

Mrk38 – **Selfish Ambition** – **Mark 10:32-45**

In our **Last msg** in Mark – we **met** the **Rich Young Ruler**

& we **looked** at the **THIRD Hard Saying** of Jesus  
**in** this **section** of **Mark**

I **think** today is the **FOURTH Hard Saying** in a row - & the last

**Today** – Jesus addresses **Selfish Ambition**

**Here's a good definition of Selfish Ambition**

*Being concerned with your own interests & welfare, over the good of others.*

& **Today** – **Jesus** is going to “**Call us Out**”

**over** our **tendency** to be Far **More Concerned**  
with **OURSELVES** – **OVER** the **good** of **others**

& **Jesus** is going **to give us** – the **clear Antidote**  
**For** us to **be healed** from our **Selfish Ambition Disease**

**Let's Pray**

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We **pick it up** today in - **Mark 10:32 (NLT)**

## **Mark 10:32 (NLT)**

**32 They were now on the way up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. The disciples were filled with awe, (possibly at the determination of Jesus to get to Jerusalem) **and the people following behind were overwhelmed with fear** . . . (possibly because they anticipated trouble when Jesus got there).**

& maybe - **BECAUSE** of the **Awe & Fear** in the **group**

**Jesus felt** the need to '**once more**'  
**remind** them of **what** was **coming** – **when** they **got** there

## **& so - in Mark 10:32(b)-34 (NLT)**

**32 . . . Taking the twelve disciples aside, Jesus once more began to describe everything that was about to happen to him.**

**33 "Listen," he said (try to pay attention), "we're going up to Jerusalem, where the Son of Man will be betrayed to the leading priests and the teachers of religious law. They will sentence him to die and hand him over to the Romans.**

**34 They will mock him, spit on him, flog him with a whip, and kill him, but after three days he will rise again."**

**This** is the **THIRD time**

**Jesus** has **clearly explained** this - to his **disciples**

But **LUKE** adds – **in his account** of this **event**

**Luke 18:34 (NLT)** → → →

## **Luke 18:34 (NLT)**

**34 But they** (the Disciples) **didn't understand** any of this. **The significance of his words was hidden from them, and they failed to grasp what he was talking about.**

This **seems** pretty weird, right? – ***“What part of mock, spit, flog, & KILL are you not getting the significance of?”***

**BUT** – the very **next section PROVES**

**that** the Disciples **Completely MISSED**  
the **Significance** of what **Jesus** was **saying** (**v's 33-34**)

Or - **Maybe** they **didn't WANT** to **hear** it

**Because** it **didn't fit** into **THEIR Plan**

<p><b><u>Which</u></b> is <b><u>Not</u></b> That <b><u>Different</u></b> – than how <b><u>WE sometimes</u></b> take <b><u>News</u></b> – that <b><u>WE Don't want</u></b> to hear</p>
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& **it's** an **important** note

**because** - in the **very next** Vs (**Mk 10:35**)  
the **NET Bible translation notes** say this

***the word “then” (v.35) is used, to indicate the implied sequence of events***

**Meaning** – the Very **NEXT event**  
**after Jesus** tells the disciples **AGAIN**

**that** he's **going** to be **Mocked**, **Spit on**,  
**Flogged**, & **KILLED** when they **get** to **Jerusalem** . . .

The **Very NEXT thing** that happens – **IS THIS**

### **Mark 10:35-37 (NLT)**

***35 Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came over and spoke to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do us a favor.”***

***36 “What is your request?” he asked. (a little miffed)***

***37 They replied, “When you sit on your glorious throne, we want to sit in places of honor next to you, one on your right and the other on your left.”***

**Wait a minute!**

**Jesus** just **told them** he was **headed** to **Jerusalem**

to **go thru** a Horrific **SUFFERING & DEATH**  
& **be RAISED** up again on the **3<sup>rd</sup> day**

& the **Sons of Thunder** (as they're known) – are **like**

***“Yeah, we hear you Jesus - but look, we've got a favor to ask you – is now a good time?”***

**NO** – **Now is NOT a Good Time** – **Are you kidding me?**

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**I think** what's **even worse** for these **Sons of Ambition**

Is that in **Matthew's Account**

**Matthew** says they **actually**  
**brought their MOTHER** to **plead** their **case** for them

**AND** – their **mother MAY HAVE BEEN** an **AUNT** to Jesus –  
**Making James & John** possibly **COUSINS**

**MAKING** this **entire thing** look like **something Joe Biden** would  
**do** for his **son Hunter** – to **get him** a **multi-million \$ salary** from  
a **Ukranian Oil company**

