

Audio Transcript of Sermon
May 2, 2020
Jesus-The Transfiguration

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. This week we are continuing our study of the life of Jesus having most recently studied when Jesus walked on water and how many people left Jesus because they could not understand the symbolism of eating his body and drinking his blood, which would later become part of the Christian Passover. As often it would be, Jesus and the disciples found themselves at odds with the Pharisees and scribes. Jesus knew that the Pharisees were hypocrites who turned the law of God into an incredible burden and it is very easy for any person in a position of religious authority to turn the words of the Bible into a burden, and these burdens are tied to traditions of people and interpretations of what is in the Bible. Jesus told us not to be like the Pharisees who on one occasion saw some of the disciples eating food without first washing their hands. Hand washing was part of the religious ceremonies of the priesthood in the Old Testament, and hand washing is an important defense against contaminating food that we are going to eat as well as protecting us from diseases like COVID-19. There were many instances in the Old Testament where individual people were also required to thoroughly wash themselves. There was no specific requirement for there to be ceremonial handwashing prior to a meal. This was a requirement of the tradition of men. The Pharisees thought that they were righteous because they could perfectly follow the traditions of men, and where do we find traditions of men today? We find these traditions in churches. The pomp and ceremony of a church service is not what we find in the New Testament. What we see as church services and church buildings are traditions of men, and just like the Pharisees sought to oppress people through the established traditions, the church establishment is much more likely to oppress their congregants for nothing more than self-preservation. No church comes between us and salvation through Jesus Christ, ever. Let's continue the story in Mark chapter seven verse one.

Mark 7:1-37

- 1. Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.**
- 2. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault.**

3. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

4. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables.

The Pharisees wanted to know why the disciples didn't follow the ceremonial handwashing traditions and Jesus immediately called these people out as hypocrites. These Pharisees saw themselves as righteous, doing the work of God on earth, and instead of being impressed with these men, Jesus called them hypocrites because while they were polite to his face, they did not care for or regard Jesus or the disciples. Verse five.

5. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

6. He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

Jesus found fault with the Pharisees because they taught the commandments of men and ignored the commandments of God. Think about how a person might go about teaching the commandments of men and ignoring the commandments of God. If you are a religious authority and you have before you people who do not know what the Bible says, you could tell them just about anything and find a way to tie it into the Bible, especially when the people somehow believe and act as if somehow you stand between them and salvation. Some with religious authority make it about themselves and their own ego, not what is written in the Bible. Then there are others who seek to change from what is written in the Bible to conform to the laws of men. All countries have criminal, civil, and administrative law processes and in the modern era these laws may differ significantly from what is in the Bible. We cannot teach these laws as the commandments of God, because these laws are not the commandments of God, these are the laws of men in the country where ever you may live. When we reject the Bible for religious traditions and the laws of the country in which we live, we are no different than the Pharisees who rejected the commandments of God for their own religious values. Verse seven.

7. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

8. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

9. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

Jesus then gave an example citing the fifth commandment, honoring your parents and the practice of some to deny their parents so they could give money to the temple. Jesus hit these hypocrites where it really hurt. He didn't go after their heart, he went after their pocket books. The exploitation of money from congregants is one type of hypocrisy that we see in even the modern era, and they will often cite Malachi 3:8 which read, *"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings."* But, what exactly does the Bible say about tithes and offerings. Don't be as concerned about what the minister says the Bible says about tithes and offerings, because no man stands between you and your salvation. Understand what the Bible says. Does the Bible say to tithe on the increase of agricultural and ranching production? Are there any circumstances in the Bible where people had other jobs in other areas where tithes were given? When Abraham tithed to Melchizedek does the Hebrew say he gave tithes of all, or that he just gave tithes? Does the Bible speak of three different tithes or three distinct uses of tithes? Are you being asked to tithe or give offerings based on what is in the Bible or based on the traditions of men that is recorded through history? Tithing is an interesting study best reserved for another day. The temple exploited people into giving offerings called Corban that went beyond tithing and many people used the requirement to give this offering to the temple as a reason to excuse themselves from taking care of their family, including elderly parents. Just recently, I heard that a minister from the United States asked his congregants to send all of the federal COVID-19 stimulus payments to him. These payments are meant to take care of one's family due to the economic downturn of COVID-19. Jesus said when we subject ourselves to the traditions of men and use that to deny our family and parents, we make the word of God meaningless. Verse ten.

10. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:

- 11. But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free.**
- 12. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;**
- 13. Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.**

Jesus then went on to explain that people become defiled from within and that how people are defiled is made manifest by what they do. All sin begins within us. Jesus gave an example of the digestive system because people had gone beyond the dietary laws of the Old Testament and were focused on the food they put into their body to the point they never considered that what defiles them is the sin that they have. Verse fourteen.

- 14. And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Harken unto me every one of you, and understand:**
- 15. There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.**
- 16. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.**
- 17. And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.**
- 18. And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him;**
- 19. Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?**
- 20. And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.**
- 21. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,**
- 22. Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:**
- 23. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.**

After Jesus had shared with people how their religious traditions made the word of God meaningless, he left and went to the borders of Tyre and Sidon where he wanted to have little contact with other people, but just like light cannot be hid underneath a basket, the presence of Jesus could not be hid from the people. A Greek woman came to find Jesus and bowed before Jesus, asking that Jesus

remove a demon from her child. Jesus told this woman that children needed to first be filled and that it would be improper for a family pet to eat the bread of the child. When the woman acknowledged this need, the demon left her child. Even though Jesus used the example of bread, because Jesus spoke of the bread of life, we know it is important for parents to teach their children about Jesus Christ and God the Father. Verse twenty-four.

24. And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid.

25. For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet:

26. The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

27. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs.

28. And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

29. And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

30. And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

After this, Jesus came to the Sea of Galilee near to the city of Decapolis. People who knew Jesus brought to him a person who was deaf and who had a speech impediment and begged Jesus to heal this person. Jesus walked this person away from the crowd and put His fingers into his ears and then after spitting touched his tongue. Looking up to heaven Jesus said, "Be opened." Immediately, the man was able to hear and he no longer had a speech impediment. Jesus told the man to tell nobody about what had happened, knowing the more he told them to say nothing, the more they would say something. Jesus understood human nature. People who saw this man healed were astonished that Jesus could make the deaf hear and remove a speech impediment. Verse thirty-one.

31. And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.

32. And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.

- 33. And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue;**
- 34. And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.**
- 35. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.**
- 36. And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it;**
- 37. And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.**

The crowd continued to grow around Jesus and had been with Him for three days. Jesus was worried that these people had nothing to eat and didn't want to send them back to their homes because he was worried that some, especially those who had come from a long distance, would faint on the walk back to their house. The disciples didn't see how they could feed this crowd with the food they had on hand. Jesus asked them how many loaves they had, they only had seven loaves and a few small fish. Jesus gave thanks for the food that they had, broke the bread and had his disciples feed the crowd. Jesus did the same with the fish they had. Everyone ate until they were full and when the leftovers were counted, they had seven baskets of food. They fed about four thousand people that day. After the meal, Jesus sent the crowd on their way, and He and the disciples boarded a boat and sailed to Dalmanutha. Mark chapter eight verse one.

Mark 8:1-38

- 1. In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them,**
- 2. I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat:**
- 3. And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far.**
- 4. And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?**
- 5. And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.**
- 6. And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people.**

7. And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them.

8. So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets.

9. And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

10. And straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.

When they arrived at Dalmanutha, the Pharisees came to Jesus trying to tempt Him. They sought a sign from heaven. Jesus refused to give a sign and this shows that sometimes it is best to not answer questions that are asked of us. Jesus decided to leave from Dalmanutha and departed to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Verse eleven.

11. And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him.

12. And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.

13. And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.

Back on board the ship and under sail to the other side, the disciples realized they had forgotten to take bread with them, nor was there any bread available to them on the ship. It was at this point that Jesus told the disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod, and the disciples thought Jesus was saying this because they had no bread with them. Jesus asked if they had hardened their hearts and forgotten what they had been taught. He reminded them of the feeding of the five thousand and the four thousand and asked how many loaves remained. He asked them how they could not understand a question about the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod, and they focused on the lack of bread not considering that if Jesus could take a few loaves of bread and feed thousands of people, he could also feed them. They also missed the spiritual lesson of avoiding the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod. The Pharisees knew that they were religious people and saw themselves as worthy. They enforced their idea of religion on other people and in so doing made the word of God meaningless. Herod was of the ruling elite, had power and

wealth. People who have power and wealth also see themselves as worthy because of their success. People who see themselves as worthy see others as unworthy and are more likely to oppress others. Jesus warned his disciples to beware the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod, to avoid becoming puffed up, to avoid seeing themselves as worthy. Verse fourteen.

14. Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.

15. And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

16. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread.

17. And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?

18. Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

19. When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve.

20. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.

