

Mark 9:38

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

John reported: 'Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbad him, because he followeth not us' (Διδάσκαλε, εἶδομέν τινα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου ἐκβάλλοντα δαιμόνια, ὃς οὐκ ἀκολουθεῖ ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐκωλύσαμεν αὐτόν, ὅτι οὐκ ἀκολουθεῖ ἡμῖν). This reveals sectarian impulse—the disciple performed genuine ministry ('casting out devils in thy name') but wasn't part of their group, so they forbad him. John's repeated phrase 'he followeth not us' betrays proprietary attitude toward Jesus and ministry. The Twelve presumed exclusive rights to Jesus' authority. This sectarianism stems from pride, insecurity, and desire for control. Their action contradicted Jesus' teaching about receiving others (v. 37). Jesus' response (v. 39) corrects this narrow-mindedness, teaching that kingdom work transcends organizational boundaries. True disciples rejoice in Christ's advancement, regardless of who performs it.

Historical Context

Jewish exorcism practices existed (Matthew 12:27; Acts 19:13), but this person successfully cast out demons 'in Jesus' name'—unusual for non-disciples. The phrase 'in thy name' indicates authority derived from Jesus, not independent power. The disciples' sectarianism reflects common religious exclusivism—various Jewish sects (Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes) viewed others suspiciously. Early church struggled with similar issues—Paul addressed factionalism (1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:4-7). Jesus' response teaches that genuine faith and effective ministry

can exist outside official structures. This doesn't endorse doctrinal indifference but warns against proprietary attitudes. The kingdom is larger than any single group.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the disciples' sectarianism ('he followeth not us') reveal pride and insecurity masked as doctrinal concern?
2. What does this incident teach about rejoicing in Christ's work regardless of who performs it, versus protecting organizational territory?

Interlinear Text

ἀπεκρίθη	δὲ	αὐτόν	ὁ	Ἰωάννης	λέγων,	Διδάσκαλε	
answered	And	him		John	saying	Master	
G611	G1161	G846	G3588	G2491	G3004	G1320	
εἶδομέν	τινα	τῷ	ὀνόματί	σου	ἐκβάλλοντα	δαιμόνια	ὅς
we saw	one		name	in thy	casting out	devils	and
G1492	G5100	G3588	G3686	G4675	G1544	G1140	G3739
οὐκ	ἀκολουθεῖ	ἡμῖν·	καὶ	ἐκωλύσαμεν	αὐτόν	ὅτι	οὐκ
not	he followeth	us	and	we forbad	him	because	not
G3756	G190	G2254	G2532	G2967	G846	G3754	G3756
ἀκολουθεῖ	ἡμῖν·						
he followeth	us						
G190	G2254						

Additional Cross-References

Luke 11:19 (Evil): And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.

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