

Gospel of Mark Chapter 10C

The Lord Jesus is beautifully described in a series of writings called the “Servant Songs” by the pen of Isaiah. With amazing clarity Isaiah captures the voluntary suffering of Jesus.

Listen to a small portion:

Isaiah 50: 5 **The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious; I turned not backward. 6 I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting. 7 But the Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame.**

- Isaiah writes: “**He set his Face like a flint.**” Jesus refused to be distracted; he would not be deterred from the course that Father had set for him.
- None of us have faced the kind of suffering that Jesus faced (nor will we) The closest example that I can think of was watching my wife bear down to deliver our children. She set her face like a flint. (Gonna get this kid out!!!)

In this next portion of Mark’s Gospel we see the Lord Jesus steadfastly making his way to Jerusalem to fulfill his destiny. (He set his face like a flint)

- Mark pictures Jesus striding out in front of his disciples. There was something different about his attitude. There was an obvious determination in his steps.

Here is our outline for this morning as we cover verses 32 - 45.

1. Determination of the Savior
2. Distraction of the Disciples
3. Disposition of True Greatness

KEY VERSE: (*Make note of this*) Mark 10:45 “**For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.**”

What Jesus teaches us about service and self-sacrifice is not only an important principle of the Kingdom; it is the very pattern of his own life which is set forth as an example to all of us who believe.

- The life that God calls us to, the life of a servant, is not simply a system of ethics; it is literally the way of the Lord, which He clearly demonstrated throughout his life and sacrificial death.

1. Determination of the Savior

Mark 10:32 **And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him,**

- The time had come; the Passover celebration was drawing near.
- Passover was one of three mandatory feasts in Israel and every able bodied Jewish male was required to present himself before the Lord.
- Jewish families began making their pilgrimage up to Jerusalem dragging their sacrificial lambs along the road with them.
- BUT here in Mark, it is the Lamb of God who is dragging his disciples along the road.

Luke 9:51 (tells us) **When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.**

- When Luke says, “(Jesus) **set his face**” the wording speaks of a profound determination. In the words of Isaiah the Prophet: “**therefore I have set my face like a flint.**” (hard, immovable)
 - You know what that looks like; you grit your teeth, you squint your eyes, you tense your whole body and press on even in the face of opposition.

The concern of the disciples is recorded in these words: “**And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid.**”

- “Amazed and Afraid” that is a strange mix of emotions, but it seems to fit this scenario.
- I believe that the disciples were amazed by Jesus’ obvious determination. He was steadfastly headed toward Jerusalem. His resolve at this point was notable and that had the disciples a little on edge.
- I believe that the disciples were fearful of the anticipated and inevitable battle with the Scribes and Pharisees. Throughout the years there were many skirmishes between Jesus and the Jewish leaders and now Jesus is running full steam ahead into their home field.
 - Trying to relate to their fear mixed with amazement; I remember the words of a certain bully in elementary school who warned me at lunch that he was going to beat me up after school. He had determination, and his determination both frightened and amazed me. What did I do to him???

Knowing their fear Jesus told them what was going to happen.

• Sometimes it helps to know the details beforehand. I am not sure this was one of those times. Mark 10:33 “**See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. 34 And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise.**”

- This was the MOST specific, most detailed prediction of Jesus’ coming passion that he would give his disciples.
- His suffering is literally days away and he is very clear about what is going to happen.
- In chapter 8 and again in chapter 9 he told them that he would be put to death and rise again BUT here he gives much more detail. He tells them:
 - He would be betrayed
 - Delivered over to the Chief Priests and the scribes
 - They would condemn him to death and they hand him over to the Gentiles.
 - He would be mocked, spit upon, beaten and he would be killed
 - And then after 3 days he would rise from the dead.

HOW do you respond to this kind of communication? What is the proper thing to say?

- Is this one of those times when it is best to be quiet, wrap your arms around Jesus?
- (If I was there) Are we going to die too? (I believe that was on the disciple’s minds)

If you remember from Chapter 8 when Jesus told the disciples that he was going to die, Peter took him aside and rebuked him. Do you remember Jesus’ response?

Mark 8:33, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

- Well Peter must have learned his lesson because in Chapters 9 and 10 he remains quiet when Jesus foretells his death.
- While Peter seems to have learned not to rebuke the Lord, there is a different lesson to be learned one that affects all men and that lesson has to do with our fleshly PRIDE.
 - This seems to be a repeat of chapter 9:

Mark 9:33 (After Jesus announced his coming passion) **And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you discussing on the way?” 34 But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest.**

- Again and again throughout the Gospels the disciples are found arguing over which of them was the greatest.
- Well here again in Chapter 10 the awkward silence following Jesus’ announcement is broken by disciples in their foolish pride jockeying for position.

2 Distraction of the Disciples

Mark 10: 35 **And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.”**

- If you are a parent you are familiar with this kind of request.
- Children know that some things that are off limits: No ice cream before dinner, no video games before homework is completed. Teens know their curfew.
- At some point, with the CUTEST face they can possibly make with, in the most endearing language: “Daddy... Just say yes... Daddy” They make their request.
- On rare occasions the children are joined by their mother in making this plea for a “blank check.” In my house, that made it impossible to resist.

