

**OUR LORD, OUR EXAMPLE**

Mark 10:41-45

Scripture Reading: Mark 10:32-45

**Intro:** Those of you who were here last Sunday morning, know that I didn't get as far in the text as I had thought that I would. I had intended to get down through verse 45, but I got only through verse 40. So I intend, the Lord willing, to finish this morning what I started last Sunday morning.

Actually verses 35 through 45 are divided by Mark into two parts, but both are concerned with the request that James and John, and their mother (according to Matthew's Gospel), brought to the Lord. It was that the Lord would promise that when the Lord would come "in His glory," James and John would be seated at the Lord's right hand and at His left hand. "In His glory" Matthew interpreted as meaning, "in Thy kingdom." They were looking ahead to the Lord's reign upon earth which they believed at that time was the purpose for which the Lord had come then.

I sought to bring out last Sunday the good points about their request, that it was commendable that their mother wanted her sons to be in the closest possible relationship with the Lord, and that this was her sons desire as well. There are not many mothers, down to the present day, who would have raised their son, or sons, to have such a desire in their hearts. And, on the other hand, there are not many sons who would want such a place for themselves. If you stop to think positively about their request, you will have to admit that it was very commendable in one way, and at the same time, very commendable. The Lord responded by pointing out to them that they really did not know what they were asking for. He went on to explain that having such a place would involve their drinking of the cup that the Lord was going to drink, and being baptized with the baptism that He was going to experience. *Both of these expressions, "the cup" and "the baptism," were expressions which spoke of the Lord's coming death on the Cross.* As proof of this, let me cite two other passages of Scripture. In Luke 12:49 and 50 we have these words from our Lord:

49 I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I if it be already kindled?

50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

The NASB translates those words like this:

49 "I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were

already kindled!

50 "But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished! (Luke 12:49-50 - NASB).

This was not a baptism of water, but a baptism of fire, a baptism of judgment when the Lord was going to suffer as an atoning sacrifice for sinners, dying in their place, taking their judgment upon Himself. So the Lord used this word "baptism" to speak of what He was going to suffer on the Cross.

The same is true of the word "cup." Most of you will remember that when the Lord prayed in Gethsemane just minutes before He was arrested and then in just a matter of a few hours later, was taken out and crucified, this was His prayer: "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." You will find this in Matthew 26:39. When the Lord prayed concerning "this cup," He was praying about His death on the Cross.

When the Lord told the disciples that they could drink of the cup He would drink from, and be baptized with the baptism that He was to be baptized with, He meant that by their preaching of His death, and the reason for His death, they, too, would lay down their lives because of the message they were preaching. And so when they asked to be seated at His right hand and His left hand, the Lord told them that they did not realize what they were asking because that place was reserved for those who would pay the supreme price for preaching the Gospel. We know from Acts 12 that James was the first of the apostles to be martyred. And, although we are not told that John suffered the same fate, tradition is strong to the effect that, after outliving all of the apostles, he, too, died as a martyr for the Gospel when he was almost one hundred years old!

But now let me point out another fact about this conversation between the Lord and James and John and their mother, Ezra Gould, who wrote the commentary on Mark in the original International Critical Commentary series reminds us that just before all of this took place, for the third time the Lord Jesus had spoken of His disciples about His approaching death and resurrection. Look at Mark 10, verses 32-34. (Read.) This was the third time. For the second time that the Lord spoke of His death, look with me at Mark 9:30-32. (Read.) And then for the first time that the Lord spoke to His disciples about His death, look at Mark 8, and follow as I read verses 31 through 33. These words were spoken just after Peter had made his great confession of our Lord as the Messiah. (Read.) You

see in all of these the Lord was directing His disciples to the Gospel. What is the Gospel? There are many verses that we could turn to, to answer that question, but I am going to read what the Apostle Paul wrote in his first letter to the church at Corinth. Chapter 15 in that epistle begins this way:

1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

6 After that, he was seen . . . (1 Cor. 15:1-6a).

What is the Gospel? It is that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, that He rose again on the third day, and that He was seen, in all, by over five hundred people at one time. His death was “according to the Scriptures. His resurrection was “according to the Scriptures.” His burial was proof of His death. The fact that He was seen after His resurrection by so many stands as proof that He was raised from the dead.

Now in our text for today, in the last verse, we have the Gospel referred to again. Look at verse 45 and listen as I read it:

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).

We will see in just a moment as we look further into the preceding verses, why the Lord mentioned the Gospel here at this point. But perhaps we can all see more clearly why this book of the Bible is called *the Gospel according to Mark*. It is good news for sinners. In these days when we hear so much bad news, what a delight it is when we can get together to learn more about the best news that ever hit the ears and the hearts of people anywhere in the world. “Christ died for our sins.” “For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

But now let’s turn to verses 41 through 45. The connection between what we considered last week and the verses we have this week, is seen in verse 41. I will call it:

## **I. THE REACTION OF THE TEN (Mark 10:41).**

Who were “the ten”? Well, we know that the Lord had twelve disciples. In verses 35 through 40 we read about James and John, two of the twelve, and the request that they brought to the Lord. It didn’t take long for the others to hear what James and John requested, and the other disciples were “the ten.”