**Can you SEE** the **Selfish Ambition Exploding** here?

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So – **knowing** that **the Disciples**  
**weren't** really **'getting'** what **he was saying**

**Jesus 'plays along'** with **their request**

Again – **in V.37** – **James & John** ask *to sit in places of honor,*  
***NEXT to Jesus, when Jesus takes his throne***

**& then we read in Mark 10:38-39 (NLT)**

***38 But Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you are asking! Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of suffering I am about to drink? Are you able to be baptized with the baptism of suffering I must be baptized with?"***

***39 "Oh yes," they replied, "we are able!" . . .***

***Oh yeah Jesus, we can do that – no problem***

***Does that mean we get the place of HONOR?***

***We're NOT really sure what you're talking about  
but if it'll get us the position, then yeah, sure – we'll do it***

**BUT – Jesus is talking about the Bitter Cup of Death**

**he's saying if you want  
a Place of HONOR with me – it involves DEATH**

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The Sons of Thunder didn't know what they were asking

They were just trying to get in ahead of all the other guys  
get a 'leg up' - You know - Secure 'their position'

Just like us in the BUSINESS WORLD  
& Far too often – in the CHURCH WORLD

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But Jesus is trying to get across to them

that the pathway to honor – For a Christ-Follower  
is thru SUFFERING and DEATH

**Just as he said so clearly in Mark 8:34 (NLT) → →**

**Mark 8:34 (NLT)**

**34 . . . “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross (walking as a dead man), and follow me.**

In **the life** of **following Jesus**

**Any Honor** comes **from** a **Genuine DEATH**

& that **Genuine Death** – is **DEATH OF SELF**

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& **so Jesus** – with a **HEAVY SIGH**

**Tells them in Mark 10:39(b)- (NLT)**

**39 . . . Then Jesus told them, “You will indeed drink from my bitter cup and be baptized with my baptism of suffering.**

**1Pet 4:13** says – *the trials and persecution you suffer for His Name – cause you to SHARE in his suffering*

& **All** of the **Disciples DID drink**  
from the **cup of suffering** – **for His Name**

& All **were baptized** with a **similar Baptism** of **Suffering**

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So - Jesus says

*indeed you WILL experience some similar suffering*

**But then – in Mark 10:40 Jesus says (NLT)**

***40 But I have no right to say who will sit on my right or my left. God has prepared those places for the ones he has chosen.”***

**Jesus isn't going to FEED this Sinful Selfish Ambition**

& He's **NOT going to try to explain –**  
**ANYTHING about Thrones in his Kingdom**

Because **Right Now – these two are Getting an F-**  
in the **School of Understanding**

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& **BECAUSE they're Failing so Bad**  
**then – the Selfish Ambition Explosion - OCCURS**

**Mark 10:41 (NLT)**

***41 When the ten other disciples heard what James and John had asked, they were indignant.***

**INDIGNANT means**

***to be annoyed and angry at unfair treatment***

& the **other 10 Disciples were *annoyed and angry***  
***at this potential unfair treatment***

& **WHY were they (*most likely*) so Angry & Annoyed?**

**Probably because they had the same Selfish Ambition**  
**& James & John - *Beat them to the punch***

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So - *It's ON now* – these guys (Probably ALL of them)  
Have SERIOUS - *Selfish Ambition PROBLEMS*

& so – Jesus Addresses it

Mark 10:42-43(a) (NLT)

*42 So Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them.*

*43 But among you it will be different . . .*

*Is it tho, really?*

Is the Selfish Ambition & Self Promotion  
we see in the church

Really that Different than what we see in the World?

It is Supposed to BE

But Often - & Sadly – It is NOT

Certainly it's because of – Our Selfish Ambition Sin Nature

But Also – I think – it's because

we DEFINE Success in the Church

According to the World's DEFINITION of Success

Which means – Our definition of Success in the Ministry

Is built on a completely FALSE FOUNDATION

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**Because Jesus made the church  
an UPSIDE DOWN organization**

**Think of a Pyramid**

then **turn it over** on **its top** – **so**  
the **person** on the **Top** – **becomes** the **person** on the **Bottom**

**THAT** is the **Jesus Style of Leadership**

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& **so** – Jesus is **going** to **FLIP** the **Success Pyramid**  
On **IT'S HEAD** – For the **Disciples**

