

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 7TH, 2025 // GOSPEL OF MARK

JOURNEY (MARK 10:32–34) GOING UP TO JERUSALEM

As we read through the Gospel of Mark, we followed Jesus around the Sea of Galilee to the eastern shore of the Jordan River, and now, we know His destination: Jerusalem.

- As the leader, Jesus walked ahead of them. His determination surprised the disciples, while others feared what might happen once they got to Jerusalem.
- **Following Jesus means going where He leads. How far are we ready to go?**

THE REVEALED MISSION

Jesus gathers the 12 around and predicts His upcoming death and resurrection a third time.

- Nothing would take Him by surprise. He knew who would betray Him, who would accuse Him, and who would crucify Him. He knew the details down to the mocking, spitting, and flogging. But He also knew that He would rise again.
- **Jesus knew His path and knows ours. Are we ready to move forward and trust Him with whatever comes next?**

SERVANT (MARK 10:35–45)

"...DO WHATEVER WE ASK YOU"

James and John approach Jesus privately, call Him teacher, and tell Him they want Him to do whatever they ask Him to do.

- This seems forward, but their request is most likely based on a promise that the disciples would sit on 12 thrones in the new Kingdom (Mt. 19:28).
- **They heard the promise but missed the plan. Will we be disappointed when our journey is difficult, costly, and different than we expected?**

"WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO FOR YOU?"

They asked for the places of the highest honor and authority in His glory.

- To them, this seemed like a reasonable request. They had left home and followed Jesus; surely, they deserved high positions of power.
- It is interesting that Jesus does not harshly rebuke their selfish shortcomings—He teaches.
- **Yes, sometimes we are wrong. God still plans to teach us, use us, and change us to better understand His direction for us.**

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND

Because He knew they did not understand, Jesus asked if they could drink the cup He would be given or be baptized with the baptism He would endure.

- They may have missed the metaphors for enduring suffering. The cup would be the wrath of God and the baptism would be the overwhelming burden of God's judgment of sin.
- **Only Jesus could endure the cup He would be given and the baptism He was already experiencing.**

"WE ARE ABLE"

They were ready to fight. They did not know that the battle was going to be internal. They would get their "cups" and "baptisms."

- Eventually, they would be faithful followers of Jesus. James would be the first martyred disciple and John would live his last days in exile.
- **We are able to live the life God gives us. He is the one who will strengthen us in the struggles. The fight is real, and it begins in our hearts. When our ambition aligns with His will, we will begin to live.**

DESIRING SEATS

The seats James and John requested were already reserved, but that did not keep the other disciples from wanting to get a high place at the table.

- Reminiscent of the "who's the greatest" debate, the disciples escalated their discussion to a full-on argument about positions of power.
- **When the Church spends time fighting over having the best ministry or the most influence, everyone loses. Sound doctrine is essential, but rabid dogmatism is a sign of pride.**

"IT IS NOT SO AMONG YOU"

To stop disunity among the disciples, Jesus contrasted greatness in the world with greatness in God's Kingdom.

- The contrast is not between two ways to rule but between ruling and serving.
- There is no room for oppression, exploitation, and tyranny in the Kingdom of God.
- **We do not have rulers. We are under God's rule and follow His example.**

SERVANTS AND SLAVES

In the Bible, the words servant and slave represent two types of surrender.

- A servant voluntarily gives useful service to others.
- A slave forfeits their own rights to serve any and all.
- A disciple is to serve others, not their own interests, voluntarily and sacrificially.
- **This does not agree with the cultural model of greatness. We admire those with authority, influence, and position. What would we do to get where they are?**

JESUS: SERVANT AND SAVIOR

Jesus is the supreme example of true greatness.

- He voluntarily came as God's servant.
- The pinnacle of His service was His death as a ransom for many.
- He did this voluntarily, sacrificially, and obediently.
- **With the example clearly set, how are we doing? We are not being asked to die on a cross, but are there parts of us that need to be surrendered so we can be effective servants? Whom will we serve?**

DISCIPLE (MARK 10:46–52)

A BLIND BEGGAR

Bartimaeus received the last healing miracle in Mark.

- We do not know how long he had been blind, but we do know he had little position in the community.
- When he cried out for Jesus, many tried to silence him. Maybe he was considered unworthy of any effort to get him to Jesus.
- **Are we listening for those around us who are crying out for Jesus? If we limit our dignity, fairness, and compassion to the congregation, whom will we miss serving? Who are we?**

"CALL HIM"

Jesus responded to Bart's cries and sent others to call him out.

- They went to him and encouraged him to get up because Jesus was calling for him to come.
- His response was immediate and exciting: a blind man running toward the Messiah.
- **How many are crying out for mercy? How many are waiting to hear that Christ is answering? How many are ready to jump? We will not know if we do not go!**

"I WANT TO SEE"

In the same way He asked James and John, Jesus sought the heart of Bartimaeus.

- Bart had already seen what many with sight had failed to recognize. Jesus was the Messiah who could show mercy and give sight to the blind.
- His faith in Christ gave him the vision he needed to follow Jesus on the road to Jerusalem.
- **Discipleship is recognizing our inabilities, trusting Jesus to give us mercy, and seeing Jesus as we follow Him! Do we want to see?**

PROGRESS

- We like progress.
- **We like progress that makes our lives better, easier, and simpler.**
- **How we define progress is directly related to how we see our plans and goals. What happens when progress gets in the way of our plan? What do we see?**

ROADBLOCKS

- Some progress will create roadblocks.
- **We either wait or try to go around.**
- **The problem comes when God's plan for our progress becomes a roadblock to our plan. We are looking to become more, but not in the way God desires, so we turn our backs or find a detour. What should we do?**

WORK

- We can see what should be done.
- **We should stop avoiding His plan. When God's plan is right in front of us, we should join it.**
- **It is the best plan for our lives now and has eternal consequences. It will involve serving others, enduring struggles, and having the most joy possible this side of Heaven. We may not see the future we planned, but we will always see Jesus if we follow Him. What do we want to see?**