

Mark 10:32-50 (PM)

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[0 : 00] If God were to ask you, what would you want me to do for you? What do you want me to do for you? What would you say? Imagine Jesus saying, what do you want me to do for you?

What would you answer? Let me ask you another way. What do you ask for? When you pray, what are your priorities?

When you come before Almighty God, what are you asking for? What are your priorities and your goals? What comes to the top of your list?

If there was a swing-o-meter that went from one end to the other end, would it be focused on the me? Or would you have a lot of prayers focused on others? Where would the swing-o-meter land in your prayers?

Or maybe you don't even have a swing-o-meter because you don't pray. Well, Jesus is asking us, what do you want me to do for you?

[1 : 07] As indeed he asks James and John and blind Bartimaeus. And how you answer that question reveals three things. Well, we're going to focus on just three things that it highlights.

Highlights. Number one, it reveals our gods. Our god is who or what do we turn to for help with the big things in life?

What do we move our diary for or accommodate, counselling other things? What can you not say no to? There are gods, the things that come first.

The second thing it reveals is our glory. Or at least, what do we celebrate? What do we think is glorious? What holds a high place in our esteem?

What classifies as an achievement? What is glory? What is glory? And thirdly, what are your goals? Where do you want to be and what do you want to achieve?

[2 : 16] Who do you want to be like? Who do you aim to be like? Well, as Jesus asks us the question, what do you want me to do for you?

I wonder what your goals, your gods and your glory and your prayers reveal. Honestly, what have you and I been asking for?

And so as we join Jesus on this journey in Mark's gospel, what we're going to see is this. We're going to see Jesus, the man who makes the impossible possible. We're going to see this amazing God who came to save.

Yes, the God who challenges our goals, he challenges our understanding of glory, and he turns the world upside down. Let me give you an illustration.

When I was back in England, I used to go on this big conference. It was not a conference, it was just like a festival. I'd take my tent and my whole family, and we'd go and park with thousands of others.

[3 : 18] There'd be lots of bands, there was about seven stages, and there was biking and a climbing wall. There was a whole heap of stuff. It's called the Big Church Day Out. People of all denominations came together and had a great time.

There was even a reptile area that my son loved as he played with the snakes and loved being there. One area I loved was the juggling zone. I don't know whether I've shown you, but unicycling and juggling I loved.

But there was a fellow with a bicycle, but a strange bicycle. You see, what happened with this bicycle is as you turned it right, it went left. And as you went left, it would go right.

And so he invited everybody to try. Oh my goodness. Have you ever tried just reversing your expectation? Please don't try it in a car or any other vehicle.

But honestly, as you start wobbling in one direction, you naturally turn to accommodate for that.

[4 : 20] And in the same way, if you wobble in the other direction, you turn and accommodate for that. Well, do you know what? Jesus is trying to unlearn what often we find as natural.

Because I think as we look at this Bible passage, we're going to see that we need our brains reprogrammed. Because many of the gods that we see are no gods at all.

Much that we declare is great glory and glorious isn't glorious at all in the eyes of God. And our goals, well actually even many of our goals send us in the wrong direction.

From where we want to be. So let's have a little jump into our Bible passage and see how Jesus helps us to reprogram our brain. So that we don't naturally go in the wrong direction.

And crash. As if we were on that bicycle. Firstly, verse 32 to 34. Notice that Jesus was going where? He was going up to Jerusalem.

[5 : 27] He was going to Jerusalem. And as we know of Jerusalem and we know the conflict that Jesus was discovering and finding. We're actually realising that actually no wonder.

The disciples started to be amazed, of course. What an amazing man he was. Miracles. Authority. But fear came in.

Did you spot that? Verse 32. They were afraid. Because as they were wandering towards Jerusalem, they were increasingly knowing what was waiting for them.

There. At first glance. Being amazed and being afraid sound like they're opposites. But actually they're a healthy fear and understanding of all that Jesus is going towards.

When we naturally are wanting to say to Jesus, please don't go to Jerusalem. Pick another path. But when you grasp what glory truly looks like, you'll be amazed.

