

A WORD ON WORSHIP

NOVEMBER 25, 2012

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Mark 9:30-31

“From there they went out and began to go through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know about it. For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, “The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later.”

The ministry of Jesus at this point in Mark’s gospel now shifts from public ministry to a time of intensive training of the twelve. Jesus was never swayed by the adoration of the masses, but now as He turns to Jerusalem one final time, His focus is on these few who will carry the gospel forward to the world. Jesus tells them again His destiny is to be rejected by men who will kill Him but he will be resurrected on the third day. It is here Jesus adds a new detail to His previous statement of suffering: He will be betrayed by one of His own into the hands of men.

They should have been worried about who it will be among them who will betray the Lord of Glory, but instead it becomes a catalyst to debate about who is the greatest. It will continue as they argue with the successful exorcist because he does not follow them. Their need for recognition will also be an issue at the Last Supper as Peter will argue that he will be more faithful than the rest. The picture we are given by Mark is showing Jesus walking ahead to Jerusalem to be sacrificed as the disciples push and shove to establish the order of the procession behind Him.

The disciples, as do many church leaders today, have an over-inflated view of leadership. They want to lead so others will serve them. So as the disciples argue with the teachers of the law over their failure to cast out a demon earlier, they have no problem chastising another who is successfully casting out demons in the name of Jesus because he was not one of them. They want to control the rights to His name, as if they held exclusive rights to the franchise. This elitist worldview has continued down the centuries and infected generation after generation with pettiness and politics. If Jesus were to ask the leaders of the Church today the same question about which we are arguing, would the silence be any louder than it was with the twelve?

The “cult of personality” is alive and well in the church today as it was with the twelve on the road to Jerusalem. How often is the pastor given top billing above Jesus, just as members of the local body seek for their name in the bulletin or church newsletter for their service? Yet our Lord demonstrated His definition of leadership by the cross of Calvary. When leadership is defined by sacrifice, the cross makes sense. The cross is God’s view of leadership. This is the definition of leadership established by Jesus, which He followed to His death. Therefore, any who seek to be leaders must follow Him to the cross to die themselves.



Sunrise Community Church
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