

## The Story of Jesus

Part 24: What Jesus Hates Most. [Thumbnail title- Stop Fighting for Jesus]

Mark 9:38-50 - [watch online](#)

**Summary:** Instead of having to fight for domination and control, we are invited to a life of acceptance and peace.

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### Main Ideas:

[01:13] Our level of acceptance is usually contingent on our level of conformity

[02:03] Often the Church tries to control and dominate in the name of God.

[02:45] Control and domination might produce conformity but sacrificial acceptance creates love and peace.

[04:58] Jesus flips our criteria of who's in and who's out.

[07:41] Pride and superiority breed abuse and domination

[09:25] What Jesus hates most is people experiencing hate in his name.

[12:08] To really be a Jesus Follower we have to sacrifice anything that makes us think we are superior.

[14:28] If we think following Jesus makes us superior to anyone else then we don't know the first thing about following Jesus.

[15:23] The Church is not to be a superior, elitist clique but an inviting community of love and peace.

[19:17] True life isn't about fighting and winning but about serving and loving.

### Invitation:

[17:37] Discover the Jesus way...

1. Accept Jesus' love for you and the world... John 3 vv.16-17
2. Take Jesus' words seriously... Matthew 5-7
3. Allow the Spirit of God to produce his fruit in your heart and life... Galatians 5 vv.22-23

### Discussion Questions:

1. What are some examples of ways people try to dominate or control others in the name of their beliefs or ideologies?
  - Have you ever felt pressured to conform to a certain group's criteria for acceptance? How did it make you feel?
2. Read John 3:16-17. What words stand out? How do you think this passage relates to the ideas presented in this message?
3. Jesus told his disciples to evaluate themselves instead of judging others. Why do you think it's often difficult to evaluate ourselves and our motives honestly?
4. How could we create a community that embodies sacrificial acceptance, love, and peace rather than dominance and control? What practical steps can we take to foster such a community?
5. How can your group pray with you this week?

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### Transcript:

**IN:** "The future of our nation is at stake!"

“If you aren’t fighting with us you’re part of the problem and you’re against us.”

“Stop being weak and stand up, stand your ground and fight!”

You know what... that’s a bunch of shit.

It’s pointless, empty noise. And if you’re like me you’re looking for something more/better

Good news... There’s a much better way. We can actually rise above all the noise and hate and fear mongering

We can actually make this world a better place and it has absolutely nothing to do with fighting and winning.

But it has everything to do with... Jesus. So let’s talk about it together.

**WE:** God loves you, likes you and accepts you.

Why is that often so hard to believe?

B/c we’ve been told for so long and in so many different ways if we don’t conform we don’t belong.

- School/families/friends/politics/especially religion.

**Our level of acceptance is usually contingent on our level of conformity**

But conformity to what? Whatever the group’s criteria are for belonging.

And they are either going to get you to conform by whatever means possible or force you out one way or another.

Truth is we all do it in some way.

And we start trying to dominate and control each other...

- We struggle for power in order to be the ones who get to set the criteria and say who is in and who is out.

And at least once a week we are told about something or someone we need to be outraged about, something else we need to fight against, something else threatening our beliefs/way of life/even religion

- Someone or something that doesn't fit the criteria the group has set.

And where do some of the loudest voices come from? People who claim to be The Church.

- **Often the Church tries to control and dominate in the name of God.**

“It’s ok if WE belittle and demonize. It’s ok if WE argue and fight... b/c we are doing it for God.”

“We are trying to get people to conform to God’s ways.”

“And what do you mean you disagree with us... you disagree with God?”

“Look, either you're with us or against us... either you stand up for your faith and beliefs or you're weak, you're lukewarm, you're a wolf in sheep's clothing.”

But you know what? That's a lie. That is not the way of Jesus.

It's actually the opposite of what Jesus taught... so let's see what he did teach and we'll discover...

Control and domination might produce conformity but sacrificial acceptance creates love and peace.

**GOD:** Mark 70 AD. Peter.

Previously... Jesus just gave the disciples a lesson in true greatness

- Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone.

But it seems like the nuances of that lesson still aren't sinking in...

**V. 38** This exorcist was going around using Jesus' name to heal people...

And the disciples went up to him and told him to stop helping people b/c he wasn't part of the right group.

- “You can't have God work through you to help others b/c you're not one of us.”

“WE were given the authority to cast out demons in Jesus' name! We're the special ones. We know the “right” way”

- Kind of funny since they weren't able to cast out a demon a few verses earlier.
- And now this guy who isn't part of the group is having no problem.

They didn't care that people were being healed,

- Didn't care that Jesus' name was being shown to be truly powerful,
- Didn't care this person was getting to experience God working through them...
- They only cared that this exorcist wasn't part of the right group. Wasn't one of them.

