



gracefellowship

Mark: Following Christ to the Cross
May 17, 2020
Being Great

This morning we are looking at the final chapter in Mark's gospel before Jesus gets to Jerusalem. After today the events we will look at will all focus on the final week of Jesus's life.

If you were with us last week you heard Jesus tell His disciples for the first time that He was going to be killed.

- They didn't get it.
- Peter rebuked Jesus

If you read chapter 9 this week you saw a second time that told the disciples He was going to die and rise again. And as we get into chapter 10 today we are going to see a third time Jesus will tell the disciples that He is going to Jerusalem to die.

:: Mark 10:32-34

32 They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him.

33 "We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles,

34 who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise."

Jesus gives more details here than ever before about his death.

Observations:

- Jesus is moving with intentionality. (Luke 9:51 Jesus resolutely set His face toward Jerusalem.)
- Jesus shows tremendous bravery and courage to move toward Jerusalem knowing what is about to happen to him.
- The disciples also get high marks in my book for continuing to follow Jesus!
 - o ...the disciples were astonished, while those who followed

were afraid.

- They didn't fully understand what was going on, but they knew enough to be intimidated by the situation.
 - o This is a good word for us today. While we are facing times that have a lot of people living in fear, worry and anxiety, the most important thing we can do is continue to follow Jesus. We follow Jesus into the unknown. As disciples of Jesus we need to commit to follow Him no matter what comes our way. Jesus doesn't chastise them for their fear; He graciously explains what is coming.
 - o Illustration: When my kids have been scared of something they have never done before I try to help calm them by telling them about my experiences. Example: Roller Coasters
- The first time Jesus told them about his death Peter rebuked Him. The second time there was confusion and no one was brave enough to ask Jesus what He meant. The third time there is no response at all.

Now, here is where the story gets interesting!

:: Mark 10:35-37

35 Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask."

36 "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.

37 They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory."

The word "then" ties this story together. In other words, Jesus just finished telling the disciples about how violently he was going to be killed and James and John came to Jesus to ask about glory for themselves in His kingdom!

You have to love how bold they are to ask Jesus to do whatever they ask before they even ask their question!

- Translation: "In your Kingdom we want to be great!"
- I actually like the way Matthew records this event in Matthew 20. Matthew was there as these events unfolded and he remembers a detail Mark doesn't include: James and John's Mom is the one who comes to Jesus and asks for her sons to have a place of glory in His Kingdom!

Illustration: Cole's Mother-in-Law sent me a text this week asking if he could be dismissed early from Staff Meeting to attend a family event celebrating the fact he and Sarah both graduated! You know you're getting old and hiring young people when their in-laws write a note asking for an excused absence! This was all a joke, of course, and something she did in order to help me give Cole a hard time!

- Ask Cole to join me on stage and introduce the next step of his journey leaving Team 56 in order to pursue Seminary and continue his path toward full time vocational ministry.

Let's get back to the text and look at Jesus's response to the request.

:: Mark 10:38-40

38 "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"

39 "We can," they answered. Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with,

40 but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared."

The cup = The cup of salvation.

- 1. For Jesus was the cup of God's wrath.**
- 2. For disciples of Jesus it is the cup of salvation through His blood, the new covenant of grace.**
- 3. It's a cup of suffering.**

Jesus also mentions that we will be baptized with his baptism. This isn't talking about the water baptism we experience when we become followers of Jesus. He is talking about baptism into His suffering. When we go through something difficult we refer to a baptism by fire. The figure of speech means we were thrown in over our heads and were left to figure it out in the heat of the experience.

As followers of Jesus we are baptized into the life and death of the Jesus. Following Jesus requires us to deny ourselves, take up our cross daily and follow Him. If we are going to follow Jesus we can expect suffering and persecution and hardship to be part of the deal. But we can also expect that following Christ into His baptism means experiencing a completely new way of life now and in eternity.

:: Romans 6:1-11

1 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?

2 By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.

6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—

7 because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.

10 The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Jesus has just finished having this conversation about drinking his cup and be baptized in his baptism when the rest of the disciples catch wind of the conversation that's taking place. Remember, James and John asked for positions of power in Jesus's Kingdom. Let's see how that goes over with the other guys!

:: Mark 10:41-45

41 When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John.

42 Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.

43 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,

44 and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.

45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

The disciples became indignant about this proposition from James and John. It's not the first time this group has argued over who was greatest among them! This was a product of their environment. Jesus says, they had been raised among a Roman culture that Jesus says, "[their] rulers...lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them."

Not so with you! Anyone who wants to be great must be your servant.

Observations:

- 1. Jesus doesn't say being great is a bad thing. He just redefines greatness!**
- 2. Being great means servicing others rather than exalting yourself.**
- 3. The best leaders don't lord power over others; they help people along.**

If you want recognition in God's Kingdom you have to step way down in this life. I love how Mark ties stories together in his gospel. Just before these events we had another interesting conversation between Jesus and a young man who was really wealthy. He probably had a lot of servants and was used to being on top of the organizational charts in his businesses and home. When he came to Jesus he asked, "What do I have to do to *inherit* eternal life? Jesus told him he must keep the commandments- then he listed

If you want to be a great leader, spend your life asking, “What can I do to help?”

- Husbands
- Wives
- Bosses
- Employees
- Life Group Leaders

James and John wanted to be given greatness. “Do for us whatever we ask... before we ask it!” Jesus called them to serve in order to gain greatness. We don’t gain salvation through serving- this isn’t a works based approach to getting your ticket to heaven punched! Because we are saved by a God who lowered Himself off the throne of heaven to come live among us and give His life for ours, we are to serve like Him in response to our salvation.

We are called to be servants. Jesus was our example.

45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Jesus saw us lost in our sins and separated from His Father and asked the question: What can I do to help? So He humbled Himself and gave His life as a ransom from many.

If Jesus humbled Himself to serve people who would mock Him, spit on Him, flog Him and kill Him, how much more should I humble myself as a servant in His Kingdom?

It’s easy right now because of the circumstances we are facing in our world to sit on our couches and become consumers of church instead of being the church. I want to remind- going to a building on Sunday morning for a worship service isn’t what makes us the church. The unified people of God, in service to the Kingdom of God on this earth, is what makes us the church. Look around you and ask the question: What can I do to help? Where can I serve? How can I be Jesus to people around me? We aren’t consumers who get to pat ourselves on the back because we woke up and watched a church service today. We have to get off our couches and go into the world and be the church by giving our lives away for the glory of our King!

Pray