

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, εἴδομέν 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** G3588 **John** **saying** **Master**
G611 G1161 G846 G2491 G3004 G1320

εἶδομέν τινα τῷ ὀνόματί σου ἐκβάλλοντα δαιμόνια ὃς

we saw **one** G3588 **name** **in thy** **casting out** **devils** **and**
G1492 G5100 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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