[6 : 33] You see, his goal is to get to Jerusalem and to sacrifice and suffer. That is his goal. And that is what we will see is his ultimate glory as well.

Because after he has suffered and been mocked and spat on, what are we going to see? We're going to see three days later he will rise again. Jesus' glory is found in his obedience to death. A sacrificial self-giving son who dies but then is raised on the third day. Who is this man that is turning our values and our ideals on its head?

Why is this great man going to Jerusalem? Who is this man? Well, he declares himself, as you've spotted, the son of man.

And as we see this, we grasp he is no mere man. He is God. Son of man is a term that's used in the Old Testament. If you've read through Ezekiel, you'll see 93 times.

[7 : 41] Time and time again, Ezekiel is spoken of as a son of man, as representing humanity. Time and time again. Well, Jesus uses the term for he wants us to grasp.

He is fully human. Son of man. But if you read on in Daniel, you'll see that the term son of man is elevated.

Let me read it to you. Daniel chapter 7 verse 13 says, The son of man is given dominion. I saw the vision, the night visions. And behold, with the clouds of heaven, there came one like a son of man. And he came to the ancient of days and was presented before him. The son of man in Daniel elevates our eyes, not just to see humanity, but to see deity. To see God in all his glory on the throne.

That's where Daniel takes us. And Jesus wants us to hold those two in tension. He wants us to grasp his humanity whilst also seeing his deity. Because this is God.

[8 : 45] And this is God who doesn't demand things of you. Do this, do that, do that, and I will give you stuff. This is the God who is going to sacrifice himself for you.

He is the God that won't demand things of you, but seeks to serve you through sacrifice and rising in glory.

Jesus' goal? The revelation of the one true God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And what true glory looks like? Well, we need to be told time and time and time again.

Which is why this passage is the third time. Jesus is saying, look, let me tell you again. That the Son of Man must be beaten, mocked, spat on, handed over, and then to die.

So it is, it's reprogramming our mind to understand, like the backwards bike. That as we often talk of glory, or as we often think about things that we aspire to, I wonder how many of us think of suffering and sacrifice.

[10 : 00] Are they things that we think of? And if we're honest, I think we don't. But with me at the next little section, we've got two scenarios here.

One with James and John, and then we meet a guy called Bart, and we find out what they are. Thinking as their priority. As Jesus asks them, what do you want me to do for you?

Verse 35. James and John ask, teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you. That's always dangerous. As a parent. Have you spotted that ever?

Just, let's slow down, just ask. And Jesus says, so what do you want me to do for you? James and John jump in. We want to share your glory.

One on the left, one on the right. That's what we want. Have they been listening? Have they not really grasped?

[11:00] Three times Jesus has spoken of his goal and what glory truly looks like. And so what we have here is Jesus graciously saying, hang on.

Are you able to drink the cup which I drink or be baptized with the baptism which I am baptized in? Well, of course, James and John go, yes, hand us the cup. Yes, I'll be baptized.

But Jesus, Jesus is pointing us to so much more. Do you know, to share one's cup in Jewish expression means to share one's fate.

And so what it's doing is basically helping the disciples to say, hang on a second. I've just told you that I'm going to suffer and die and be spat on or rejected. And I'm asking whether you will share my fate.

Will you share my suffering and rejection? I'm also going to ask whether you will share my life from death.

[12:05] But do you grasp what I mean when I say, will you drink the cup? Are you able to drink the cup? Jeremiah 25, 15 helps us to see that drinking the cup points to the cup of God's wrath.

It's basically saying God is angry at sin and rebellion and like a steam train he's coming towards us. And yet what he's saying is as we share the cup of God's wrath, Jesus is going to take the cup for us.

Are we going to share and identify with him? Let me read to you, Jeremiah 25, 15. It says this. Thus the Lord, the God of Israel, said to me, take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it.

James and John couldn't see the imagery in the cup. But one day they will. Jesus will share the fate of humanity, taking the cup of God's wrath on the cross.

And then will rise in glory. Are we asking for a shortcut without sacrifice? Is that what James and John were after?

