

(In preparation for gathered worship next week, January 18, 2009)

Mark 9:14-50

Something massive is taking place in the ministry of Jesus. He is overturning evil! He is reclaiming all things for God's glory! He is rescuing the world! He is instituting the kingdom of God!

And the method he uses is as remarkable as the mission. Faith is the weapon of choice. Humility marks the victor. Suffering produces a winning edge. Never did a kingdom triumph on these terms. The way forward seems to be backwards!

As subjects of Jesus, do we endorse the method as much as the mission? To find out, read the passage and answer the following questions.

- 1) Why were the disciples unable to cure the boy with an unclean spirit in verses 14-29? If we are to be used mightily for the kingdom of God, what ought to be the distinguishing mark of our lives?

- 2) In the kingdom of God, what is the sign of greatness? See verses 33-37. How does it differ from the world's idea of greatness? Do you see evidence of this greatness in your life? Explain.

- 3) According to verses 38-41, how can you tell who is, and is not, a child of the kingdom?

- 4) What do you fear most? And why do you fear it? What does Jesus suggest you should fear most? See verse 41-48. And why, according to Jesus, should you fear it?

- 5) In the context of the passage, what does it mean to be salty? (verses 49-50) Hint: it has something to do with the advance of the kingdom of God. Are you salty? Explain. If you have lost your saltiness, how do you get it back?