

SENT TO SERVE
(Mark 10:32-45)

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SENT TO SERVE **(Mark 10:32-45)**

INTRODUCTION:

- 1) When it comes to those who follow Jesus Christ, it must be admitted that there are a number of us can be “slow learners.” In particular many struggle to grasp the basic biblical truth that “servanthood is the way of spiritual greatness,” that the cross comes before the crown, that to be like the Savior we must be a servant.
- 2) We should not become too quickly discouraged at the self-evident truth of this situation. Those who first walked with Jesus suffered from this malady. They just “didn’t get it” even though Jesus repeatedly put the truth before them.
- 3) Mark 8-10 is a remarkable portion of Scripture. It is the most sustained and specific teaching on discipleship in the New Testament. The 3 chapters follow a very distinct pattern on being a servant. In each chapter there is:
 - 1) A passion prediction 8:31-32; 9:30-31; 10:32-34.
 - 2) A foolish response by the disciples 8:32-33; 9:32-34; 10:35-41.
 - 3) A lesson on discipleship, service and true spiritual greatness 8:34-38; 9:35-37; 10:42-45.
- 4) Now in Mark 10:32-45, our Lord’s instruction on spiritual greatness reaches its Climax with His breathtaking declaration in v. 45, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” This is the key verse of Mark’s gospel. This is the reason Jesus came. This gets at the heart of the gospel. This is the pattern for all who would follow Christ. We are sent to serve, even laying down our life if God so ordains.

TRANSITION:

This passage will raise and answer the question, “what will the gospel make of us?” The answer: it will make us servants like the Savior. However, before we consent to serve, before we say yes to being sent to serve, we must consider the issue of servanthood: what is its nature? What is involved?

I. You must Consider the Cost of being a Servant 10:32-34

- On the road (“the way”) to Jerusalem (this is the first mention that Jerusalem is where His passion will occur).
- Jesus the Savior leads, going before them, his face set for the destiny that awaits Him (“He is inflexible in His determination to do the will of God,” Lane, 374).

- 1) The road of service invites misunderstanding 10:32
- Amazed – astonished, awed
 - Afraid – (gr. *phobos*), terrified. Of what? No! Of who! He knows where He is going and what He will do, but not they. They watch our Lord in amazement and fear, even though they have no idea what is happening and awaits Him.

- 2) The road of service involves a mission 10:32-34
- Private time with the 12.
 - Provides most detailed & precise prophecy of His passion. Jesus' words reflect text like Psalm 22:6-8 and the mocking of the Righteous Sufferer, and Isaiah 50:6, one of the Servant Songs, and the Suffering Servant of the Lord.
 - 9 specific aspects of His passion, His missions are delineated. God sovereignly and providentially has laid out the road He will walk, the plan He will accomplish. It is no different with us. God orchestrates the steps of our lives.
 - Family and friends may misunderstand.
 - God has a plan for your life crafted and ordained to the last detail, the last breath.

II. You must Consider the Challenge to being a Servant 10:35-40

- Being a servant doesn't come easy, especially for those who have been trained to lead. Of course there is also the battle we must engage with the flesh. After all, there is a voice from our fallen sinful nature that can whisper quite persuasively, "The Lord takes care of those who take care of themselves." Just enough truth to deceive us, and just enough heresy to derail us. Why is it this way?

- 1) Being a servant goes against our human inclinations 10:35-37
- James and John come (without Peter!). Matthew 20:20-21 reveals they had their mother do their dirty work! (she was possibly Jesus' aunt). Blood after all is thicker than water, and Peter is cut out.
 - Their request reveals their complete lack of comprehension of what Jesus has just said.
 - Sensing, no doubt, the inappropriate nature of their plan, they try and trick Jesus into agreeing without hearing the request. Jesus doesn't bite and simply ask, "what do you want...?" (v. 36).
 - Their request: the best seats in the house, in the Kingdom. Their request reveals both their superficial understanding of what it means to follow Jesus and their inflated opinion of their own importance, something those who are called to lead are especially susceptible to.

TRANSITION:

2) Being a Servant is Ordained By Divine Revelation 10:38-40

- Jesus is gentle but firm, gracious but direct.
- Drink and baptize are interesting and powerful metaphors. Drink speaks of sharing in one's fate. It was also a common picture in the Old Testament of the wrath of God in judgment. Baptism clearly parallels the image of the cup, referring to Jesus' passion and death as a baptism, His being overwhelmed and immersed in the destiny put before Him by His Father.
- Jesus understood this was providentially the will of God for His life. Did James and John? Their all too quick answer reveals that they did not. Jesus by divine revelation tells them that they are indeed ordained for a similar destiny, but to sit on His right or left is a decision reserved for His Father.
- Sadly James and John fail to see that the pathway to glory is always the pathway of suffering. Before the crown there is a cross.

