

Mark Ch10v35-45 - Jesus: The Suffering Servant

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Preacher: Steve Keating

[0:00] Blessing and joy to have you with us here this morning. Steve ministers and serves in Passage West Baptist Church, so our sister church there. So Steve, thank you and you're very welcome. You and your family with us here this morning.

So thank you, Steve. Good morning, everyone. It's a joy to be with you. You can turn in your Bibles to Mark chapter 10. That's Mark chapter 10. As Ralph said, I am not from Passage West. I am from Florida, but we live in Passage West. We've been in Ireland for about 12 years. I'm one of the elders at Passage Baptist along with Shane and Brendan and John Daunt.

So we greet you. The church greets you. We see you, as Ralph said, as a sister church. It is a joy to be able to see what God is doing in all of Cork and to be a part of it, isn't it? It's a joy to be able to see that we can work together for the sake of the gospel.

And so my wife Valerie is here. We have four children. We have two here with us today. I've got two that are in Florida right now. One lives there. And then our oldest daughter, Aisley, is flying back on Saturday. She spent the summer there. So it is, like I said, a joy to be with you.

So I'm going to read from Mark chapter 10, starting at verse 35. Mark 10, 35. I'm reading from the CSB. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached him and said, Teacher, we want you to do whatever we ask you.

[1:37] What do you want me to do for you? He asked them. They answered him, Allow us to sit at your right and at your left in your glory. Jesus said to them, You do not know what you're asking. Are you able to drink the cup I drink or to be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?

We are able, they told him. Jesus said to them, You will drink the cup I drink, and you will be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with. But to sit at my right or left is not mine to give. Instead, it is for those for whom it has been prepared.

When the ten disciples heard this, they began to be indignant with James and John. Jesus called them over and said to them, You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those in high positions act as tyrants over them. But it is not so among you.

On the contrary, whoever wants to become great among you will be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you will be slave to all.

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. Let me pray one more time for us.

[2:59] Father, we come before you now trusting that you will speak to us through your word, which you have done from the beginning of time. And so we ask God that we would hear from you, that you would use your word by your spirit to transform us, and that we would see Christ a little more clearly today.

Help us now, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. So when I was about 20 years old, I was at a camp in central Florida, the very camp my two oldest children are at right now.

And I was serving there during the summer, and it was raining as it does in Florida in the afternoons, a deluge really coming down. We have this open-air gymnasium, and basically the whole camp was in there.

And I was standing on the porch of that gymnasium, and I happened to be standing in a puddle, and I happened to have my hand resting against this metal downspout that was there, when lightning struck a post about 20 meters away from me.

Now, however that electricity flowed, part of the flow of least resistance was through my arm. And so I was thrown back from that lightning strike, and thankfully I was okay.

[4:22] I probably should have gone to the hospital. I didn't go to the hospital. But my arm ached all day, and maybe, maybe, just maybe, that's the day I started losing my hair.

I'm not sure. It's the idea of the path of least resistance in that story that reminds me of this passage. So the disciples here of Jesus have been traveling with the Lord for a few years, but they're still unclear.

They're still unclear on his purpose and his mission. But we see it even in verse 32, if you go up from the passage I just read, verse 32, they were on their way to Jerusalem.

Jesus was walking ahead of them, and he tells them plainly in verse 34 that they're going to kill him. So he is being clear. The disciples are just not quite getting it.

James and John here in this passage, our passage, they wanted the path of least resistance. They wanted glory as fast and as painlessly as possible.

[5:25] They wanted to be served without serving. They wanted to sit next to King Jesus when he conquered the Romans, but they didn't really want the mess that came of that along the way.

They wanted a conquering king. They didn't want a dying servant. And just like these disciples needed a wake-up call to the sobering and glorious reality of who Jesus is and what he came to do, we need that too.

We need to be sobered by the humble Christ that the Lord Jesus came to die and to serve humanity.

And that is why we should worship him. I want you to see and respond in worship to the beauty of Christ, the perfect servant.

Why is Christ's servanthood worthy of our worship? I want to show you two reasons from the text to worship Jesus this morning. There's many reasons.

[6:31] I just want to show you two from this text why we should worship Jesus. Firstly, worship Jesus. He's the suffering servant. Look back at verse 35.

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached him and said, Teacher, we want you to do whatever we ask. What do you want me to do for you? He asked them.

They answered him, Allow us to sit on your right hand, your right and your left in your glory. Jesus said to them, You don't know what you're asking. Are you able to drink the cup I drink or to be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?

