

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 6TH-7TH, 2025 // GOSPEL OF MARK

THIRD PREDICTION (MARK 10:32-34)

Every Jewish male was expected to travel to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast (Ex. 12; Deut. 16:16).

- Like most Jews, Jesus did this annually (Lk. 2:41), and here we see Him with the disciples on the road to Jerusalem (v. 32).
- This year's pilgrimage to Jerusalem was a bit different—the religious establishment there had already decided to kill Jesus (Mk. 3:6).

Jesus is a wanted man—going to Jerusalem now was like walking straight into a trap!

- Yet here was Jesus, walking ahead of His disciples, straight into the city where suffering and death were waiting for Him.
- Understandably, Jesus' disciples were astonished by His courage and afraid for themselves.
- So often we do not think about Jesus' courage in the face of death and suffering.

COURAGE AND LOVE

Did Jesus ever feel fear?

- Jesus experienced every human emotion that we do, so of course He did (Mk. 14:32-36; Mt. 26:36-39; Lk. 22:39-44).
- Yet, His deep, sacrificial love and passion moved Him to act even in the face of fear.
- Courage is not really the absence of fear. It is action driven by love even in the face of fear.
- Jesus certainly felt fear, anguish, and dread, yet He was never paralyzed by them.
- Jesus chose sacrificial love and obedience to the will of the Father even in the face of fear, and this is the perfect example of courage.
- In life, we are going to feel afraid at times, yet we display courage when we obey God and choose sacrificial love despite our fear.

"TAKING THE TWELVE ASIDE AGAIN..."

This is Jesus' third direct prediction of His betrayal, suffering, death, and resurrection to His disciples.

- This last prediction is the most detailed: Jesus tells His students that He will be handed over to the Gentiles by the religious order (a deeply traitorous and shameful act for the Jews), mocked, spat upon, flogged, and killed.

"...HE WILL RISE AFTER THREE DAYS."

As difficult, shameful, horrifying, and painful as His suffering would be, Jesus' obedience and love would result in resurrection and redemption.

- God's perfect plan for salvation would be accomplished, and the grave would not be the end!
- Sometimes all we can see is immediate suffering, but obedience and love have a great reward.

SUFFERING AND GREATNESS (MARK 10:35-40)

Even though the disciples are described as "astonished and afraid" of what awaits them in Jerusalem, two disciples (James and John) seem excited at the possibility of glory awaiting them in Jerusalem.

- All of Jesus' warnings and predictions about His betrayal, suffering, and death have not really sunk in quite yet. These two brothers are more fixated on the potential for status.

James and John approach Jesus with an audacious request, which is likely why they start with such a bold preface (v. 35).

- Jesus responds, "what do you want me to do for you?"
- This is an amazing question from Jesus! If Jesus asked you this, what would you say?
- Your response reveals quite a bit about the state of your heart.

A person at a king's right hand was his second-in-command, and the one to his left was third.

- James and John request that when Jesus ascends to the throne as Messiah, they would be His top officers over the entire Kingdom of God.
- That is a very bold, audacious request!
- We commend their faith, but within this request there are two very flawed assumptions.

The first assumption was that when they arrived in Jerusalem, Jesus would establish the Kingdom, but they were forgetting the cross (to be on Jesus' right and left in a week's time would mean something very different).

- The second assumption was that greatness in God's Kingdom was based on status, rank, power, and authority, but they were forgetting humility and God's definition of greatness.

"You don't know what you're asking"—Jesus alludes to the fact that the path to the kind of authority they were seeking only came about through the same kind of suffering He would endure.

- A cup was often associated with judgment and suffering (Ps. 75:8), so Jesus asked them if they were willing to "drink the cup," to which they responded, "we are able" (vs. 38-39).

Jesus would be baptized/submerged into suffering and death, and He asks these young men if they would be able to do the same.

- Jesus assured them that they would "drink the cup" and share in this peculiar baptism, but the bestowal of that reward was only in the hands of the Father (vs. 39-40).
- Church history tells us that James was martyred (Acts 12:2) and John was exiled (Rev. 1:9).

WE OFTEN HOLD TO THE SAME FLAWED ASSUMPTIONS...

We want the Kingdom, but we often forget that it involves sacrifice, difficulty, and suffering.

- We want God's grace, rewards, and favor, but we often forget that they sometimes look different than we expect.
- We want greatness, but we so often think about greatness through the lens of earthly kingdoms.

NOT TO BE SERVED, BUT TO SERVE (MARK 10:41-45)

When the other 10 disciples heard about the request of James and John, they were "indignant" (v. 41).

- This is not "righteous indignation" at the immaturity of these two; this is wounded pride and jealousy because they called "shotgun" before any of the others got the chance.
- So Jesus, as the ever-patient master teacher, calls them once again into the classroom (v. 42).