[13:16] Well again, if we talk about baptism, what is baptism? Roman helps us to see. It's a dying to self and rising with Christ. Romans 6, 3 says this. Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

James and John naively said, of course we're able. But actually they hadn't grasped what Jesus was speaking about. Greatness is selfless.

It's sacrificial. It's serving. And so Jesus spells it out in the passage. He says, look, But it shall not be among you, but whoever would be great among you must be your servant.

And whoever would be first among you must be slave or servant of all. For even the Son of Man came, not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

[14:22] Ouch. James and John have just been burned by Jesus. And if we're honest, to what extent have we, as we ask ourselves, What does greatness look in my life?

What do I aspire to? What are we praising? What are we noticing? Are we keen to be firsts and finalists? Or actually have we grasped this reversal that Jesus brings that says, I seek for you to serve, for that is why I've come.

And then it's as if we've seen James and John and grasped that they are wrestling with what it is to follow Jesus. We get introduced to Bart. Blind Bartimaeus.

Bart. He cries out, Jesus, verse 47, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. And many told him off. Shh. Stop shouting.

We're too busy with Jesus following him. And this man cried out again, Son of David, have mercy on me. Bart. Bart.

[15:31] Bart. Bart. Bart. Bart. Bart. Bart. Bart. Bart. Bart. Bart. Bart. Bart. Bart. Bart. Bart.

Bart. Bart. Bart. knew who Jesus was. He could see. Son of David. Well, that's a reminder of Jesus

and the fact that he was born of the line of David, but not just that he was born of the line of David, but he would be the Messiah. He would be the Christ. He would be the fulfilment.

And so as Jesus said to him, what do you want me to do for you? The same question he asked James and John. How did he respond? He didn't ask for greatness and glory. He just asked for mercy from the Messiah. Rabbi, teacher, let me recover my sight. And Jesus said to him, go your way. Your faith has made you well. Or it can be translated, your faith has saved you. And immediately he recovered his sight and followed Jesus. The physical spoke of the spiritual. This man who couldn't physically see could clearly see. And that's where we get to. Bart had aligned his goals with Christ and his glory, and he knew what God, his God was. Jesus. I wonder if someone came and heard your prayers tonight. I wonder if someone spent some time with you. I wonder how they would think your prayers would reveal your goals, your glory, and who your God truly is. If someone was to hear our prayers, could we be accused of being gold diggers? Maybe as we ask for a car or a wife or a bigger home? John Stott remarks and said this, our world and even our church is full of Jameses and Johns, go-getters, status seekers, hungry for honour and prestige, measuring life by achievements and everlastingly dreaming of success. Is that true of us? Sadly, many have inside and outside of the church have got things backwards. So what do we want God to do? What do you want God to do? Have you seen true greatness?

And are you willing to follow? Will you follow Jesus, taking time today to honestly review your goals, to acknowledge Jesus, the great servant king, as your true God, who is worthy of changing your diary and dropping everything else and following? And have you redressed your view of what glory and things to celebrate? As you think about the world that we live in, guarding our hearts from false gods. Well, let's pray that we would follow the example of blind Bartimaeus, guarding our hearts against the sin that James and John articulated. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we live in a world that is telling us one thing, and we so easily and so often fall into the trap of bigger, better, greater, health, wealth, happiness. And yet, as we look to Jesus, we see him revealing true greatness as one who serves and sacrifices for others. We see him as the true God.

Lord, we see him as the true God. We see him as the true God. We see him as the true God. We see him as the true God. We see him as the true God. We see him as the true God. We see him as the true God. But just cry out, have mercy, Lord. Help us to readdress our goals that they may reflect rightly this wonderful world that you've called us to be a part of, willing to make those hard choices, following the example of blind Bartimaeus.

Amen. Amen.

[20 : 53] Amen. Amen.

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[24 : 24] Amen. Amen.

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[26 : 54] Amen. Amen.

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[29 : 24] Amen. Amen.

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[31 : 54] Amen. Amen.

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[35 : 53] Amen. Amen.
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[40 : 24] Amen.