

## Thompson Road Baptist Church

January 29, 2017

### A Movement of God, Part 2: The Workers, Mark 9.33-50

1. Introduction
  - a. Illustration of football teams and people doing their job
  - b. Proposition: To participate in a movement of God, we must practice the qualities that lead to success
    - i. Recall: To participate in a movement of God, we must have a clear sense of our mission
  - c. Note: Success is growth, but not just numerical growth. The first area of growth we need is in church health. If we are healthy, we may indeed grow numerically, but without it, we won't.
2. Success depends on Humility, vv.33-37
  - a. The disciples are consumed with concern over who among them will receive the most glory, but Jesus counters by stating that those who receive the most glory are those who are more concerned with others; cf. Mark 10.45, "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
    - i. He drives this home by challenging the disciples to receive the lowly, overlooked child. The point isn't necessarily to accept or care for children; the point is to be concerned with doing those things that don't put you in a position to be glorified, to do things that others wouldn't necessarily be inclined to do.
  - b. Application
    - i. How can you do better to adopt a servant mentality in the church? Where might a desire for personal glory stand in the way of you being effective?
    - ii. There is never a point in the Christian life when you're done. As long as you have breath in your lungs, there is something you can contribute to completing the mission.
      1. Notice how Mark 10.45 says, "For EVEN the Son of Man..." Nothing about Jesus' status excuses him from service, and certainly none of us is beyond where Jesus was.
    - iii. "I have always viewed the leadership positions that I've taken on in the past as what can I give, what do I have to bring to the table? What can I put out for everyone else?... [But] I've been able to see that it's not about how much I can shoulder or how much I can give, but it's [about] how much I can get the other people to realize that we need to give together [and] what we can do as a group."
      1. We cannot be a healthy church if we don't sit and regularly consider how we can serve each other, to bring each other to the goal that we desire
      2. If you're sitting here saying, "We don't need revitalization," or, "This work is for other people," you're dead wrong.
      3. If you're saying, "We don't need that person," you're dead wrong. We don't get to choose the team; we're given what we're given. We have to learn how to be successful with what the Lord has put before us.

3. Success depends on Cooperation, vv.38-41
  - a. In the second teaching point, the disciples are bothered by one outside their group who is being successful working in Jesus' name.
    - i. Jesus responds by telling them that anyone who is working truly in his name is an ally in the battle against evil
    - ii. Paul shares a similar outlook in Philippians 1 when he discusses those whose motivation in preaching the Gospel is partially motivated by a wish to see him harmed; cf. Philippians 1.15-18, "...The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice."
  - b. Application:
    - i. We must be ready and willing to cooperate with others for the cause of Christ.
    - ii. As a church, we have become isolated, either through attrition, conflict or personal decision. This is not healthy. The NT churches were interconnected and cooperating.
      1. I have even heard it said that today's generation is not as concerned about the things of God. This is wrong. The way the churches look may seem foreign to some of us, but devotion is high and the commitment to theological richness is stronger than it has been in generations.
    - iii. We made a big step by choosing to align with the SBC, opening the door to fellowship and cooperate with over 600,000 churches. Next week, I'll be meeting with two in our city.
4. Success depends on Personal Holiness, vv.42-50
  - a. The final teaching of Jesus here emphasizes the need for personal holiness/sanctification. Leading others or yourself to sin is to be avoided at all cost. The startling imagery is used to show that possession of spiritual life is worth the costliest sacrifice (vv.42-48)
  - b. Overall, our lives must be purified. This is the message contained in salt and fire—both of which have a purifying effect (v.49)
    - i. However, things which look like salt can lose their saltiness due to impurities. Likewise, we can fail to be purified when we stop seeking and receiving the purifying effect of sanctification (v.50a); cf. Matthew 5.13, "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet."
  - c. Application
    - i. As a church and as individuals, we must be committed to holiness. The message last week was that repentance and belief is what brings entrance to the kingdom. But once in the kingdom, the expectation is that we will pursue a life like Christ's; cf. Romans 6:1-2, "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?"

- ii. For too long personal holiness and discipleship have been neglected in the name of necessity. The operation of the church required so many hands that many fell through the cracks. We have worked to make things more efficient, in an effort to allow a greater emphasis on discipleship.
  - 1. How can we call others to not sin if we are not making regular efforts to put to death the sin that still dwells in us? This journey of sanctification, of seeking to be more like Christ, is never over. It is the height of irresponsibility to bring others in when we aren't taking care of those we already have. Did you ever stop to think that God has refused to give numerical growth because he cares too much about the well-being of new believers then to let them enter into an unhealthy church?
  - 2. We have to look inside ourselves and see how unchecked anger, bitterness, complacency, laziness, pride, gossip and fear have hindered the advance of the gospel in our church. Again, we cannot grow if we are not healthy. A plant that has shriveled from lack of care does not bear fruit worth eating.

#### 5. Conclusion

- a. This passage, which begins with a dispute, ends with a call to be at peace with one another (v.50b). Our peace is disrupted by failures at each of these points, but strength and unity are achieved when we embrace the life of a disciple that Jesus teaches on here.