III. You must Consider the Conflict in being a Servant 10:41-44

- The ten are ticked at the two, because of their request and probably because they thought of it first! (cf. 9:33-34 and their lust for position as well). Jesus steps in and uses the occasion for His greatest and most powerful lesson on being a servant, on being a leader in God's Kingdom.

1) You must say no to the ways of the world 10:41-43

- The pagan world is driven by selfish ambition and a lust for raw power and position. They "lord it over" (*katakuriuousin*) and "exercise authority over" (*kataxouosiazousin*) them. In the world the more important you are the more people serve you. Jesus says, "not so but is it among you." In His world the more important you are, the more people you serve. Jesus opposes the mindset of the world, their way of thinking, and so must we. (Romans 12:2).

2) You must say yes to the work of a slave 10:43-44

- You want to be great, do something great for God? You want to please and honor the Lord Jesus with your life? Then become a *diakonos* (v. 43), a *doulos* (v. 44). Become a servant, a table waiter, a household servant and a slave. Such a person will have the mind of Christ, esteeming others better than himself, looking out for their interests. Such a person, like Jesus, will live life not giving attention to their own interests, but to those of others (Philippians 2:3-5).
- Jesus reverses all ideas of greatness, turning the world's philosophy on its head. So, who will we say "no" to and "yes" to? It will be a battle, there will be a conflict. To many it will not make sense. Be a servant, a slave? Why? How?

IV. You must Consider Christ when being a Servant

10:45

- William Lane said, “The reversal of all human ideas of greatness and rank was achieved when Jesus came, not to be served, but to serve (p. 383).
- John McArthur says, “Jesus was the supreme example of servant leadership.”
- The word “for” connects v. 45 with the argument of vs. 43-44. Why should you become a servant? A slave? Answer: because that is what your Savior did.

1) Follow Christ in Service

- “For even” emphasizes the remarkable humility and service of one who should by all rights be honored and served.
- “Son of Man” (Daniel 7:13) is wed to “ransom for many” (Isaiah 53:12) and radically redefines who and what Messiah would be. He is Messiah, but a suffering Messiah, a servant Messiah. The man for all men, the Man from heaven, the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve.
- If He serves, we must serve!
- If He gives, we must give!
- If He stoops down, we must stoop down!

2) Follow Christ in Sacrifice

- “give His life”, no one takes it. This is why He came.
- “give His life”, why? How? As a “ransom” (*lutron*).
- “Ransom” means to deliver by purchase, whether a prisoner of war, a slave, a condemned/forfeited life. It means a payment, usually of money, required to release someone from punishment or slavery.
- Here it speaks, and speaks clearly, of Jesus substitutionary atonement, His sacrificial death on the cross as the price paid to purchase the release from guilt and bondage sinners who would trust and believe in Him. The ransom was not directed to the devil, but the Father. Righteousness demanded it. Love provided it.
- “Guilty, vile, and helpless we, Spotless Lamb of God was He! Full atonement! Can it be? Hallelujah, what a Savior!” Can I atone? No, but I can act! Can I save? No!, but I can serve, perhaps even laying down my life for others.

Illustration: In June 1999 American flight 1420 crashed on landing in Little Rock, Arkansas. Among the 145 passengers were 25 students from Ouachita Baptist University who had been on concert tour. When the plane crash landed, it split in to allowing many to escape quickly. The plane also immediately caught fire. Tragically, but gratefully only 9 persons died. One was a Ouachita student named James Harrison. A strapping 21 year-old saxophonist, student, and part-time music minister from Paragould, Arkansas, James never left the plane. He had been seated in the right rear and joined a line of people moving to the exits. Then he stepped aside. Witnesses say they saw and heard him helping others,

including a burn victim, to get out first. Everyone assumed he finally also had left. Only later was he discovered missing. He apparently was overcome by smoke and perished. He always was known for helping others, said Allison Hunt, his singing partner for two years. "He gave up his life so that others might live." (*World*, 6-19-99, p. 37).

CONCLUSION:

Francis Schaeffer understood what our Savior calls us to do, and he also understood the challenge, the conflict, that too often confronts us. "Christ says we are to take the lowest [spot], but we like to take the higher. And we have a lovely rationalization for doing so because every time we take a bigger place we say that we can have greater influence for Christ. But this is not the Lord's way. Leadership is not to be sought; Leadership is to be waited for... To the extent that we want power among men, to that extent we are in the flesh and the Holy Spirit has no place in us. To the extent that I demand leadership and want leadership, to that extent I am not ready for Christian leadership." (*Compass*, Sum 1997, p. 26).

Sent to Lead? Perhaps.

Sent to Serve? No doubt.