

When You Don't Understand, Don't Be Afraid to Ask
Mark 9:30-32

I. Graduate: The Contemporary Cultural Pressure to Conform

A. From Diversity, to unity, to conformity

1. Diversity - Let's make room for everyone around the table
2. Unity - Let's make room for every worldview around the table
3. Conformity -
 - a. Definitions
 - (1) Behavior in accordance with socially accepted conventions or standards
 - (2) A type of social influence that describes how a person changes their attitude or behavior in response to group pressure
 - (3) **Conformity involves a change of belief in order to fit in with a group**
 - b. Examples
 - (1) Let's have only one culture, one worldview, one experience at the table
 - (2) Let's deny essential, fundamental differences
 - (3) Let's all be the same
 - (a) No gender
 - (b) No politics
 - (c) No religion
 - (d) Just conformity
 - i) Cancel culture
 - ii) Shame politics (Grand Marais)
 - c. **Dangers**
 - (1) Disallows independent thinking
 - (2) Disparages individual identity, worldview, and activities
 - (3) Rejects any contrary authority like God or the Bible

B. The Biblical Call to Non-conformity

1. **Romans 12:1-2 (ESV)** *¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*
 - a. **Living sacrifice** -
 - (1) The call to discipleship is a call to present all that you are to God without reservation
 - (2) The call to following Jesus is not only
 - (a) a call to believe certain spiritual facts
 - i) Jesus is God's Son, the Christ
 - ii) Jesus died on the cross for human sin

- iii) Jesus rose from the dead
 - (b) a call to trust a certain Person for a certain outcome
 - b. Do not be conformed to this world : the call to reject conformity to the world and be utterly surrendered in faith, in love, and in joy to the good and acceptable and perfect will of God
- 2. **1 John 2:15-17 (ESV)** ¹⁵ *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* ¹⁶ *For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.* ¹⁷ *And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.*
 - a. There is no denial that the world entices the affections of our hearts
 - (1) The desires of the flesh
 - (a) for entertainment and pleasure,
 - (b) the desire for the world to satisfy our lust for pleasure rather than having God’s grace and glory our source of complete contentment
 - (2) The desires of the eyes for possessions and satisfaction
 - (a) What we own,
 - (b) What we have power over
 - (3) The pride of life for self-exaltation and the praise of man
 - (a) That we make something of ourselves for our own glory
 - (b) Rather than let God make of us what He will for His glory
 - b. But this is all temporary, and you, as an eternal soul, are not created for temporary.
 - (1) God created you for eternity
 - (2) Only the one who does the will of God, who created us for forever, abides forever.
- 3. Conformity to the world leads to eternal separation from God.
 - a. *If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in Him.*
 - b. If the love of the Father is not in a person, then the wrath of the Father rests on Him.
 - c. ***Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind . . .***
- 4. How can we avoid the cultural conformity trap?
 - a. By the transformation of our mind, our thinking, our worldview
 - b. And how does that happen? Through the Word of God, specifically by embracing the teachings of Jesus.

II. Transforming the Mind: Embracing the Teachings of Jesus

A. When you don’t understand, don’t be afraid to ask.

- 1. **Mark 9:30-32 (ESV)** ³⁰ *They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he did not want anyone to know,* ³¹ *for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into*

the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise.”³² But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.

2. Two reasons for fear
 - a. Afraid of the teacher
 - (1) Ms Stoer
 - (2) But, who is the teacher here? Jesus
 - b. Afraid of the answer
 - (1) Illustration: Momma says, “Go cut me a switch!”
 - (a) Show the difference between a switch and a SWITCH!
 - (b) When momma says, “Go cut me a switch, you don’t ask why because you know you don’t want the answer!”
 - (2) Sometimes, we will not ask for understanding because we know the answer will require something of us we do not want to release, or
 - (3) we believe the answer will impose something on us we do not want to receive
3. Two Comforts
 - a. We are loved by God
 - b. His will for us is good
 - (1) **Romans 8:31-39 (ESV)**
 - (2) (Rhetorical Questions)
 - (a) ³¹ *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?*
 - (b) ³³ *Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies.*
 - (c) ³⁴ *Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.*
 - (d) ³⁵ *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”*
 - (e) ³⁷ *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else*

in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

B. Embrace the mission as primary, not supplemental

1. **Matthew 28:19-20 (ESV)** ¹⁹ *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*
2. **Regardless of the context of a Christian’s life, the mission is the same: be a disciple-making disciple**

C. Wait for the power, then go.

1. **Illustration: Fuel**
 - a. Heading for Duluth
 - b. Truck all ready
 - c. Ignition
 - d. Nothing!
 - e. Useless to head for Duluth in the truck when there’s no gas in the tank.
 - f. **It is useless to think we can live like Jesus for God’s glory in this world without being empowered by the Holy Spirit**
2. **Acts 1:8 (ESV)** *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*
3. Powerless people are more likely to conform to cultural pressure than someone empowered by the Holy Spirit to be transformed into the likeness of Jesus
 - a. Through the Word
 - b. In prayer
 - c. By submission of the will (indulge, don’t quench, the Spirit)

III. Final Admonition

A. Following Jesus with our whole heart comes with great cost

1. **Matthew 10:24–25 (ESV)** ²⁴ *“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.*
2. **John 15:18–21 (ESV)** ¹⁸ *“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. ²¹ But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.*
3. **Mark 8:34–38 (ESV)** ³⁴ *And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself*

and take up his cross and follow me. ³⁵For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. ³⁶For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? ³⁷For what can a man give in return for his soul? ³⁸For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

B. Following Jesus with our whole heart comes with great gain

1. **Matthew 5:11-12 (ESV)** *"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*
2. **Revelation 21:3-4 (ESV)** ³ *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."*
Revelation 21:7-8 (ESV) ⁷ *The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."*
Revelation 22:3-5 (ESV) ³ *No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.*

C. You stand on the threshold of a great adventure.

1. The course, though it is not fully known to you, is fully known to God.
2. Kevin, give your life to Jesus, heart, soul, mind, will, and body.
3. Give yourself to Him without reluctance or without reservation, and He will lead you through this world to His eternal glory.
4. **Proverbs 3:5-6 (ESV)** ⁵ *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.*