

We have come to the end of Mark 10 and I have decided to push “pause” in our series in order to apply some of what we have learned. For the next couple of months we are going to make an effort to engage our friends and neighbors in redemptive conversations about Jesus. We are going to do that by participating in Explore God with over 300 other churches in the metroplex. Explore God is a way to talk about some serious questions that don’t get talked about very much. For the next two weeks we will train, prepare and communicate how you can be involved and then, on Sept. 13, I will preach the first of seven messages that address some of the ultimate questions of life. But this morning I want to remind you of the two most important resources we have been given in order to lead people to the beauty of the gospel. The first resource is **a prepared messenger**.

In Mk. 10:43-45, Jesus said, “Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” Jesus not only called His disciples to serve but He demonstrated service in His own life. The selflessness of His service was based on an awareness of three things, all found in John 13:3. Until we settle these three issues it is unlikely that we will be able to break out of our preoccupation with ourselves in order to serve others.

1. He knew where He came from.
2. He knew where He was going.
3. He knew that the Father had given Him what He needed.

Ro. 8:32/2 Pe. 1:3

Armed with this knowledge Jesus got up from supper, took up a towel and began to wash His disciples feet. If you are convinced that you have come from God and are going back to God, if you know that God will give you everything necessary for “life and godliness” then you have nothing to lose. We can be bold in our efforts to share the good news of the gospel – that is if we know what that is.

The second resource is **a prepared message**. The message we bring will never change but it must be explained in terms that people can understand. Our culture is changing fast. We used to assume a certain biblical literacy. You could talk about sin or sing about bringing forth a royal diadem and people would be familiar with those concepts. Not today. In fact, many today are militant about the fact that they don’t believe in God. Our first step is to find out what God they don’t believe in. There are three aspects of the

gospel that provide common ground with people no matter what they believe about Jesus.

I. This world is broken...and so are we. Nothing works the way it should. At some point everyone hits the wall. Remember when you were a child there was always someone who had the solution to your greatest problems. When you got hurt or sick, your mom knew what to do. When you were really sick the doctor could make you well. When you were confused your teacher could explain things to you. When you were lonely you had a friend who took the edge off your loneliness.

Then you grew up and you discovered that sometimes people get divorced and there is nothing you can do about it. Sometimes even our pets get sick and die and we don't have any control over that. At some point you come face to face with a flawed and fallen world. And the worst part is that you discover that it's not just the world that's broken, you are broken too. No matter how far your friends are from God or how different their views are from yours, one thing we can all agree on is that there is something wrong with this world. That's the bad news but here's the good news...

II. This world can be fixed...and so can we. In every human heart there dwells a vision, a dream, a hope of a better place. But how do I get there? There is a way out of our painful predicament but the solution lies beyond the usual prescriptions - education, money, politics, science. These can be wonderful resources but history proves them inadequate to solve our problem.

Mark introduces to the One who has authority over our desperate condition. He does this by recounting four strategically placed miracles back to back.

When Jesus calmed the storm He demonstrated His authority over nature.

When Jesus cast demons out of a man from Gerasa He demonstrated His authority over satanic forces.

When Jesus healed a woman who had been bleeding for 12 years He demonstrated His authority over sickness.

When Jesus raised a little girl from the dead Jesus demonstrated His authority over death.

These are all forces we are helpless to overcome. There is no human solution to these problems. The storm on the lake terrified experienced sailors. The

demoniac could not be subdued by anyone. The hemorrhaging woman had been seeing doctors for twelve years but only got worse. The young girl was no longer sick, but dead. In the most hopeless cases Jesus brings healing, deliverance, and salvation.

Peter observes all this and comes to the conclusion, “You are the Christ.” His confession that Jesus is the “Christ” literally means “anointed one.” Kings and priests were traditionally anointed with oil as a coronation or consecration. The word had become associated with the Jewish Messiah who would be the King to end all kings, the King who would make the world right. Peter is saying, “You are the Messiah.”

Then the story takes a most unexpected turn. “And He began to teach them that the Son of Man *must suffer* many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.” 8:31. And Peter rebuked Him.

It made no sense that the Messiah would suffer. After all, he was going to defeat evil and injustice and make everything right with the world. How can you defeat evil by suffering and dying? But Jesus used the word “must.” He is not saying, “I will do my best but I will lose the battle.” He is saying, “I came to be defeated.”

Jesus is not just predicting He will die, He’s planning to die. Why? **Because the love of God is the only solution to man’s problem.** This is good news because **we owed a debt we could not pay so Jesus paid a debt He did not owe.** Why? Love. The very nature of love calls for a transfer of the debt of the one loved to the one who is the lover. When you love someone you are willing to pay what they owe.

You are loved with an unconditional, everlasting, sacrificial love. What makes God’s love so irresistible is that He loves us even though we can do nothing for Him. He doesn’t need us. We need love but He does not. He is love. We love because we want to be loved back. He loves because that’s His nature. He doesn’t need our love. He isn’t lonely or needy or hungry for affection. That’s why Ro. 5:8 describes God’s love this way, “God demonstrated His love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Do you see it? We had done nothing for God, in fact, we were hostile to God, and yet He sent Jesus to die for us. That’s a beautiful thing.