Jesus isn't having any of it... **V. 39-41** Jesus- “What's wrong with you guys?!”

He's using my name. He's actually doing good and helping people in my name... he's obviously not against us.

He's not going to experience the power of my authority working through him and then not believe in me.

Anyone not against us is for us.

Jesus flips our criteria of who's in and who's out.

We are usually the opposite aren't we?

- Anyone who isn't exactly like us and agrees exactly like us is against us.

And Jesus tells the boys, “Yeah I gave you authority to cast out demons, but that doesn't make you any better than anyone else. That doesn't give you the right to reject people.

You guys aren't here to be better/greater than anyone else, decide who's in/out... you're here to serve and invite.

In fact if someone gives you a cup of water (a basic courtesy in middle eastern culture) b/c you follow me... if they do this very basic thing for you b/c of me they are going to be rewarded, just like you are, for furthering the KoG.

There is no room for this "Us V. Them" in the KoG... it's so much bigger and better and more inclusive than you think.

And Jesus says... "You think you are the elite. You think you are the ones who are in... you think you have the right to tell people whether they are in or out?"

Think about what excluding people like this will actually do." **V. 42**

This is one of the spots where this translation seems pretty weak (no perfect translation... important to use a few in spots that seem unclear).

To cause someone to "fall into sin" is misleading.

And it is so unfortunate b/c I think if more church people/leaders understood what Jesus was really saying we'd be a very different Church.

Jesus isn't saying... if you force someone to commit a sin or trick them into sinning it'll be bad for you...

- You can't make someone lie, cheat, steal

The better phrasing isn't "to fall into sin"... but to fall away/to lose faith/to be offended...

Jesus is saying... If you cause someone who is beginning to follow me, who has a little start of faith, like this exorcist guy, to stop trusting me, to stop believing in me b/c you reject them it would be better for you to drown horribly.

That's really harsh. But Jesus knows... Pride and superiority breed abuse and domination

When we think we are the elite gatekeepers, when we think we are superior enough to tell others to do it our way or they are doing it wrong...

- Then we think any means will justify the end.
- And if people don't get inline then they are pushed out/condemned/rejected.

How many people do you know/heard about, who reject the Good News about Jesus' love b/c of how they have been treated by "Xians"?

Even I feel it from other Xians... If I don't get mad at the right causes, speak up about the right issues, preach against the sin they like to condemn the most then I'm a weak leader, a luke-warm Xian.

And that's nothing compared to what some of you have experienced... I know you've experienced rejection/hatred at the hands of someone who called themselves a Xian.

Maybe they said they hate your sin but love you the sinner... Doesn't that make you feel so loved and accepted by God?

- No... it only creates feelings of judgment and hate.

If that is you... I'm sorry.

The fact that you are watching/listening is courageous... and maybe you love Jesus but you've started to wonder if it's worth this abuse/judgment/rejection...

- You don't want to lose Jesus but you have been so mistreated by his people that you can't help but feel like maybe you're losing faith.

Listen... Jesus understands. And he is on your side. If you can believe it, he's more angry about it than you are.

What Jesus hates most is people experiencing hate in his name.

And Jesus tells his disciples, "If you do that it to someone it would be better for you to be thrown into the sea with hundreds of pounds of stone around your neck than for you to cause any more harm in my name."

And he says... "How about instead of judging who is in and who is out you take a really close look at yourself?"

"What you really need to do is cut out anything that makes you want to be or think you are greater than."

**V. 43-48** This is a heavy passage for sure... so let's break it down a bit...

1st... WHO is Jesus talking to? - Buddhists? Muslims? Atheists?

He's talking to his disciples. He's talking to people who claim to be his followers.

- Probably people who claim to have some kind of authority in his name
- Whether it's leadership authority or just moral authority.
- People who think they can tell others whether they are right or wrong... in or out.

So Jesus says... "Instead of judging if someone is in or out, you need to be evaluating yourselves very seriously."

Again "cause to sin" is misleading...

- Not talking about different vices but a warning against abusing position, power, trust, and leadership

Some commentators say there is meaning behind the body parts Jesus names...

- Hand- how we use power
- Feet- what we spend our lives pursuing
- Eye- things we value

Others say these are the parts of the body that we humans seem to value the most... and if what we value the most is in God's way we need to get rid of them.

Either way... Metaphorical: to be applied to wider issues

To really be a JF we have to sacrifice anything that makes us think we are superior.

Get rid of anything that keeps you from following Jesus' way, that gets in God's way of bringing people to himself.