21. And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?

Jesus came to Bethsaida where a blind man was brought to him and people asked Jesus to touch the man. Jesus took the blind man by the hand and walked with him out of town. Jesus put spit in this man's eyes and laid his hands on him. He asked the man if he was able to see. The man replied that he could see only very blurry. Men walking by looked like trees walking by. Jesus put his hands on the man a second time and had the man look up. The man's vision was completely restored. Again, Jesus told the man to not tell anyone about what He had just done for him, realizing the man was likely to do just the opposite and tell everyone. Verse twenty-two.

22. And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

23. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.

24. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.

25. After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

26. And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.

Jesus continued on His way with the disciples and came to Caesarea Philippi. Along the way he asked the disciples what people thought of Him. The disciples shared that some thought Jesus was John the Baptist, Elijah, or another prophet. Jesus asked the disciples who they thought Jesus was, and they replied that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah. Jesus told the disciples to tell nobody he was the Messiah, probably realizing out of zeal, many would. Verse twenty-seven.

27. And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?

28. And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets.

29. And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.

30. And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

Jesus then began to teach the disciples that He would one day be killed and after three days, He would rise from the dead. He told them that he would be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes. Jesus was very open about His fate and carefully used words so he would not be misunderstood. Peter was immediately offended and began to rebuke Jesus. Jesus in turn rebuked Peter, comparing Peter to Satan, and told Peter he was looking at Jesus' fate not from the eyes of God but from the eyes of man. Verse thirty-one.

31. And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

32. And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

33. But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

After this private discussion with His disciples, Jesus brought in a larger crowd and taught them a lesson about following Jesus considering Jesus had just taught Peter if we are seeing our life through the eyes of God or the eyes of man. Jesus told the group that in order to follow Jesus we have to deny ourselves and take up our cross. Jesus very well knew what his fate was and in order to follow Jesus, we must be willing to endure the same fate. If the thought that our faith could lead to our death is unappealing and we would prefer to live until the end of our natural life, we will have that, but we will lose out on eternal life. If we are willing to put our life on the line for the Kingdom of God, we will have eternal life. Exactly how our life will be put on the line may look different from person to person. We can never be ashamed of the words of Jesus, or else Jesus will be ashamed of us when he returns to establish The Kingdom of God on earth. Verse thirty-four.

34. And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

35. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

36. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

37. Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

38. Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

Jesus then said something which seems mysterious continuing in Mark chapter nine and verse one.

Mark 9:1-50

1. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

Some have read Mark chapter nine verse one and see this that some would live forever. For this to happen, the person would have to be physically alive until the return of Jesus, because as we know from Hebrews 9:27 that it is appointed for men once to die and then the judgement. What Jesus was describing in intriguing language that probably caused discussion among the disciples came about six days later when Jesus took Peter, James, and John apart from the others into a very high mountain. Jesus was transfigured before them and his body and clothes became shining bright and pure white. With Jesus were Elijah and Moses who were talking with Jesus. Peter immediately offered to build three tabernacles, one for Jesus, one for Elijah, and one for Moses. He was so frightened by what he saw, he didn't know what else to say. A cloud came over them and through the cloud they heard a voice telling them to listen to Jesus, the beloved son. All of a sudden Moses and Elijah were gone, and Jesus was with them. Verse two.

2. And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.

3. And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

4. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.

5. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

6. For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.

7. And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

8. And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

As they walked down the mountain, Jesus told Peter, James, and John that they were to tell nobody what they saw until after Jesus was risen from the dead. This

time, they kept what they had seen and what Jesus had told them to themselves, but they did not yet understand why Jesus would need to rise from the dead. The disciples then asked Jesus why the scribes said Elijah must come first, and Jesus confirmed this need and explained that Elijah is come and that Jesus must suffer many things, Verse nine.

9. And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead.

10. And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.

11. And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?

12. And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought.

13. But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

When they arrived at the base of the mountain, they saw a huge crowd with the disciples including scribes who were questioning the disciples. Immediately, the people were amazed when they saw Jesus, and many ran to greet him. Jesus wanted to know what the scribes were asking. One replied that he had a child who was possessed who was wild and out of control. He foamed at the mouth and tried to bite with his teeth. He shared that the disciples were unable to cast out the demon. Verse fourteen.