**Mark 10:43(b)-44 (NLT)**

**43 . . . Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant,**

**44 and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else.**

**DO YOU** have a **TRUE Servants Heart?**

**Desiring** to **HELP** those **around you**  
with **NO regard** to **your SELF?**

**Are** you **willing** to **GENUINELY**  
**take** the **lowest position** of a **Slave**

**in order** to **Serve**  
those **Christ** has **put** in **front of you?**

**If you Genuinely & Truly DO**

**then you are counted as the Most Honored  
in the Upside-Down Kingdom of God**

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**& I say Genuinely & Truly  
Because we see (too often)**

**a Christian “Put On” this approach  
in order to Succeed in their Selfish Ambition**

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**But – God sees the HEART**

**& the heart of a True SERVANT  
The heart of a True SLAVE to others**

**Is the Heart – that is MOST HONORED  
in the Kingdom of God**

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**WHY?**

**Because - Mark 10:45 says (NLT)  
*45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to  
serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”***

**Many Scholars view THIS Vs  
as the key - to the entire Gospel of Mark**

## **Sacrificial Servanthood**

**On the Order** – of **Jesus Christ** Himself

The **Son of Man** came to **SERVE**  
and to **give his life** as a **RANSOM** for many

**How in the world** can **we say** we are **following Jesus**

**If we** are **driven** by  
**seeking a position** - **or a title** – **or honor?**

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**Worldly ambition** in the **ministry**  
is a **Black-Eye** on the **church**

It causes **Jealousy**, & **Rivalries**,  
& **all things** that **come** from **the flesh**

& **the response** of the **other 10 Disciples**  
**PROVES THAT**

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**& if** the **Disciples** who **were**  
**Physically WALKING** with **Jesus** for **3 years**

**can** so **easily SUCCUMB**  
to this **Destructive Sin** - of **Selfish Ambition**

Then **How LIKELY** are **WE**  
to **take on** these **same Sinful Tendencies?**

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**The words of Philippians 2:3**

should **pierce our hearts** – on **this matter**

**Philippians 2:3 (ESV)**

**3 Do nothing from selfish ambition** (concern for yourself) **or conceit** (thinking too highly of yourself), ***but in humility*** (not thinking of yourself) ***count others more significant than yourselves.***

**This Requires** – The **Bitter**, & **Humiliating**  
**DEATH of SELF**

**Not just trying hard** to **ACT this way**  
**so** you **can GET** the **Position** you've **been Vying for**

**This** requires **real** – **rubber meets the road** – **DEATH**

It is **Death To SELF**

It is the **Death OF Self**

**Galatians 2:20(a) says (NLT)**

**20 My old self** (my sin nature) **has been crucified with Christ . . .**

**That** is **Positionally True**

**if you** are **SAVED today**

Your **Sin Nature** Has **BEEN Crucified**

**Then WHY** are **we still**

**acting** out of **SELFISH AMBITION** & **CONCEIT?**

**MAYBE because** – you have **Not put into Practice**

The **REST of the Vs**

**Galatians 2:20(b) (NLT)**

***20 . . . It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.***

**Listen to me please**

If **we take** the **beginning** of this Vs - ***My old self*** (my sin nature) ***has been crucified with Christ . . .***

& **then** we **TRY REALLY HARD**  
to **NOT** have **Selfish Ambition** in our **Lives**

Then **we've MISSED IT** completely

**Because** we **Don't Understand** – the **REST of the Vs**

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Your **OLD Nature CAN'T Be Dead** (in a practical sense)  
**without** the **NEW LIFE of Christ - Taking its Place**

**It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me**

Have you **allowed THAT**  
to **be TRUE** in your **Life?**

**Are** you **Truly Allowing Jesus Christ**

To **Rule & Reign** in **Your life** –  
to **Live IN YOU completely?**

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**We MUST Live – By Fully Trusting**  
**in the LIFE - of the Son of God – Living Fully IN US**

**In order for us – to Lay our life down**  
**& be a True Servant** to Others

**& then the one who came to earth**  
to **BE a Servant** & to **Give** his **life** a **RANSOM for Many**

**WILL BE – IN YOU –**

The **Sacrificial Servant** he has **called you to be**

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We **have to close** – with the **words** of **Another James**  
**this one** mostly likely the **brother** of **Jesus**

### **James 3:14–18 (NLT)**

***14 But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don't cover up the truth with boasting and lying.***

***15 For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic.***

***16 For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind.***

***17 But the wisdom from above (the opposite of this) is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere.***

***18 And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.***

**Let's Pray**