

The Church: A Spiritual Community (Part 4) Barriers and Blinders to Spiritual Community

Jerry Cisar — March 26, 2017

Text: Mark 10:29-31

Introduction

- A. What is the greatest obstacle to community in the church?

- B. What must I do?

I. Do you want the community that Jesus describes?

- A. What does a saved life, a rescued life, look like?
 - i. The Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:14-20)

 - ii. What is required of disciples. (Mark 8:34-35)

Richard Hays: *“When we embrace Mark’s answer to the question, “Who do you say that I am?” we are not just making a theological affirmation about Jesus’ identity; we are choosing our own identity as well.”*¹

- iii. Both the Parable of the Sower and Mark 8:34-35 have significant connections in Mark 10:29-30.
 - a) The repetition of this idea of one-hundred-fold.

 - b) The repetition of the phrase, *“for my sake and for the gospel”*.

B. Community doesn't fit our expectations.

- i. It looks like little bothersome children. (10:13-16)

- ii. It looks like James and John. (10:35-41)

- iii. It looks like people who need us to lay our lives down for them. (10:42-45)

- iv. It looks like blind Bartimaeus. (10:46-52)

- v. It doesn't look like the rich man. (10:17-22)

LIVE THE STORY

*The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community.
The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- What is the greatest barrier and blinder to the spiritual community that Christ promises in Mark 10:29-30? Have you seen this in your own life?
- Which of these describes your past sentiment regarding community in the church: For some what they've seen of *community* is enough for them to say, “No thanks!” Others have desired community but been hurt. Still others have attempted to pursue it and have concluded that it's uncatchable. Some thought it was automatic upon becoming a Christian and have been disappointed. How has that view changed?
- Has your idea of community ever been close to Bonhoeffer's description of *“some wishful idea of religious fellowship”* which he says is a great danger? How does Mark 10 speak to that?
- Does the community of Christ, the church, seem like a reward worth losing your life (your very self) for? If so why? If not, what is needed to change that?
- Does the community of Christ factor into your decision making process? Or, only self? Explain what this looks like.

¹ Hays, Richard. *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation* (Kindle Locations 2361-2363). HarperCollins.

c) In Mark 10:29-30, losing our very life morphs into leaving *“house, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, or lands,”* and saving our life morphs into receiving *“a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.”*

ii. Many fail to find it because they haven't left the key thing we must lose: *“his very self.”*

C. The church is a reward.

Larry Crabb: *“And I hope we will also see that God has called us to spiritual community, with Him and with His people. It isn't an option, it is a command. But far more than that, it's the greatest privilege and joy we've been offered.”*³

B. How does the Gospel work to bear fruit?

C. Do you want the 100-fold life that Jesus describes? It is found in a spiritual community called the church.

D. How many would consider making a *death to my very self* kind of decision for the purpose of gaining true spiritual community in the church?

II. Why do so few experience the blessing of community?

A. We must leave or forsake for Jesus' sake and the Gospel, first.

Meyer: *“...if the latter is not found the case, it is through the absence of the former. The hundredfold compensation is so certain, that its not having been received presupposes the not having forsaken.”*²

B. The call that Jesus gave to the rich man is the same he gave to his disciples in Mark 8:35.

i. The inheritance of eternal life comes with the church, but many people don't want the inheritance.

William Willimon: *“The cross teaches us to have no qualms about suffering in service to the gospel. What is immoral is not one's suffering in service to the gospel, but rather one's suffering in service to triviality.”*⁴

III. Why is this community so hard to find?

A. D. Bonhoeffer: The great danger of *“some wishful idea of religious fellowship.”*

2 Quoted in Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures. Translated by Philip Schaff. Zondervan.

3 Crabb, Larry. Becoming a True Spiritual Community: A Profound Vision of What the Church Can Be (Kindle Locations 1101-1103). Thomas Nelson.

4 Willimon, William H. Calling & Character: Virtues of the Ordained Life (pg. 113). Abingdon.