14. And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.

15. And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him.

16. And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them?

17. And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;

18. And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

Jesus immediately linked this failure to lack of faith, and asked that the son be brought to him. Immediately the demon tried to tear at Jesus and the son fell to the ground foaming at the mouth. This son had a demon since childhood and the demon tried to kill the son through fire and through drowning. The father asked Jesus for compassion to help their son. Jesus told the father that all things are possible with belief. Immediately the father said he believed and Jesus rebuked the demon which came out of him. The son became limp and people thought he had died. Jesus took the son by the hand and helped him stand. Verse nineteen.

19. He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.

20. And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

21. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.

22. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

23. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

24. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

25. When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.

26. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.

27. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

Some in reading the account of the son foaming at the mouth may think of epilepsy and seizure disorders. Epilepsy and seizure disorders are neurological disorders that impact the body's functioning and doctors often prescribe medicines to manage symptoms. These are medical conditions that are a very real part of the human condition, and of and by themselves do not indicate demon possession. Demons mock God the Father, Jesus Christ, and all people on earth, including people who happen to have epilepsy and seizure disorders. The demon that possessed the son was mocking epilepsy and seizure disorders. Afterwards, the disciples wanted to know why Jesus was able to cast out demons

and they couldn't even though Jesus had earlier given them this power. Jesus told them that some demons come out only by fasting and prayer. Verse twenty-eight.

28. And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out?

29. And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

As they left, they passed through Galilee and Jesus wanted to travel without a crowd because he wanted to teach the disciples. As they walked, Jesus taught the disciples that he would be turned over to the authorities so that he would be killed, and after the third day he would rise. Even though the disciples heard what Jesus was teaching, they did not understand his message and they were too afraid to ask. Looking back at what happened to Jesus, it is very easy for us to see and understand what happened. The disciples did not have the same privilege we have. What Jesus was teaching them about His death was yet future for them. They also had a hard time understanding why Jesus would need to die if he was the Messiah. That understanding would come to them. Verse thirty.

30. And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it.

31. For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.

32. But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

Finally, they came to Capernaum and when they were settled in the house, Jesus asked them what they were discussing on the walk. The disciples kept quiet because they were trying to figure out which disciple was the greatest disciple. Jesus taught the disciples that if a person wanted to be a leader, they must be willing to be last and become a servant of all. When the children of Israel left Egypt and came to the Red Sea, the Egyptians were in pursuit and the children of Israel thought they would die. The angel of God who was normally in the lead during this instance followed and became a visible barrier so that the Egyptians could not see the children of Israel. Similarly, when given a position of leadership, it is not to be seen as a position of power, even though positions of leadership often come with power, because when we see a position of leadership as a

position of power, we enable ourselves to exploit the people we lead. Jesus pointed out that a leader serves all people, not just the people the leader likes. Jesus then brought to him a child and set the child in the middle of the group and taught that we must be willing to receive a child, whether it is a physical child or a spiritual child new in the faith. Verse thirty-three.

33. And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?

34. But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest.

35. And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.

36. And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them,

37. Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

Considering the lesson of leadership, John shared with Jesus that they had seen a person casting out demons in the name of Jesus who was not one of the disciples, and they told this person to stop. Jesus told them to not forbid a person from doing this because if a person does a miracle in the name of Jesus, that person is not likely to speak evil of Jesus. Jesus also shared that people like this man who act in the name of Jesus are not against Jesus, and in a way that makes these same people for Jesus. Never deny a gift from a person claiming the gift is through Jesus, because nothing bad will come to that person. Verse thirty-eight.

38. And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbad him, because he followeth not us.

39. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.

40. For he that is not against us is on our part.

41. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

Pointing to the child, Jesus said we must take great care to not offend the little child because it would be better to be dead. When working with people who are

new, or children, in the faith, curious, or exploring, we need to be incredibly cautious to not offend people. It's a whole different approach with these people compared to Pharisees and scribes. Jesus then shared that we have to remove from our life that which can cause offense. It's much better to remove what causes offense and have eternal life than it is to keep what causes offense and brings us to death. Verse forty-two.

42. And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

43. And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

44. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

45. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

46. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

47. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:

48. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Earlier in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus had compared his followers to the salt of the earth. He reminded them that even salt can lose its flavor and then it has no value for cooking. Verse forty-nine.

49. For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

50. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

As often was the case with Jesus and the disciples, they came across scribes and Pharisees, who thought of themselves as worthy, who also exploited the people they encountered in the name of God. Jesus not only showed the Pharisees and scribes how hypocritical their practices were, he showed how their practices made the word of God to be meaningless. Knowing His time with the disciples was short and that these men would become the first leaders of the church, Jesus

gave the disciples a lesson on leadership and showed that a leader is a servant to all and willing to put herself or himself last, never exploiting others.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.