What was the reaction of the ten? Were they happy about James and John had asked the Lord to do for them? Were they disappointed that the Lord did not grant their request? They probably should have been disappointed. But they were not! In fact verse 41 tells us that “they began to be much displeased with James and John.” The word “began” means that they didn’t like what James and John had done when they first heard about it. But the more they thought about it, and the more they talked among themselves about it, the more displeased they became. We all have probably reacted to certain things like that. “Displeased” means that they were indignant, and indignant means that they were angry, very angry. And their anger did not stay at the same level, but it grew and grew and grew. Whatever unity the twelve may have enjoyed before this happened, was gone. A breach had been created that would either take a long time to heal, or maybe couldn’t be healed at all. James and John had done something which in the eyes of the ten probably could never be forgiven.

Why did they feel this way? If James and John did not deserve what they had asked the Lord to do for them, who did deserve it? Probably not one of the ten would have admitted it, but down in each one of their hearts was the feeling that if anyone deserved such a place, he did! Each one was sad because he didn’t get to the Lord first. Pride has a front seat in all of our thoughts. And it is hard, even impossible for pride and love for the brethren to dwell together in the same heart.

Do you remember when the Apostle Paul was describing love in his first letter to the Corinthian believers, among other things he said, “Love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinking no evil” (1 Cor. 13:4b-5). Shouldn’t they have given James and John, and their mother, the benefit of the doubt, and rejoiced that they were all desirous of being so intimately related with the Lord? For the moment it looked like all that the Lord had done in working with the twelve had become unraveled, and that the Lord really was going to have to start all over again with all of them.

But now let us notice:

## **II. THE LORD'S REACTION TO THE TWELVE (Mark 10:42-45).**

Notice that the Lord did not throw His hands up in despair like we might have been inclined to do. Although it looked like chaos from a human standpoint, we need to remember that the Lord is always in control, always sovereignly God-like in His response to difficult situations. And this was really a bad situation. But instead of responding angrily, He graciously began to show them that they were still thinking the way the world thinks, when what they needed to do, was to think the way that God thinks. This is a perfect illustration of what Pastor Will was talking about last Sunday night when he contrasted the wisdom of this world with the wisdom of God, or as it is here especially, the wisdom of the Cross.

Everybody on earth is familiar with the wisdom of men, the wisdom of this world, as the Lord expressed it in verse 42. The Lord said, "Ye know . . ." The men with authority are the men at the top, the one who is in the position of being able to tell the others what to do, and what not to do. They have lordship. They have authority. They have the final word. Everybody knows who the boss is. That is the way that things work in this world. Everybody secretly hopes to be in the top position some day. This creates a lot of jealousy. It creates a feeling of competition instead of a feeling of cooperation. There are always exceptions in the business world, but generally this is the way things work in the world. In Luke's account of this situation, he recorded that a real battle ensued over which of them was the greatest.

But the Lord said, "But so shall it not be among you." Somewhere we all ought to have these words printed out where we can see them and be reminded of them every day that we live. As you and I read our Bibles we ought to notice how differently the Lord's people behaved in difficult circumstances and how differently they behaved from what was natural. If we have an enemy and he is hungry, we are to feed him, not leave him and hope that he will die. David had a chance to kill Saul, but he didn't! And why? Because David said that he was the Lord's anointed. The story of Joseph is most amazing. He refused to pay his brothers back when he was in a position to do so. Whether he was a slave, or in prison, or wherever he was, he did his work so well that Potiphar and the jailor and eventually Pharaoh, turned all of their affairs over to him. We are not to be overcome with evil, but we are to overcome evil with good.

What did the Lord say was His way? He said according to verse 43, that the one who wants to be great among the people of God, should be their “minister.” The word that the Lord used here is *διάκονος*, from which we get our English word *deacon*. The Lord was not speaking here of an office in the church because the church was not yet in existence. The word actually means one who performs services without any reference to who is being served. It can be a little child, or a young man who gives his seat to a lady so she won’t have to stand. It is a person who is always looking for opportunities to help someone else, not because he or she has to, but because he or she wants to.

Professor Gould, whose name I had never noticed until I started using his commentary on Mark, was the Professor of New Testament Literature and Language in the Divinity School of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, had this to say about the word *διάκονος*, as compared with the word which is translated “servant” in verse 44, which is the familiar Greek word for a bondservant, *δοῦλος*, that there is a climax in the Lord’s words here. And you can see it easily when I show you what it is. It amounts to this: If you want to be “great,” be a minister; if you want to be “the chiefest,” then be a bondservant to “all.”

The world says that the way up is up; the Lord Jesus said that the way up is down.

But I still haven’t gotten to the best part of my text. It has to do with our precious Lord. And so my last point is what I have taken as my subject for my message this morning:

### **III. OUR LORD, OUR EXAMPLE (Mark 10:45).**

What should be my motivation to be a “minister” and a “servant”? It is the Lord. He did not come for others to minister to Him, and to serve Him. He came, the Son of man, the Son of God, to minister to us. He gave His life to ransom us from the penalty of sin, for the bondage of sin, and ultimately from the very presence of sin in our lives. And regardless how we may have to humble ourselves, we can never even begin to humble ourselves like He did. We humble ourselves “for Jesus’ sake.” There is no other way that we can possibly even to begin to be like Him except by humbling ourselves and walking before Him and before all people by God’s grace, trusting that by being *διάκονοι* and *δοῦλοι* we may be able to point others to our wonderful Savior.

**Concl:** How do you think that the apostles felt after listening to these wonderful words from our Lord Jesus Christ? I am sure that with all of them, except possibly for Judas, there was a deep sense of shame for the way they had behaved toward each other. And they must have prayed, as we should, that in their daily relationship with each other, they would treat each other as the Lord had patiently and lovingly pointed them to that more excellent way.