We are able, they told him. Jesus said to them, You will drink the cup and I drink and you will be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with. But to sit at my right or left is not mine to give.

Instead, it is for those for whom it has been prepared. James and John, you either love them or you just get really annoyed by them.

[7:31] I mean, who do these hotshots think they are? Apparently, they think much of themselves. The sons of thunder were bold and seemingly a bit brash at times.

And here, man, they just go for it. They just go for it. They believe that Jesus is the Messiah, but they don't yet understand what kind of Messiah they're following. They fully expect that Jesus will conquer the Romans and deliver his people from worldly oppression.

That's what they expect. But Jesus had been really clear. Like I said, he was going to come and die. Yet, James and John here are really happy to ask a favor of the Lord.

They wanted power and privilege just like the Romans had. That's what they wanted. They were actually going to bring exactly what they wanted to end. It's going to reveal a little bit in that question of can we sit here.

The radical way of the cross seemed to be the furthest from their minds. But Jesus graciously tells them that they don't know what they're asking.

[8:44] Verse 38. They don't know what they're asking. He then flips it, as Jesus tends to do, and asks them a question. Look at the question in verse 38.

Are you able to drink the cup I drink or to be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with? So, the Lord Jesus Christ holds a unique place when it comes to suffering.

His cup of suffering, that's the cup that Jesus is talking about, this cup of suffering, his cup is bearing the wrath of God's judgment for sinners. No one else could ever or will ever do that.

He's unique in that way. The idea of baptism here pictures the complete suffering, the overwhelmingness in his suffering, the immersion in suffering, the drowning in suffering.

That's the unique place of Jesus. Excuse me. James and John, though, still don't get it because they answer his question. Sure, we're able.

[9:51] Yeah, Lord, we can take it. We can drink the cup. Could someone maybe get me a cup of water? That would be great. Thanks, Sam. They're like, yeah, that's their proud response.

We can do it. We can do it. It's an easy response to a really sobering question. Jesus tells them, verse 39, oh, yes, you will drink a cup of suffering.

The Apostle Paul later writes to the Romans that Christians are children of God. And he says this, you don't have to turn there, but he says this in chapter 8, verse 17.

He says, and if children, you are heirs, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. Thanks, brother. If, indeed, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

the way of kingdom leadership and discipleship is the way of suffering. Now, Jesus alone will suffer for the sins of humanity, but what Jesus is telling James and John is they will suffer.

[11:02] That cup of suffering is also going to be theirs. And we know, because we can look back, James was murdered with the sword. John was exiled to a lonely island.

Are you able to drink the cup I drink? This is what Jesus asked. Think about that question. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink? Jesus Christ, the Lord of all things, the maker of heaven and earth, the timeless, eternal Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, he chooses a cup of suffering, a baptism, an immersion of suffering.

He does this to serve humanity. He does not take the path of least resistance. He takes the path of most resistance.

The last verse in our passage, therefore, even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. brethren and sisters, he is the king that leads you into battle.

He is the commander who is first on the battlefield and he is the last to leave. He is the rescuer who saves you from the fire while getting burned himself.

[12:26] He is the shield that takes all the blows that you deserve. He is the high tower that is bombarded to protect you. He is the Passover lamb slain on your behalf.

Jesus Christ is worthy of your worship this morning because he is the suffering servant. Are you too proud this morning to be served by Christ?

Christ? Are you too proud to be served by Christ? This often is a stumbling block for people coming to faith, isn't it? They are often too proud to admit that their sin, their lives, their mess, their heart are all too much for them to deal with.

Is that you this morning? Are you too proud to need a savior? Are you too proud to be served by someone?

Or maybe you are a Christian this morning. In humility, you have trusted Christ. But brother and sister, have you forgotten the tenderness of Jesus?

[13:41] Have you forgotten the tenderness of Jesus? Jesus left the glories of heaven to serve you. And sometimes we think of that and we think it's just like some idea of you or we think he came to serve you, ye, humanity, but he came to serve you by name.

He came to serve you by name. He came to serve Sam and Noah and Cherry and Becca and Ben and Alex and Asia and Ralph.

He came to serve you. You! Christ came. He is the servant of servants.

Brethren and sister, when you are at your lowest, Christ is there to gently lift your head, to hold your hand. When your depression feels inescapable, Christ is there to serve you.

