

TRUE LEADERSHIP Sunday School- February 20, 2011

Unifying Topic: JESUS CAME TO SERVE

Lesson Text

I. A Request For Power (Mark 10:35-40)

II. A Call To Serve (Mark 10:41-45)

The Main Thought: For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. (Mark 10:45,KJV).

Unifying Principle: Great leaders make a gift of themselves and their work to those whom they would lead. What is the mark of great leadership? Jesus said that He came to serve, not to be served, and demonstrated that as an example to follow.

Lesson Aim: To help students appreciate how Jesus wants us to serve others.

Life Aim: To teach Christians that Christ, who gave His life as a sacrifice for many, wants us to value serving others more than seeking a position of power. We do this by realizing that we achieve greatness through humble service.

10:35 And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire

10:36 And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you?.

10:37 They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.

10:38 But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?.

10:39 And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:

10:40 But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.

10:41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John.

10:42 But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

10:43 But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:

10:44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

10:45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

HISTORY:

Chapter 10:28-31 Peter raises his voice, still thinking about what they have done in following Jesus: **Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.** Christ takes the worse scenario- to forsake a father, a mother, a brother, a wife, for Christ, those whom He knows they love, is hard. Just as the rich are to live as sacrificially as the poor (parting with or giving up what they think they've earned or secured and/or is theirs) in order to have what Jesus is giving. And yet they must do so, rather than deny or disown Christ. Secured wealth is not secured salvation; neither is giving up everything with the wrong motive. Really you can't hold on to what is not yours, "*temporal possessions.*" The person's motive has to be that, he is giving or sacrificing for Christ's sake and the spreading of the gospel with a pure heart.

So now Jesus turns this around and says, even though giving up and forsaking all, there is a promise, a reward. 'You have not done this for nothing!' The promise rewarded will be that of an hundred-fold now in this time of what he gives up and sacrifices, but we can't forget about the persecution on the way to the promise! Some had been rejected by family and lost their homes when they turned to Jesus for salvation or set out to serve Him. Why Persecution? –a believer suffers for righteousness. What comes from persecution?

- A special closeness, a oneness, a deep intense consciousness of the Lord's Presence. It is beyond imagination and unexplainable.
- It conveys a special identification with Christ. As the Lord suffered on behalf of the disciples, the disciples, suffers on behalf of the Lord, and therefore completes the sufferings of Christ for the church.

However, these experiences are gained only through suffering. But what is given, is given for Christ's sake, and the gospel's! The true believer, the disciple of Christ will be abundantly rewarded, in fact a hundred-fold. They shall have abundance of comfort while they live, sufficient to make up for all their losses. Jesus teaches us a wonderful truth while holding in His hands our blessings. To close this, He tells them, though they were first called, that there should be disciples called after them that should be preferred before them; Israel, although first, will be last, because of their rejection of Christ; the Church of the Gentiles although last, will be first because of their acceptance of Christ!

Chapter 10:32-34 Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem... This is Jesus' final destination He had being

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talking about! And as the disciples follow, they were both **amazed** and **afraid**.

- Amazed, because they saw that there was something different about Jesus—a great sadness! He usually walked along with the disciples, utilizing every moment as a teaching opportunity. This time **Jesus went before them**. When the disciples saw Him striding out ahead of them, they knew something serious and unusual was occupying His mind. His pace and His preoccupation amazed and perplexed them.
- Afraid, because they realized something significant was about to happen that they did not understand. Jesus' unusual behavior and foreboding countenance caused fear.

Yet, despite their not understanding and their fear, they followed right behind Him. They did not withdraw nor forsake Him. Why?- Because they were drawn to Jesus through His love. Jesus was their life! However, they were hard to teach and slow to learn. Jesus had already informed them of His impending death and of God's concept of the Messiah. **Jesus takes away the twelve.**

10:33 This is the third time that Mark stresses the death and resurrection of Christ. He was constantly drilling that fact into His disciples, but they did not understand. These twelve had followed Him and were about to constitute the foundation of the church. Jesus knew what laid ahead of Him in Jerusalem. He made two points, **saying, Behold:**

1. **The Son of man shall be delivered to the chief priests and scribes (Jews) and condemned to death.** The word "*delivered*" (*paradothestai*) means to be delivered over into. It meant that His death was determined, ordained, set in the plan and counsel of God. His death was right before His face, ready to take place. Jesus had already named the men who would kill Him. The fact that Jesus was being condemned by the Jews, the people who had been chosen to bring salvation to the world, must have cut Him deeply.
2. **He shall be delivered to the Gentiles** and tortured and killed. The chief priest and scribes were to be the prosecutors, not the executioners. They were forbidden by law to execute anyone (Jh.18:31). They had to deliver Him over to the Gentiles for execution.

