ in faith: (**Romans 6:4**). Eunuch responds, rejoices.

B. 39b-40: *Continuing.* While had angelic direction, already received a divine mandate in the Great Commission to proclaim to Gospel. One never has to worry about if it is God's will that His Son's name be magnified: 1 Cor 9:16 - woe to if I do not preach. That we would be restless to make Christ's glory known!

IV. **Application.**

A. *What it means/What we'll do.*

1. Go proclaim the gospel: Jesus commands (**Mark 16:15**). See esp. v. 35. Open mouth, begin w/ Scripture, share good news.

a) Connecting with people: How? Cold evangelism. Consider disciples (Jn 1), invited to follow (Andrew/Philip), sharing with others (Peter/Nathaniel). E.g., the things we love to share, but not tactics. Cultivate a love for Chris that oozes into our lives! Invite someone to dinner/community group. To Church (to meet family: to hear Words, see Body of Christ).

2. Go to the nations: Serve a global God. Love: (**Isaiah 49:6**).

a) We make God's glory known among the nations by Sending: (e.g., James, Kennedy).

b) We make God's glory known by Going (e.g. Guatemala, Pastor Luis next week.)

c) Make God's glory know by Loving. Show body is one. e.g., visit family members!

Galatians 5.25-6.10 — Pillars Series Accountability — Thesis: Accountability is our responsibility in the Spirit to one another.

I. vv. 5:25-26: *We* live by the Spirit

A. vv. 25-26: *Spirit in the Body*. Context work of Spirit in personal life (you v. 18), now seen church (we v. 25). Enemy of walking together with spirit: conceit, excessive appreciation of one's own worth. Provoke to vindicate it, envy when it's wounded. Remedy: **(Philippians 2:3-4)**. What does this humility which considers others look like? Bearing burdens.

II. vv. 6:1-5: Bearing Spiritual Burdens

A. vv. 1-3: *Accountable to each other*. Spirit empowers for this.

1. v. 1: for restoration. Accountable when we sin. Overtaken (CSB). Implies getting snared in unexpected, not practiced sin.

¹ Accountability is desire to get uncaught, restored.

Confronting and confessing: **(Matthew 7:5)**. Need to be on both sides of equation. Not everyone, someone needs to know your stuff, Spirit works in this.

2. v. 2: of life. Beyond typical accountability, sharing burdens of life. Career decision, family conflict, act of encouraging one another: fulfill Law, love as Christ. **(1 Peter 5:7)**
Accountability is sharing in 'casting.'

3. v. 3: In humility. Requires openness. Recognition that none are strong enough to walk by the Spirit alone. Why have responsibility to one another.

B. vv. 4-5: *Responsible for ourselves*. Accountable for each other, ultimately responsible for our own faith: future tense, different word for 'load' indicate Day of the Lord.² E.g., Parents accountable to disciple children, but children personally responsible for faith. Salvation not by association. See Spirit move individually in responsibility, corporately in accountability. A spiritual and physical task.

III. vv. 6:6-10: Bearing Physical Burdens

A. v. 6: *Accountable to share*. Accountable to teachers, to support them (E.g., Myron). Teachers responsible for what they teach: **(Hebrews 13:16-17)**. Support has eternal significance.

B. v. 7-8: *Responsible to sow*. Broader context, contra Free Grace/Carnal Xtny. Not saved by fruit, but fruit evidence. How

do you sow? Repent and believe, follow Jesus and obey. Will see evidence. Born out in immediate context:

C. vv. 9-10: *Accountable to care*. Cannot disconnect physical from spiritual. How? **(Luke 12:34)**. How avoid errors of prosperity gospel, eternal life. E.g., pastor Luis, money. Sowing for eternity! Accountable to do good, with eye toward eternity: why no free food at Happy Tummies, full hearts, dignity. Further, priority for church. Support James, Kennedy.

IV. Application

A. *What it means*. Accountability recognition of our weakness, responsibility to bear one another: **(Ecclesiastes 4:10, 12)**. Fall and need to be restored, burdened and need help: accountable to one another. God glorified in this.

B. *What we'll do*.

1. Confess to one another. Faith not a self-improvement program. It is to walk and sow in the Spirit, a battle against deceitful desires, cannot fight alone: **(1 John 1:9)**.
Accountability not do more try harder: in confessing/
confronting declare that Christ rose to defeat sin! In restoring, declare that Christ has paid the penalty.

2. Care for one another. Spiritually and physically: bear burdens and do good. How we point to Christ: **(Matthew 11:28)**, he is the ultimate burden bearer. Not that we are collectively strong, but he is strong in us.