When your anxiety is off the charts and you feel completely out of control, Christ delights to serve you. Parents, when you feel completely incapable of the task set before you, which is like all the time, Christ's strength is there in your weakness.

[15:19] His heart for you is never fickle. His heart for you is never fickle. He does not waver in his affections for you.

He does not get annoyed with your struggles or your sinful tendencies. As one author put it, serving sinners is what gets the Lord Jesus Christ up in the morning.

He delights to serve you. The enemy, Satan, wants you to forget this.

He wants you to stumble and feel like there is no help. He wants you to sin and feel like you can't be forgiven. He wants you to feel independent like you can take care of yourself.

But brother and sister, you cannot take care of yourself. You need a Savior to serve you. You need Jesus just as much today as the very first day that you cried out for his mercy to save you from your sin.

[16:30] And so, I call you and myself to believe that the Son of God who created all things is 1000% for you.

He is never against you. He is willing to grow. If He's willing to go to the cross to bear your sin and shame, He is willing to walk with you through the darkness.

He is willing to sit with you patiently in your doubts and your fears. The Lord Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, will serve you.

He will serve you comfort. He will serve you joy. He will serve you peace. He will serve you grace that transforms you into His very likeness. And it is that transforming grace that empowers you to do exactly what Asia talked about these believers in Mongolia, empowers you to serve others.

To serve others. To bear each other's burdens. To weep with those who weep. Husbands, it frees you to love your wives as Christ loves the church.

[17:43] It allows you to give sacrificially to the kingdom. It allows you to think of others' needs before yourself.

It allows you to take insult and derision because you are proclaiming Christ and loving the people around you. His service enables you to suffer for others.

His service for you allows you to drink a cup of suffering. And when you think you deserve something, like James and John, when you think you are entitled to something, remember, you are entitled to nothing but death and judgment.

the wages of sin is death. You've earned it. You earned it. But when you were desperately broken in your sin and owed a debt that could only be paid in hell for eternity, Christ suffered for you.

Worship Jesus because he is the suffering servant. Secondly, worship Jesus. He's the truly great one.

[19:03] Look at verse 41. When the ten disciples heard this, they began to be indignant with James and John. Jesus calling them over and said to them, you know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lorded over them, and those in high positions act as tyrants over them.

But it is not so among you. On the contrary, whoever wants to become great and whoever wants to be first among you will be slave to all.

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. Here we see the other disciples' response to James and John's request.

They're a bit upset. Shocking. They're upset. They're indignant. They're angry. They're annoyed. They're resentful. Who are these guys to think that they can sit on the right and left of Jesus?

More than likely, they're a little bit miffed that they didn't ask the question first. Like always, Jesus turns their petty conflict into this amazing teachable moment.

[20:19] And this wasn't the disciples' first time entering into this kind of discussion. Just the chapter before in Mark 9, we read that the disciples are arguing among themselves who's the greatest.

Can you imagine? Can you imagine discussing who is the greatest while in the presence of Jesus? Seems shocking, right?

Like we would never do something like that. I think we probably do that more often than we think we do. These disciples were literally walking in the footsteps of greatness.

They have seen the Lord Jesus heal disease. They seen him give sight to the blind, cast out demons, raise the dead. Peter, James, and John saw him transfigured into glory.

They're arguing who's the greatest among them. It's a little glimpse at the human heart, isn't it? And here again in chapter 10, the disciples are arguing and competing for position.

[21:25] So he gathers them in, kind of like a team huddle, and he starts laying out the reality of discipleship and the kingdom of God, what the reality of greatness really is.

Verse 42, he reminds them of the pagan leaders around them, how they see them, that those rulers lord their power over them, that they're tyrants, that they're dictators.

And then in verse 43, Jesus says his kingdom should have none of that. that should not be among you. Do you want to be great?

Be great servants. Do you want status? Put yourself at the bottom. This is the upside down, inside out kingdom of God.

The way up in God's kingdom is down. This pushes against everything the world tells you, doesn't it? Look at verse 45 again. It's the crux of the passage, the crux of the whole gospel of Mark.

[22:35] Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many. That's astounding. It's just astounding. A ransom is a costly payment to set a captive free.

That's what a ransom is. We sang about it. If you have trusted Christ for your salvation, brother and sister, your ransom is paid in full.

You are free. Free from the condemnation of sin. Free from an eternity of death and judgment. Free to love God and love others.

The person and the work of Jesus redefines greatness. He redefines greatness. Greatness is suffering for and serving others.