- Anything that would cause you to stop trusting Jesus and start trusting your own holiness/ability

B/c if you are only looking out for yourself, if you are so hung up on who is in and who is out, if you are so superior and domineering that you make people offended by Jesus then you risk the fires of hell.

What now?!

Hell = Actual Greek word is... 'Gehenna'

- Actual place. The valley that runs past the south-west corner of the old city of Jerusalem
- In ancient times it was used as Jerusalem's trash dump, It was always smoldering

By Jesus' day it had become a metaphor for the fate, after death, of those who reject God's way.

What Jesus seems to be doing is combining the two meanings...

- If you don't eliminate what is getting in God's way,
- If you refuse to follow the way of my kingdom, the way of my peace...
- You are heading for destruction in this life and the next.

Jesus is NOT giving a systematic teaching on the exact nature of the afterlife and judgment and all of that.

He's using this image and the meaning it had been given as a warning.

Saying... My kingdom isn't about you feeling good about yourself, feeling smug and superior b/c you got into the IN/Holy crowd while others are out.

- Feeling some sense of pride as you tell others how much of a dirty sinner they are.

This Kingdom is about my way... it isn't about winning and domineering it is about love, peace, joy, acceptance.

Look at your life, look at whether or not you think you are superior...

- Is there something you're using to try to dominate other people?

Take care of it b/c if you don't...you're only fooling yourself and it's possible you've never been following me in the 1st place.

If we think following Jesus makes us superior to anyone else then we don't know the first thing about following Jesus.

Then he gives us the alternative... **V. 49-50**

Everyone will be tested with fire... actual words are Everyone will be salted with fire... Huh?

In OT Jewish law, many of the offerings like grain and animals that were burned on the altar needed to be salted.

- Salt was linked to purification and holiness
- Meaning a disciple's service and loyalty to Jesus needs to be as total as the sacrifice offered at the temple.
- The motives need to be pure and focused on God's heart not our desire to be more than.

A life dedicated to Jesus and willing to sacrifice ego, comforts, status, privilege will create peace with others and bring people into the peace of God.

**The Church is not to be a superior elitist clique but an inviting community of love and peace.**

**Transition:** So does this sound like the Xianty we see in angry SM posts? Does this look like the Xianity we see from many of our politicians?

The type of Xianity that tells us to be strong, to dominate, to force people to "follow God's laws", to make sure everyone knows they are out b/c of their choices and beliefs has nothing to do with following the real Jesus.

Following Jesus is not about getting what we want... whether it's money, comfort, or power.

- It's not about dominating and controlling so we can win.

Following Jesus requires us to sacrifice what we think we want/need... for the good of others and for the KoG.

It's time to stop worrying about if WE are winning or losing... and start cutting out anything in us that is keeping people from discovering the love and acceptance of Jesus.

Palm Sunday... the day Jesus rode into Jeruslaem as the true king... didn't come with an army, didn't come with any weapon, didn't come to take over and dominate...

- He stopped his followers from trying to fight for him
- He said my kingdom isn't of this world.

Then he chose to die for all of humanity. To sacrifice himself for the world he loved.

- The people he valued... all of them.

Jesus came to serve those whom the disciples wanted to dominate.

And if we truly want to follow him we must be willing to cut out any hint of superiority/pride/or desire to dominate.

It's not by standing and fighting and digging in that the KoG grows and changes lives...

- It's by kneeling to serve, being gentle in our words, and caring for the people Jesus died for

**YOU:** So let's stop worrying about who is in/out and start molding our lives and our thinking around the way of Jesus.

How? Not by trying really hard to be nice... you'll just get proud of yourself and think you're better than everyone else...

**Discover the Jesus way...**

1. Accept Jesus' love for you and the world... John 3:16-17

2. Take Jesus' words seriously... Matthew 5-7

3. Allow the Spirit of God to produce his fruit in your heart and life... Galatians 5:22-23

Every day or... one thing a day twice.

**WE:** Following Jesus isn't always sunshine and daisies and happy songs...

Following the real Jesus is demanding. It requires sacrifice.

- And often the hardest thing to sacrifice is our pride/ego/desire to dominate/control others/our need to win.

Jesus didn't come to conquer and force people to obey him.

He came to love and serve... everyone.

- Especially those who were told they didn't belong,
- Who were told they were doing it wrong
- Who had been abused by those who thought they were the holy ones.

And he is still loving and serving and inviting.

He's inviting each of us to discover his love, to accept his mercy/forgiveness/grace, and to allow him to change us from the inside out into people of peace who literally change the world one person/conversation/act of love at a time.

The life Jesus offers is so different and so much better than what the rest of the world thinks we should be fighting and dominating and controlling for.

And it's available now to each of us... But we have to be willing to follow the Jesus way...

True life isn't about fighting and winning but about serving and loving.