There is a symbolism seen in this fact: (1) both Jew and Gentile (the world) are guilty of the death of God's Son and (2) Jesus was to bear the sins of both Jew and Gentile (the world) in His death. He was to reconcile both to God.

10:34 Note the four forms of torture mentioned:

1. **Mockery:** to ridicule, scorn, insult, humiliate, defy, jeer.
2. **Scourge:** to beat with a rod or a whip weighted with either jagged metal or bone chips. Thirty-nine or forty lashes were inflicted. The whole purpose of scourging was to inflict severe pain.
3. **Spitting:** a sign of utter contempt.
4. **Crucify:** terrible suffering on the cross.
 1. Mentally, while He was being tortured, His mind was bound to be upon thinking about the sin of man and the problem sin had caused God. Imagine being stripped naked, hung up high for all to see, mocked, and completely rejected by His people. He was suffering mentally to the ultimate degree.
 2. Spiritually, His heart was being broken. Somebody who had always been present with the Father, now separated and experiencing the wrath of sin as God poured out on Jesus on the cross. He was to be separated from God bearing the condemnation of sin for man.
 3. Physically, His pain was to be more severe because of the mental and spiritual pressure. His physical sacrifice is connected with blood.
 - a. First, He sweat blood when He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane.
 - b. Then there was the crown of thorns jammed down on top of His head, hard.
 - c. Then there was the flogging, beating with a whip made of several little whips, each with sharp, jagged rocks and shards of metal tied to their ends. These dug deeply into His back, shredding it beyond recognition.
 - d. There is also the spikes driven through His hands and His feet.
 - e. And finally the piercing of His side with the sword so that blood and water spilled out.

All of this is proof that God really loves us, for the awesome price He paid to make us righteous. After going through all of this **on the third day He was to rise again**. Jesus set His heart and face toward the cross. He was consumed and obsessed with the cross. Why? – Because the purpose of the cross was the focus of God's purpose, His Will throughout all eternity.

- The cross was dear to His heart because it was the means by which He was to gain many brothers.
- The cross was dear to His heart because through death He was to be made the captain of man's salvation.
- The cross was dear to His heart because by His death He was to destroy the power of the devil over man; that is death.
- The cross was dear to His heart because by the cross He was to reconcile all men, reconcile them both to God and to one another.

- The cross was dear to His heart because through death He was to arise and return to His former glory which He had with the Father before the foundation of the world.

This is truly "*True Leadership*" of being the example of laying down one's life before the people and for the sake of the people.

LESSON:

Mark 10:35-40 A Request For Power

10:35-36 There was no doubt that this was the momentous event for which Jesus had prepared Himself for and tried to prepare His disciples. While Jesus was thinking of the cross, others were thinking of an earthly and material kingdom. So, if Jesus was about to set up His kingdom, now was the time to seize the positions of power in His kingdom; now was the time to secure the positions of rule and authority. This is what James and John were thinking. **James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come to Jesus.** This is the same James and John in Matthew 20:20-21 whose mother came to Jesus asking of Him for her sons to sit one on His right and the other on His left in His kingdom. Well this time the sons are asking for themselves in Mark. They made a secret approach to Jesus.

They wanted to get the upper hand on the other disciples. This was not a healthy request; it was an evil ambition. An evil ambition is sneaky. Note their words: **we would that you should do for us whatsoever we shall desire.** They tried to get a commitment before they revealed their request. They even sensed that their desire might be wrong and evil; but they subdued the sense of conscience, blinded by lust for honor, position, power, wealth, and recognition. **Jesus asked the two men what their request was.**

10:37 They answered straight to the point, wasting no time with their request, as any conscientious leader would. **Grant that we may sit one on your right and the other on your left;** grant us the top positions in your kingdom (glory, government) which you are going to set up when we get to Jerusalem. What needs to be noted is that ambition can be good or bad. The determining factor is "*motive*." The ambition of James and John exposes several possible motives:

