

Competition, Rivalry, and a Cup of Cold Water
Mark 9:38-41

I. Competitions and Rivalries

A. Famous Competitions/Rivalries

1. Name a famous competition/rivalry
 - a. Business
 - (1) Coca-Cola vs Pepsi
 - (2) Microsoft vs Apple
 - (3) Ford vs Chevy (Is there really any competition?)
 - b. Sports
 - (1) Army vs Navy
 - (2) Green Bay Packers vs Everybody
 - (3) Lakers vs Celtics
 - c. Family Feuds
 - (1) Hatfields vs McCoys
 - (2) War of the Roses (1455-1485): York vs Lancaster
 - d. Entertainment
 - (1) C3PO vs R2D2 (Kenny Baker vs Anthony Daniels)
 - (2) Neo vs Agent Smith
 - (3) Batman vs Joker
 - (4) Alien vs Predator
 - (5) Luke Skywalker vs Darth Vader
2. Distinction between the two ideas
 - a. The world is full of competitions and rivalries
 - b. There are some benefits to competition
 - (1) Competition increases market awareness and market penetration
 - (2) Competition encourages higher quality at the same prices
 - (3) Competition produces increased consumption
 - (4) Competition drives innovation
 - c. But, when competition becomes rivalry, something else happens
 - (1) Competition typically remains objective and outcome based, rivalry makes it personal, more subjective, and often, less rational
 - (2) When the act of winning (beating another person) becomes more important than procuring the prize, competition has morphed into rivalry.
 - (a) A “tunnel vision” attitude can develop where nothing matters but how we measure up against the opponent.
 - (b) That attitude has the potential to descend into unethical behavior in order to achieve the win

B. Jesus supports the competition but sabotages the rivalry!

1. John expresses a budding rivalry

- a. **Mark 9:38 (ESV) John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.”**
- b. Rivalry because John makes it personal
 - (1) We saw
 - (2) We tried
 - (3) Not us
- c. John’s motives
 - (1) Maybe trying to make points with Jesus after the “Who is the greatest” discussion?
 - (2) Maybe he is an immature, young man
 - (3) Maybe he is caught up in hero worship
 - (4) Maybe he is truly concerned for the purity and integrity of the gospel and reputation of Christ
 - (5) We don’t know John’s motive, but we do know Jesus’ response: **Do not stop him!**
- d. **Jesus supports the competition but sabotages the rivalry. Why?**

2. Reasons

- a. **He who does miracles in my name will not soon speak evil of me**
 - (1) Miracles -
 - (a) Miracles are an expression of power and authority
 - (b) We know that authority imposed against itself causes its own destruction
 - i) (a house divided against itself cannot stand)
 - ii) If Satan casts out Satan then his authoritative rule will not stand
 - iii) Which suggests that if this person is truly casting out demons, then the power to do is the same power Jesus has used to cast out demons!
 - (2) “in my name”
 - (a) Not just the name, but faith in the man behind the name
 - (b) Not just faith in the man, but assumption of the motive, the heart, and the power source
 - (c) **Fully representative of the heart, spirit, mind, will, and person of Jesus**
 - i) In Jesus’ name means we are asking God to treat prayer as He would the prayers of Jesus
 - ii) We are also declaring to God the presentation of ourselves in the manner of Jesus: wholly dedicated in our hearts to the glory and will of God no matter what!
 - iii) We ought not to pray in Jesus’ name if we

are not prepared to be, to ask, and to receive from God in the very likeness of Jesus!

