



Serves

Jesus gave His life as the ultimate sacrifice.

MARK 10:32-45

Most people are served by someone in a typical day. A waiter brings a glass of water. A driver allows you into the flow of traffic though you didn't have the right of way. How often are we grateful for those acts of service? Do we rudely get upset when the waiter doesn't meet our standards? Do we cut someone off in traffic even when we've just been allowed ahead of our turn? Gratefulness for the sacrifices of others should change the way we live.

- **What are ways people served you in the past week?
How did you acknowledge their service?**

UNDERSTAND **THE CONTEXT**


MARK 10:1-52

While teaching the crowds in “the region of Judea and across the Jordan” (Mark 10:1), a group of Pharisees approached Jesus with a question about divorce. He answered by pointing them to the commands of Moses and presenting them with God’s ideal for marriage. Later, He answered questions about divorce that His disciples raised (10:1-12).

As people were bringing their children to Jesus so He would bless them, the disciples rebuked them. Indignant over the disciples’ behavior, Jesus told them to bring the children to Him. He taught that entering God’s kingdom meant coming like a child, then He blessed the children (10:13-16).

As Jesus and His disciples continued the journey, a wealthy man rushed to Him and fell to his knees, asking what he needed to do to have eternal life. Jesus called attention to the commandments. The man testified that he had kept all of them. Jesus instructed him to liquidate his assets, give the money to poverty-stricken people, and follow Him. Because the man would not part with his wealth, he walked away from Jesus with sadness in his heart. The Lord taught His disciples about the difficulty of leaving everything and following Him (10:17-31).

When they got closer to Jerusalem, Jesus told the disciples a third time what would happen to Him there. He explained that He would be handed over to the religious leaders and Gentiles. He would be mocked, tortured, killed, and He would rise after three days (10:32-34; see also 8:31; 9:30-32). James and John then approached Jesus, asking for places of honor at His right and His left. The other disciples were offended when they became aware of the request, and Jesus once again taught them about servanthood. He set the standard, coming to serve by giving His life as a ransom for those who would believe in Him (10:41-45).

 **Read Mark 10:32-45. What are the words and phrases that demonstrate an attitude of servanthood?**

EXPLORE THE TEXT

DEATH COMING (MARK 10:32-34)

³² They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. The disciples were astonished, but those who followed him were afraid. Taking the Twelve aside again, he began to tell them the things that would happen to him. ³³ “See, we are going up to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death. Then they will hand him over to the Gentiles, ³⁴ and they will mock him, spit on him, flog him, and kill him, and he will rise after three days.”

VERSE 32

For the third time in three chapters, Jesus announced His approaching death to the disciples (8:31; 9:31; 10:33). The text says ***they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem***. As they headed toward the city where Jesus would die, He explained to His disciples the shocking events that would happen to Him in the coming days.

Two groups were following Jesus—His ***disciples*** and other followers. The disciples were ***astonished***. Perhaps they were *astonished* that Jesus was determined to go to Jerusalem. More likely, they were astonished at His teaching (see 10:24,26). The same word was used of the crowd that witnessed Him driving out an unclean spirit in Mark 1:27. The disciples were at a loss for words and lagged behind as ***Jesus was walking ahead of them***. The others who ***followed*** Him were ***afraid***. This word was used both of fear in a negative sense and reverence or respect in a positive sense. Their fear may have been because they sensed something was about to happen in Jerusalem. Perhaps both attitudes of fear and reverence existed as they made their way to Jerusalem. Jesus took the Twelve aside and began to explain ***the things that would happen to him*** in Jerusalem.



Why was it necessary for Jesus to continually remind His disciples about His death and resurrection?


BIBLE SKILL: Use other Scripture to help understand a Bible passage.

Read the three passages in which Jesus announced His death and resurrection: Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34. Note the verses that come after each (8:34-38; 9:33-37; 10:35-45). What is the common theme and how does it relate to Jesus's prediction of His death?

VERSES 33-34

In Mark 8:31, Jesus had spoken of his arrest and His death. He reiterated it in 10:33, noting that He would be **handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death**. In Mark 9:31, Jesus added the detail that He would be betrayed. Here, He added the additional detail that the **Gentiles** would **mock him, spit on him, flog him, and kill him**.

All three predictions of Jesus's death included the fact that He would **rise** again. The church often separates these two events, but Jesus kept them together. The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus were viewed as one event rather than three separate events. Yet, why did the disciples not recall this and take hope after Jesus's death? Instead, they hid in fear. They did not understand His death, and couldn't understand the resurrection either. One day they would understand that the death, burial, and resurrection was the heart of the gospel (1 Cor. 15:3-5).

 **Why do you think the disciples continued to have trouble understanding Jesus's teaching? How can we make that teaching plain to a world who doesn't understand?**

REQUEST MADE (MARK 10:35-40)

³⁵ James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached him and said, "Teacher, we want you to do whatever we ask you." ³⁶ "What do you

want me to do for you?” he asked them.³⁷ They answered him, “Allow us to sit at your right and at your left in your glory.”³⁸ 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?”³⁹ “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.”⁴⁰ But to sit at my right or left is not mine to give; instead, it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”

VERSES 35-37

The request of *James and John* indicates their lack of comprehension of Jesus’s prediction of His death. The insensitivity of the disciples is highlighted in their statement, *Teacher, we want you to do whatever we ask you.*

Matthew 20:20-21 explains that the mother of James and John was the one who made the request. But the request from James and John, even if it was brought by their mother, was still their own request.

Many would love Jesus to be the genie in the lamp that grants three wishes. They would love to have a request line to Jesus where He would do whatever they asked Him to do.