1. There was the motive of favoritism. James and John, along with Peter, formed an inner circle around Jesus. They apparently had some feeling that they were special; the favorites of Jesus, therefore, they were due the top positions.
2. There was the motive of wealth, Zebedee, the father of James and John, was apparently wealthy. He owned a fishing business large enough to furnish fish for the palace. Wealth did carry weight with monarchs of their day, and they knew it.
3. There was the motive of power, position, influence, and authority. They wanted to be right next to Jesus in position and influence, power and authority.
4. There is the motive of social status. They were somewhat wealthy and were accepted within the palace, and were personally know by the High Priest which gave them some social standing. Social standing often makes a person feel that he is entitled to more—more position, more recognition, a higher seat. Social standing can also make one feel he is better or above others. Perhaps James and John had a tinge of both feelings. And...
5. There was the motive of love, faith, and loyalty. When ambition is rooted in the Lord and steeped in love and loyalty, it is always right and healthy. There is the possibility that James and John wanted to be next to Jesus because they were sensing some degree of love and loyalty to Him. Their love and loyalty to Him would not be the dominant force in their ambition right now, but it was definitely present.
 - a. They definitely believed Jesus: His Word, His promises, His kingdom, His power.
 - b. They definitely wanted the positions because they wanted to be next to Him.

Somehow they were speaking of glory and Jesus was speaking of death.

10:38 But Jesus said unto them, you know not what you ask. Jesus was straight forward, pulling no punches with these two ambitious men. To request positions of high honor meant also to request positions of suffering. You could not have one without the other. The question is **Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?**

The "*cup*" and the "*baptism*" referred to what Jesus would face on the cross. There is a difference between *drinking the cup of suffering* and being *baptized with suffering*."

- The "*cup*" refers more to what one takes into himself and bears within himself. It is more internal suffering and inward agony. The "*cup*" means drinking the bitterness and agony of trials, pain, hurt, sorrow, heartbreak, suffering, disappointment and tears.
- The "*baptism*" refers more to what is put upon one from the outside. It is more external suffering. The "*baptism*

of suffering" means being immersed in the rapids of affliction, rejection, abuse, ridicule, opposition, persecution and martyrdom.

When Jesus asks them if they can drink the cup He drinks, He is not asking them if they can die for the world's sin. As sinful men, James and John were not capable of this. Jesus used the cup to mean "*my lot in life*"; to share someone's cup was an expression for sharing another's fate. Jesus is asking whether James and John are prepared to live a life with more than its share of suffering because of their association with the Messiah. The idea that suffering with Jesus is an indispensable part of later sharing in His glory. In both questions He was asking James and John if they were ready to suffer for the sake of the kingdom.

10:39 They responded immediately, **We can**. In other words their understanding of what the kingdom of God would look like was very different from what Jesus had in mind. However, Jesus said, **Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink, and the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:** (James was killed by Herod. He was the first apostle to drink the cup of martyrdom. John lived around one hundred years old. Just how John died is unknown; however, he drank the cup and was baptized with suffering in a most distressful way).

10:40 **But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.** They did not understand that Jesus operated solely in obedience to God the Father and would not be the one to determine who receives the most honor in heaven. This also concerns not only the twelve, but all who follow Christ, and for all time. The two men accomplished nothing with their request, except to expose their hunger for power.

Mark 10:41-45 A Call To Serve

10:41 How did the other **ten disciples hear** what James and John had done? They probably saw the two approach Jesus off in the distance. They knew something unusual was happening. However, upon finding out, the ten other disciples were **displeased with James and John** for asking such a thing. What right did they have in asking such a thing? Why did they deserve a higher position than any of them? Jealousy, envy, pride, self-centeredness, and bitterness bred within the heart of each against the two. One thing is certain, the band of disciples was threatened; their cohesiveness and the very work of the Lord was at stake. Selfish ambition can cause some terrible things among men.

10:42 Jesus once again sits the twelve down and imparts: **You know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them.** The Gentile system of success (that of the secular world), is based on getting ahead of the other guy and they will lord it over you. The philosophy of Christ refutes this.

Genghis Khan says, "A man's greatest work is to break his enemies, to drive them before him, to take from them all the things that have been theirs, to hear the weeping of those who cherished them, to take their horses between his knees and to press in his arms the most desirable of their women."

This is the world's thinking. Jesus goes on to say...**and their great ones exercise authority upon them**, meaning in the world the greater the position, the greater the authority.