RULERS OF THE GENTILES (V. 42)

The Caesars of the Roman Empire gained their position and kept it through coercion, manipulation, conspiracy,

intimidation, and sheer force of power.

- The way they demonstrated their "greatness" was to lord it over others and exercise authority by demanding compliance and respect.
- But this understanding of authority and greatness is not just confined to rulers in the Roman times.

This attitude shows up in workplaces, churches, and families.

- It says, "Greatness is power, achieved by climbing to the top and keeping control through manipulation, domination, rule through fear, and always being right."
- It often stems from deep insecurity and pride. Those who boss others around and hold on to control feel the need to prove themselves.

"It is not so among you" (v. 43a)—as children of God, we do not dabble in all these puny efforts at worldly greatness and trying to prove our significance.

- We are significant because God says we are! We do not have to earn it, achieve it, or crush anyone else to keep it.
- According to God's standards, the person who is truly great is the one who serves.

Although Jesus came with every right to be served by humanity, His purpose was to serve them.

- He willingly laid down His rights and took on a responsibility He did not have to take: to offer His life as a ransom (substitute) for many (v. 45).
- Can the same be said about us as His followers?
- Do we willingly lay down our rights and take on responsibilities we do not have to take to serve others around us? That is true greatness.

BLINDED EYES OPEN (MARK 10:46-52)

Beggars were considered outcasts in Jewish society; few holy men would have anything to do with beggars (and would NEVER touch them for fear of becoming unclean).

- Blind people (or anyone with a disability) were often considered cursed by God.
- Bartimaeus ("son of excrement") in Jericho represents this kind of lowlife who was considered subhuman in this society.

As Jesus passed by on the road out of Jericho, this blind beggar called out to Him using His Messianic title:

"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (v. 47).

- A lowlife like this could not disturb an important holy man like Jesus, so the crowd rebuked him, telling him to be quiet (v. 48).
- But Bartimaeus was desperate, and the crowd's rebuke caused him to cry out even more.

But with great astonishment, the crowd looked as Jesus stopped, called him over, and asked him an amazing question: "What do you want me to do for you?" (v. 51).

- There's that question again!
- What would you ask for? Great blessing, power, authority, and privilege? For Jesus to make you rich, powerful, beautiful, or famous?
- Before you answer, what is your greatest need?

Will power, status, money, comfort, admiration, authority, privilege, or beauty fix your life? Will the things you are chasing, if you were ever able to get all of them, satisfy and save your soul?

- You can get all those things and still remain completely blind to the realities of eternity, the Kingdom of God, and your greatest need.
- You are a sinner who needs a Savior. But have courage and get up. He is calling for you (v. 49)!

"RABBONI...I WANT TO SEE." (V. 51)

Bartimaeus was physically blind, but spiritually he could see that he needed the mercy of Jesus and that Jesus could save Him.

- He asked Jesus not for fame, riches, blessing, power, or authority but simply to open his eyes so he could see and follow Him.
- What a picture of faith! This is the faith that reveals to us the reality of Jesus and His Kingdom.

When we understand how broken and undeserving we are, how desperately we need God's mercy, and how willing Jesus is to stoop down and touch us in our time of greatest need, that is when our eyes are opened to see.

- When we see Jesus—in His love, mercy, grace, compassion, and power—saving us as undeserving beggars, we want to follow Him with our lives!

WHAT DO YOU WANT JESUS TO DO FOR YOU?

- Before you answer, consider this amazing irony: the God of the universe, who you should be serving, gave up His life to serve you!
- Is this fair? No. But thank God that He is not fair! He is merciful, generous, and kind.
- Jesus is offering to save you from your sins and make you into a new creation. He is offering His continued guidance, help, and healing.

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE ASKING...

- James and John wanted glory without understanding the cost, and often we want reward/responsibility without sacrifice.
- Sometimes what we ask God for is rooted in our ignorance of what we truly need and of God's bigger plan for our lives.
- Are we trusting God's plan and His wisdom when the path is hard or He tells us "wait" or "no"?

OUR GREATEST NEEDS

- Our greatest needs are always spiritual—not worldly—but often we are so blind to them.
- We all need a Savior, Healer, and Shepherd.
- We all have a need to serve and follow. We were created to serve the purposes of God (Gen. 2:15), not simply to serve ourselves!
- Are you looking to Christ to meet your greatest needs or to something else?

OUR ONLY HOPE

- Our own plans, ambitions, and idols cannot save our souls, forgive our sins, satisfy our hungry hearts, or guide our restless lives.
- Only Jesus can open our eyes to our greatest need and our only hope—that's Him!
- Do you want to see?
- Do you want to see yourself clearly? How about Jesus? Eternity and reality? Greatness?