

## THE SCRIPT:

1. To whom did Jesus refer in his response?
2. What was Jesus' opinion of Moses' command?
3. Why do you think Mark may have included this passage right here?  
(Consider the plight of women in divorce, also considered "the least." Also, according to Matt. 5:32 who is putting a snare in the way of the woman?)
4. Think back to Matthew 5:21-48 on anger, adultery, divorce, oaths, retaliation, and love in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount: "You have heard it said [...] but I say..." How is this similar?

### Scene 3

## THE STAGE: vv 10-16

1. Where are they now?
2. To whom is Jesus speaking?
3. Who enters the stage in vs 13, and what are they doing?

## THE SCRIPT:

1. What is Jesus' emotional response to the disciples, and why?  
(reference Mk 9:42)

## THE REVIEWS:

1. What intrigues you about Jesus in today's lesson?
2. What characteristics of God are revealed in Jesus in the lesson?

<sup>1</sup> "Archaeologies of Childhood" Kelsey Museum of Archaeology

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<sup>2</sup> Mark G. Vitalis Hoffman, Working Preacher ©2020 Luther Seminary

## FURTHER STUDY:

### A. Scriptures (parallel Gospel accounts):

Matthew 18:1-14; 19:1-30

Luke 9:46-50; 17:1-2; 18:15-30

### B. Suggested Reference Materials:

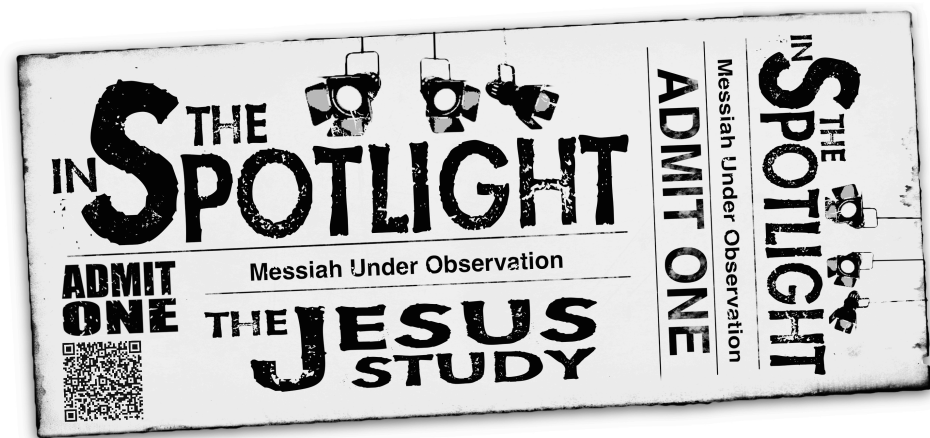
"Beautiful Outlaw" by John Eldredge

"The Jesus I Never Knew" by Phillip Yancey

"Walking in the Dust of Rabbi Jesus" by Lois Tverberg

Next Week: Mark 10:17-52

You won't want to miss it!



## LESSON #15

"Us and Them "

or

"The Devil Made Me Do It"

Mark 9:33-10:16

Focus Scripture:  
Mark 9:49

"Salt is good, but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

Food for Thought

Concerning your understanding of the Church, how big is your tent?



## Vocabulary Definitions:

**Eternal** (*aiōnios*): does not focus on the future per se, but rather on the quality of the age to which it relates. Thus believers live in "eternal life" right now, experiencing this quality of God's life now (love, peace, joy) as a present possession.

**Saved, Save** (*sōzō*, from *sōs*, "safe, rescued") to heal, preserve, rescue, deliver out of danger and into divine safety in this life.

**Scandalize** (*skandalisē*): to put a snare (*in the way*), to cause to stumble, to give offense. Misrepresented as general "sin" vv 42-48.

**Gehenna**: a valley West and South of Jerusalem, the city dump where all forms of refuse (dead animals, dead criminals) were thrown, it gets misinterpreted as "Hell," but is a misunderstood metaphor. It was where things of no consequence or importance were thrown to decay, always burning. Significant to this lesson, Gehenna was also the place of ancient worship where children were sacrificed to Ba'al.

## Brief Historical and/or Cultural Context:

*Jesus has just allowed Peter, James and John into the inner circle and they witnessed Jesus in his glory with his father, Moses, and Elijah. He comes down from that "mountain top" experience to witness an argument about his disciples' inability to cast out a demon. Jesus has been trying to prepare his disciples for the culmination of his ministry on earth, and they are far from understanding.*

*Jesus' message all along has been: "Think differently. This is how the Kingdom works - if you want to be first, you have to be last, and servant of all." He now uses a child as a visual example. According to archaeology, there is little information about childhood in the first century. "Infant and child mortality were high, health care and education very limited, natural danger abundant, and child abandonment and child slavery were facts of life. Children, and vestiges of their childhood activities, are relatively elusive aspects of the archaeological record."<sup>1</sup> The uncomfortable fact in ancient Semitic culture is, except for the first born male, children were the lowest of the low. They had as much power as a slave. They were the unseen and unheard, the "least". For Jesus to draw attention to a child as someone important in God's kingdom was incomprehensible to his audience, hence, John's non sequitur (Mk 9:38).*

### Scene 1

**THE STAGE:** Read Mark 9:33-50

1. Where are Jesus and his disciples?

## THE STAGE: (continued)

2. To whom is Jesus speaking?
3. To what is he responding?

## THE SCRIPT:

**More Context:** *In vv. 39-41, in the Greek, Mark uses three "for" ("gar") clauses, and a better translations might be: "for no one [...] for whoever does [...] for whoever is[...]. The Greek should also be kept in mind when reading "sin" in vv. 42 - 45. The Greek reveals specific sin: "scandalize," setting a snare or a trap for another to stumble. A more descriptive reading could be: "If your hand (foot, eye) causes you to put a snare in the way of another and causes them to stumble [...] it is better to live in the Kingdom maimed, than work against the Kingdom, deserving to be tossed in the dump." Keep in mind Jesus is NOT speaking of the afterlife, nor is he referring to "hell" in vv. 43-48. As in Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is teaching how to live effectively in the Kingdom. Most likely vs 44, 46, & 48 was a colloquialism of the time, not a reference to eternal damnation, eternal fire, and eternal worms.*

1. What is Jesus' point (metaphor) in bringing in a child for a visual aide?
2. How does Jesus bring John's question back to the subject of welcoming/loving/accepting the "other" or "least of these"?
3. Compare vv. 39-41 with Mark 3:35
4. How does John's non sequitur actually reveal the "skandalisē" he may have put in the path of the man exorcising demons?
5. What emotions can you read into Jesus' discourse, and how do his words reveal the importance he places on the care of "the least of these?"

### Scene 2

**Brief Historical and/or Cultural Context:** *"Divorce is a symptom of human failure contrary to God's intentions in creation."<sup>2</sup> Please do not read this in a 21st century context. Jesus is speaking to the patriarchal Hebrew community where a woman's husband was chosen for her, when she was young, for financial, business, or political gain. She was her husband's property and if he divorced her she was out on her ear, unless her family would take her back. These practices remain in many cultures even today. For Jesus to say marriage was a union of two becoming one, and inseparable, was revolutionary, and salvation for women.*

**THE STAGE:** Read Mark 10:1-16

1. Where is Jesus?
2. Who are the players in vv. 1-9?