10:43 **But not so among you!** Jesus was quite clear about the difference. The way of the world is not the way of the Lord. He places the highest stamp of approval on love which expresses itself in tasks of service. Therefore, **whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister** (servant). Office and power do not make a person great; service does! Jesus did not find fault with ambition on the whole. However, there is good and true ambition (greatness) just as there is bad and false ambition (greatness). There is no place in the church for domineering leaders. The Lord's view of ambition or greatness is fourfold:

1. True ambition or greatness is not exercising lordship and authority over people; not self-centeredness.
2. True ambition or greatness seeks to minister, not to be ministered unto; you're looking for people to help and for ways to help them, whether at work, home, school, or church. It is always seeking those who need a visit, care, attention, company, food, clothing, shelter, or money.
3. True ambition does desire greatness. Note: the greatness desired must focus upon Christ; doing what the Son of God says. It is greatness due to obedience, due to doing what Christ has revealed.
 - The **great** are they who minister.

What Jesus was saying is that among His disciples, they who minister are great. The idea of ministering is that of occasional service.

10:44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest (the one holding the greater position), **shall be the servant.**

4. True ambition or greatness becomes the servant of all. The word "*servant*" (*doulos*) means a "*bond-slave*."
 - The **chiefest** are they who are servants or bond-slaves.

What Jesus was saying is that among His disciples, they who are bond-slaves are the chiefest; a person who is bound to the Lord every moment of life, always serving—regardless of hour or call or difficulty. Christians are to serve and help others, to be other-centered and not self-centered. It is not found in being a lord or a master, but ministering and serving others. Not every believer serves with the same fervor or commitment. In the kingdom of God the greatness of an individual comes from the lowly place he takes as a servant of all.

10:45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, The "*Son of man*" was the most frequently used title for Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels. The Son of man is a reference of suffering. He came to minister. The verb (*Gr diakomeō*) means to serve as an attendant, to wait on tables. The supreme act of ministering is seen in Jesus Christ! This is seen in three supreme acts.

1. The supreme Humiliation. This is the act of coming to earth. The Son of man came; the Incarnate in human flesh and a servant to mankind. In all reality, for God to become a member of so low a race of beings is unimaginable. It had to be the most humiliating acts possible.
2. The supreme Mission. This is the act of ministering.
3. The supreme Price. This is the act of giving His life a ransom for many.

...and give his life a ransom for many. "*Ransom*" (*lytron*) signifies a loosing; debtors freed; to buy someone out of helpless bondage. The word "*For*" (*Gr anti*), means "*in behalf of*", indicating a substitutionary death. Christ gave His life in exchange, as a substitute for many. He died in our place. The word "*Many*", simply emphasized a contrast in number—one person died however the ransom was paid for many. The impending doom would lead to victory. The ransom would be paid and slaves of sin would be set free. He had foretold His death and resurrection several times, but this occasion bore special significance, because He interpreted His death—who would kill him; how it would happen; his coming not to be ministered to but to minister (serve), and to give His life a ransom for many. It was all too unbelievable for His disciples to take in.

SUMMARY:

Jesus, the son of man, knowing what's ahead of Him is having to explain again to His disciples, His spiritual sons of what's about to happen to Him—His departure. He would die at the hands of the chief priests and scribes—the Jewish leaders. He describes in great detail—they will mock me, spit on me, flog me, whip me, **and kill me**. But in three days I will rise again.

However, as Jesus is telling them this, James and John were thinking something all together differently by asking Jesus a request for themselves. They are not really receiving the big picture Jesus is talking about. Asking Jesus a question was not the problem, it's always the motive in which you ask. It's just like a parent telling the children they're about to die and leave them and they're thinking about whose getting the house, or the money, the furniture, or the car; I'm the oldest and the others are getting angry. That's why it's always good for parents to leave a "*Will*." Jesus left His "*Will and Testament*" for all His children to see, read, and obey everyday—The Bible! God wants to give us what's best for us not merely what we want.

Jesus lets them know quickly, "*Not so!*" you will not be as the world, you will be different, you will think differently, and you will **do** differently! Jesus lets them know that being the greatest is serving others—being the servant! And being the chiefest, you will be the slave of all! He lets them know that He did not come to be ministered to but to minister and give Himself, His life a ransom; an exchange, a substitute for many—the ultimate victory!

James and John's request for power begins with a call to service, just as there is no testimony without a test. Keep in mind our unifying principle: "*Great leaders make a gift of themselves, and their work to those whom they would lead*", because Jesus will be our true example as we serve. True leadership is shaped in serving which gives us an opportunity for God to do the "*possible work*" that we can't do.

APPLICATION:

What you can't do, God will help you do and alleviate the stress. He develops and unfolds us in the mist of service.

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