But you know what the world considers great though. More. Greatness is having more in the world. More money, you should have the biggest home possible.

[23:51] You should go wherever the money takes you. Your salary indicates your value. More influence. That's what the world says is great.

The influence that you have, you should compromise for position and power at work. That's what you should do to be great. You should never take a role that you feel is beneath you.

You must make sure any contribution that you make is noticed. That's what's great to the world.

More money, more influence, more status. Your children should be in the best schools. You should have the best car. You should have the nicest things.

Even countries think this way, don't they? Nations think this way. Greatness is measured by the strength of the economy, the power of the military, or if they have a seat at the table of influence.

[24:55] That's what makes you great. So when Jesus reveals this truth in 43 and 44, on the contrary, whoever wants to become great among you will be your servant.

When he reveals that, we have to recognize it is socially unacceptable. You can imagine one of his disciples saying in this moment, no, Jesus, that is not how the world works.

But we must equally imagine Jesus smiling and saying, you're right, but I have overcome the world.

The Savior of the world does not claim his victory by slaying his enemies in battle.

He does not plunder his enemies. He does not lord his status over his enemies. Remember, you were his enemies. He claimed victory by dying for his enemies.

Dying for you and for me. This is greatness. To be great, he became the servant of all. Jesus Christ is redefining greatness.

[26:14] Actually, he's probably just showing us what uncorrupted greatness really is. And this is not what the world wants. The world perceives this as weakness, but it is glory.

Paul tells us in Philippians 2 that Jesus emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity. And when he had become a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

So, Jesus was obedient, a suffering, submissive servant, to the point of death on a cross. Paul continues in that passage in Philippians 2, for this reason, as a result of Jesus humbling himself and dying on a cross for the sin of humanity, for this reason, God has highly exalted him.

He has given him a name that is above every name. At the name of Jesus, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

The servanthood of Jesus leads to glory. The servanthood of Jesus leads to glory. Every single knee from Adam and Eve to you and me will bow in humility and submission to King Jesus.

[27:57] Every tongue willingly or unwillingly will confess that he is Lord. The human heart resists this.

It is socially unacceptable that your sin requires payment. It is backward thinking and weak that you need someone to rescue you because you can't rescue yourself.

It is foolishness for Jesus to give his life as a ransom for many. The human heart doesn't want a savior.

And that's often again the objection. And that's often what makes it so difficult to accept. You do not want to embrace someone dying in your place on a cross.

You hate the idea of a substitute because it shows you can't do it. You would never ever want your king to die on a cross.

[28:57] You know why? Because in this world everyone thinks that they're king. This is what James and John didn't realize they were asking.

They wanted their own kingdom. If you are here today and you are building your own kingdom I have news for you.

Your kingdom will end. It will end. Every knee will bow to Jesus. No one is bowing to you.

This world gives you a corrupt view of leadership and discipleship. Jesus says in 42 it's a pagan view. The Gentiles are lording it over them.

Climbing the ladder of success or the ladder of status in the church is not the way of Christ. can I just tell you that you are not competing with one another.

[30:03] You are not competing with one another. If you are clamoring for recognition repent. If you want greater status in the church or at work or with your friends repent.

If you are controlling! And you just feel like I have to get my way repent. Stop asking whether a task is beneath you.

Ask whose burden you can carry, whose needs you can notice, and where you can serve with no recognition. That is greatness.

This is what Jesus did for you. Worship Jesus because he is truly great. he proved that on a cross as servant in all.

And yes, he is coming again. He came first as suffering servant and he is coming soon as conquering king.

[31:09] So he is both that. He is great in his servanthood and he is great in his kingship. He is great in every single possible way.

He is the servant, son, and savior, all in one. He embodies those things perfectly. He's the truly great suffering servant. I'm not sure what you expected when you were introduced to Jesus because I don't know most of you.

But as James and John found out, Jesus is far greater, far more powerful, and far more humble than humanity thought that he would be.

he did not take the path of least resistance. He took the path of suffering by giving his life as a ransom for sinners, as a ransom for you.

He is worthy of your worship today and every day because of that. So worship the suffering servant.

[32:18] he is truly great. Let's pray together. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for a great savior who is just beyond measure worthy of our worship.

Forgive us when we forget that. Forgive us when we walk through our day complaining about something and forgetting the king of glory stepped out of heaven to serve us.

Would we be a people that serve one another? Would we be a people that aren't clamoring for recognition? Would we be a people that want Christ to get the glory and not ourselves?

Help us, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.