- a) Remember, Jesus asked, “Let this cup pass from me,” and God said, “No, and sent Him to the cross.”
- b) Remember, Jesus, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross.
- c) If having the joy of God’s will and glory realized in your life is not the motive for your prayer, you really should not pray in Jesus’ name, because you’re not praying in Jesus’ name.

b. The one who is not against us is for us

- (1) We need to understand, from Jesus’ point of view, who “us” is!
 - (a) “us” is bigger than you and me
 - (b) “us” is all those whom God has elected and granted faith in Jesus Christ and in whom He has invested His Spirit!
 - (c) There’s no provincialism in the Body of Christ
- (2) **1 Corinthians 12:12-27 (ESV)** ¹² *For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.* ¹³ *For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.* ¹⁴ *For the body does not consist of one member but of many. . .* ²⁷ *Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.*

II. A Cup of Cold Water: Why This Picture?

A. A cup of water given

1. Traits
 - a. Because you belong to Christ
 - (1) The elect being served because of Christ
 - (2)
 - b. Will not lose the reward
2. Supports “for us, not against us” statement: How?

B. In the likeness of the covenant keeping God!

1. God invites the thirsty to a satisfying drink (Isa 55:1)
 - a. **Isaiah 55:1-2 (ESV)** ¹ *“Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.* ² *Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.*

- b. God invites the spiritually thirsty and hungry to come to Him for sustenance and satisfaction.
 - c. God makes a covenant promise that if we will bring our need to Him, He will supply His grace, and mercy, and power to us abundantly!
 - d. How do we know God will keep this promise?
 - (1) Chinese Restaurant: lot of promise but no delivery
 - (2) Disappointment at the promises of others surrounds us
 - (3) How do we know we will not be disappointed with God?
2. Jesus provides the water that leads to eternal life
- a. (John 4:13-14)
 - (1) The encounter with the woman at the well
 - (2) **John 4:13-14 (ESV) ¹³ Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."**
 - (a) Jesus offers the living water that satisfies
 - (b) Jesus offers the living water that saves
 - i) Forgiveness of sin
 - ii) Freedom from guilt
 - iii) Future of glory
 - (c) Jesus secures this water for those who will drink through His sinless life, substitutionary death, and subsequent resurrection
 - (d) How do we know the water can be ours?
 - b. He will not lose His reward!
 - (1) **John 6:37-40 (ESV) ³⁷ All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰ For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."**
 - (a) All that the Father gives me will come to me
 - (b) I will lose nothing of all that he has given me
 - (c) Everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life
 - (2) Everyone to whom Jesus gives of the water of life receives eternal life
 - (3) And He, Jesus, does not lose His reward - His reward being the people to whom He gives a drink of the water of life
 - c. Jesus is

- (1) the fulfilment of God's covenant promise,
- (2) the proof of God's covenant faithfulness
- (3) the embodiment of God's covenant love
- d. What does this mean?
 - (1) It means that Jesus' instruction to His disciples is this:
 - (a) Be Like Me (and that other guy who was being like me)
 - (b) Offer lost people God's covenant love just like
 - i) I have offered you the water of life
 - ii) Or that you would offer one another a cup of water in my name
 - (2) **It means that rather than get caught up in divisive rivalries, the disciples of Jesus ought to work together with those who minister "in Jesus' name" to bring Christ to the world, like cold water to your best friends on a hot day**
- 3. **Now is the time to offer a cup of water, before it is too late!**
 - a. **(Luke 16:19-31)**
 - b. Lazarus and the rich man
 - (1) No drink of water in the grave
 - (2) No relief from the agony of sin's consequences
 - c. Set aside the rivalries now before it is too late
 - d. The thirsty world perishes, you have the gospel, give them a drink

III. Conclusion

A. God offers a satisfying drink to thirsty hearts

- 1. If you are thirsty
 - a. For forgiveness
 - b. For mercy
 - c. For new life
- 2. Jesus gives the satisfying drink of God's covenant-love

B. Be Like Jesus

- 1. Be active offering that drink to others
- 2. Do not stand in the way of those offering that drink to others
 - a. Jesus Christ is the point of the gospel, of the church, of discipleship and disciples
 - b. Be like Jesus and proclaim Jesus and affirm those who are being like Jesus and affirming Jesus
 - (1) Tim Ramey invitation
 - (2) An invitation every Christian ought to make daily (start your own "MeToo" movement)