If you combine the narratives of Matthew and Mark you find that James and John actually bring their mother with them to make their request. Why would they bring their mother?

- It actually makes more sense when you realize who their mother was. In the description of the crucifixion she is among those who are there at the cross.
 - Matthew calls her the mother of the sons of Zebedee.
 - Mark calls her Salome
 - John calls her the sister of Jesus’ Mother.
 - So James and John’s mother was Jesus’ Aunt.

Matthew 20:20 **Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. 21 And he said to her, “What do you want?” She said to him, “Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.”**

- Matthew tells us that when they came to Jesus they knelt down in front of him. (worshipped) When you consider their motive and their actions, something isn’t right!
- James and John assume the position of humility, the posture of worship but while their physical position might be considered reverent, their motive is self-serving.

Stop for a moment and consider how easily worship and discipleship can be polluted by self interest.

- Now take a minute to ponder the motivation that lies behind your own worship, the purpose that drives your prayer.
 - How many of our prayers are “Self-Centered.” How often does our intercession focus on the things of this world?
 - Can we worship with all of our hearts when pride and self-interest pollute our motives?

James and John are pillars of the church. They are in the inner circle of Jesus closest friends. Their names are written on the foundation stones of the eternal city, the New Jerusalem.

- YET they are people just like us, believers but immature, incomplete but growing in Grace and Jesus takes the time to teach them.

Mark 10: 38 **Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?”**

- The cup from which Jesus would drink and the baptism in which he would be baptized refer to the suffering that he would endure as he obediently walked the path that the Father prescribed for him.
- Certainly without understanding James and John say:

39 **And they said to him, “We are able.” And Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, 40 but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”**

- The history of the Church tells us that all of the disciples drank from the cup of suffering.
 - James was the first of the Apostles to die, beheaded in Jerusalem in 44 AD
 - While all of the other Apostles suffered and died John suffered and lived. Tradition holds that John was scheduled to be boiled in oil but somehow miraculously escaped. He was forced to drink deadly poison but it had no effect on him, he was exiled to the Island of Patmos, which was normally a death sentence, but somehow he ended up in Ephesus where he died in a very old age.

We should not be surprised (*think it strange*) when the cup of suffering touches our lips or when it seems like we have been plunged into a literal baptism of suffering.

- Paul taught Timothy as a servant of God he should expect suffering

2Ti 1:8 **Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God,**

2Ti 2:3 **Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.**

Of course when the other 10 heard about James and John’s request they didn’t take it well:

41 **And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John.**

- Selfish ambition always produces dissension and division within the church.
- The indignation of the 10 may actually have been because others were harboring the same ambitions but James and John beat them to it.

- The fact that the disciples are fighting over who is the greatest, their constant jockeying for position reveals the fact that they really don't know what true greatness is.
- Even after 3 ½ years of living with Jesus, hearing his words every day, watching him lay his life down for the people they still didn't get it.
- Ever so patient, always the teacher, Jesus called the boys to himself and began to teach them.

3 Disposition (*nature, character*) of True Greatness

Mark 10:42 **And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.**

- The way of the disciple **MUST** be different from the way of the World.
- The world practices leadership from a model of dominance, authority, and the effective uses of power and position.
 - That seems to work in this fallen world.
 - **BUT** The Kingdom model is diametrically opposed to the way of the world

43 **But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant,**

- The World measures power by the number of **SERVANTS** a man possesses; the Rule of God is displayed by the measure of **SERVICE** that is done from a thankful heart.

44 **and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."**

- Primacy, greatness, strength and valor in the Kingdom are perfectly exemplified in the character of the King.
- He holds the first position, the place of true greatness because he left his home in glory and became the slave of **ALL**.
- Although he is the creator, the owner and Lord over all of creation he willingly emptied himself taking the very nature of a servant and giving his life as a ransom for many.
- Greatness in the Kingdom always points first and foremost to the King.

When God graciously opens our eyes to the wonder, the glory and the beauty of our Lord Jesus;
When I begin to comprehend the majesty of his life and the depth of his humiliation;
When my soul begins to grasp the unfathomable riches of his mercy and His crowning victory over sin and death:

- I simply **MUST** respond in whole hearted devotion, adoration and worship.
- The gratitude that wells up within my redeemed soul drives me to continually offer my life as a living sacrifice.
- Service to Christ and to his Body should be as natural to the reborn soul as crying is to a newborn child.

BUT like the disciples there are times when we become bogged down with worldly pursuits, when we struggle with one another rather than with the sin that remains in us.

I am concerned that the ways of the world are influencing the saints. Rather than loving and sacrificial service, the church is marked by consumerism, asking what's in it for me?

- Matthew 19... After the Rich Young Ruler walked away... Peter reminded Jesus that THEY left their homes and families to follow him.. What's in it for US???

In our flesh we desire to be served rather than serve. (That is the way of the world)

- Remember on the last night that Jesus was with his disciples, once again they argued over who was the greatest... And he took a towel.....

John 13: 13 You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am.

14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.

16 Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.