Note that James and John’s request did require faith—Jesus said He was going to die and rise again, and they asked Him to grant them something after His resurrection. At best, they were insensitive to Jesus’s prediction of His betrayal and death. At worst, they were demanding that Jesus do what they wanted Him to do.

Jesus asked the disciples, *What do you want me to do for you?* The fact that He even asked this was an act of grace. Jesus was under no obligation to do anything the disciples asked. Yet He pressed them to define what they were asking.

James and John answered that they wanted to sit at Jesus’s right and at His left in His glory. Perhaps they had in mind what Jesus had promised His disciples in Matthew 19:28—that “in the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” But they were asking for even more. James and John wanted to sit on the two thrones closest to Jesus. This was an insensitive request considering Jesus had twelve disciples and other followers accompanying Him to Jerusalem. The right side was the highest position of honor, and the left side was the second place of honor.

The request of the disciples reveals that they had a profound misunderstanding about the kingdom of God and what awaited them in eternity. Jesus had come to establish this kingdom through His suffering

and death. Ambition, not humble loyalty to Jesus, was their motive, and Jesus was ready to expose the fallacy of their request.

● **How do we know if the requests we make of God in prayer are self-centered or servant-centered?**

VERSES 38-40

Jesus answered in terms of servanthood, not ambition. Were they able to **drink the cup** that Jesus drank? In the Old Testament, reference to the *cup* emphasized both suffering and the wrath of God. Isaiah 51:17 said, “Wake yourself, wake yourself up! Stand up, Jerusalem, you who have drunk the cup of his fury from the LORD’s hand . . .” Jesus would pray that this cup be taken away from Him on the night before His death in the garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:36), yet He surrendered.

Jesus also asked if they could **be baptized with the baptism** that He had embraced. Immersion in water was also an Old Testament theme of encountering the wrath and judgment of God. This was the meaning of the flood in Genesis 6 and the expression of the psalmist when facing the floodwaters of God’s wrath (Ps. 69:2,15). Would the disciples surrender to the idea of servanthood that Jesus embraced? Would they understand He was giving His life for the sins of the world?

The disciples naively responded, **We are able**. Only history would reveal that they were indeed able to die for Christ. James would become the first apostle to experience martyrdom (Acts 12:1-2). John would be the only apostle to die of natural causes, but He dedicated the remainder of His life after Pentecost to serving Christ and the church. Indeed, they would have the opportunity to prove that they could drink the cup and be *baptized* with the baptism Jesus undertook at His death.

“The disciples needed humility and submission more than power and authority.”

Jesus said, **to sit at my right or left is not mine to give**. This was a statement of Jesus’s submission to His Father. In submission to God the Father, God the Son did not trouble Himself with these matters as He prepared to go to the cross. The fact that the disciples asked Jesus that question reveals their disregard for the moment. Tucked between the prediction of His coming death and the declaration of His desire to give

His life, the request seems lame and self-centered. It was a play for pride and position. The disciples needed humility and submission more than power and authority.

● Why do you think servanthood is sometimes disgraced in modern society rather than valued or honored?

● How does pride and position get in the way of serving others?

ROLES REVERSED (MARK 10:41-45)

⁴¹ When the ten disciples heard this, they began to be indignant with James and John. ⁴² 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. ⁴³ But it is not so among you. On the contrary, whoever wants to become great among you will be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first among you will be a slave to all. ⁴⁵ 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.”

VERSES 41-44

Ambition and pride also affected the other *ten disciples*. They were *indignant* when they discovered the request to sit at Jesus’s right and left hands. Why should Jesus give the places of authority to James and John but not to them?

Jesus exposed the attitude of the disciples by comparing their ambitions to the leadership style of the *Gentiles*. Those who ruled the *Gentiles* were said to *lord it over them*. Instead of helping others, the rulers used them.

Jesus challenged His disciples to be different. The standard of their authority would not be power but servanthood. Those who wanted to *become great* would be those who served others. In verses 43-44, Jesus used both the word for *servant* and the word for *slave*. His disciples were to give up their selfish ambitions and serve the needs of others. The one who wanted to be *first* in the kingdom had to become the *slave to all*.

○ How does serving others set Christianity apart from other worldviews?

VERSE 45

Jesus expressed His life purpose in this verse. The One who most deserved to be served was the One who wrapped His whole purpose in serving others. He gave His life as a ***ransom for many***. The word *ransom* came from the slave market. It meant to free someone by paying the price caused by their release. This was not a price paid to Satan but to God, who has stored up wrath for all those who have sinned and fallen short of His glory. Jesus would fully satisfy the wrath of God as that “cup” was poured upon Him on the cross.

“Jesus’s disciples should live out the purpose of Christ by giving their lives in service for others.”

Jesus came to serve. He served by giving His life on a cross. God raised Him from the dead, displaying visual evidence that He was pleased with that sacrifice. In turn, Jesus’s disciples should live out the purpose of Christ by giving their lives in service for others.

○ What affect has Jesus’s service had on your life?

KEY DOCTRINE: *God the Son*

Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. (See Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 4:14-15.)

APPLY THE TEXT

- + Believers should humbly recognize the necessity of the death and resurrection of Jesus.
 - + Believers must examine their motives for serving others.
 - + Believers demonstrate Christian character by serving others.
- **As a group, discuss ways you can serve one another. How can your group serve in your church? What are the needs in your community that your group can serve?**

- **How does Jesus's teaching about servanthood and His example challenge your view of relationships? What is one specific way you can humble yourself and be a servant this week?**

PRAYER NEEDS
