

SRM14032

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"The Road to Resurrection: Honoring Everyone"  
Mark 9:33-37

I've heard several people say in last week or so, "For Lent this year, I'm giving up Winter!"

This week many Christians celebrated Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the season of Lent, traditionally forty days of fasting, prayer, repentance and self-denial in preparation for the remembrance of the suffering, sacrifice and victory of Jesus Christ over sin and death.

It is a time when it is appropriate to look forward, not only to spring, but to the eternal spring all people long for, one free of sorrow, suffering and death.

The gospel of Mark was written probably to Christians living in Rome, suffering under its persecution of Christians. Rather than minimize their sorrows or promise that they would soon be spared, John Mark in his gospel described the way of Christ as a way through sufferings to resurrection and eternal life.

In describing the life and work of Jesus, he shows stages in Jesus' ministry, Mark 8:31-10-52 record Jesus' last Journey to Jerusalem. It becomes for him a journey to His main task for which He was sent, to die as a sacrifice for sins and conquer death in the Resurrection.

For a long time, Jesus performed his miracles in relative obscurity, healing people, but telling them not to tell about it. This begins to change when Jesus says to his disciples in Mark 8:27 (NKJV) "Who do men say that I am?" So they answered, "John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ." Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him."

This is because the belief the Jews had about the Messiah at the time was of a triumphant political leader. Jesus needed to correct this in His disciples, and He does it three times, the first in Mark 8:31 (NKJV) "And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again."

Their first reaction is to reject it, and Peter, as spokesman, rebukes Jesus. Then Jesus gives a whole new vision of the kingdom of God than they have ever heard: Mark 8:33-38 (NKJV) But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, "Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

It is a picture of a glorious new kingdom, but that one that is spiritual and better than they thought, but which is entered through a path of sorrow.

Jesus Himself leads the way, becoming a glorious King, but receiving His kingdom through first taking on Himself the judgment of God on human sin.

Between this morning and Easter Sunday, I'd like to invite you to look at His "Road to the Resurrection", from the Transfiguration to the triumphal entry.

It was His Road to Resurrection. First He shows his inner circle a glimpse of His coming glory in the Transfiguration.

After the Transfiguration, Jesus set his ministry in the direction of his death and Resurrection. What did it take to get there?

His journey points the way for us who want to be truly alive, celebrating and enjoying Eternal Life.

After the Transfiguration, the disciples learn that the way will not be easy. They come down from the mountain to find the rest of the disciples surrounded by a crowd, and arguing with the Jewish leaders.

The argument arose because Jesus' disciples were unable to cast out a demon from a teenager so possessed from childhood.

When the boy is brought to Jesus, the demon makes a defiant show of strength: Mark 9:20 "Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth."

Now after Jesus successfully heals this boy, He makes haste to leave the area, because His purpose is not to attract a large following, but to do the work for which the Father had sent Him, and to prepare His disciples to understand it, so they could tell it the world after He was gone.

So Mark 9:30-32 says, "They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he did not want anyone to know, for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise."

But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.."

This is the second time He tells them this. He is showing them the Road to Resurrection, eternal life.

Jesus' summary of the 10 Commandments was to love God and people. The first four deal with loving God, but the last six deal with loving other people.

The fifth is "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you."

This morning I'd like to just center on the idea of honoring all people, as seen thru what Christ taught in Mark 9:33-37.

The lesson of the healing of the demon-possessed boy, is that God's wonders come not from what we do in our own strength, but what we do in Christ's strength, thru Faith and Prayer.

After this healing, when Jesus tells them of the road to Resurrection, they are "afraid to ask him about it."

In Mark 9:33-37, Jesus teaches that the way to Resurrection is not thru personal ambition, but by honoring others above yourself.

As important as the words are, Jesus method of teaching is just as important as his message.

Jesus' method was to concentrate on a few men & disciple them.

We are called to love one another, but in order to get past the superficial, we need to get into small groups where we can be real about our struggles, and accept one another as we are.

This passage tells us how Jesus did this.

1. Some people seek greatness by trying to be great in the eyes of other people.

Jesus loved his disciples enough to hold them accountable for their sins. (v. 33-34)

"Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?" 34 But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest."

"The house" was probably Peter & Andrew's.

Capernaum was where Jesus had started his ministry, & he had healed Peter's mother-in-law.

Jesus' question is something of a rebuke

The disciples were guilty of pride. In conjunction with their messianic expectation of a political liberator, the disciples dream of status, honor, and power.

They were embarrassed because instead of thinking about Jesus' death and Resurrection, they were discussing who might be in a position to take over when Jesus was gone!

As John Piper points out, Jesus does not criticize them for pursuing true greatness or significance.

“he created us to be great and to be significant—to come to the end of our lives and feel that they were well spent and well invested. But what has happened to this God-given longing for greatness is that it has been corrupted by sin in two ways:

1. it has been corrupted into a longing not to be great, but to be known as great; and
2. it has been corrupted into a longing not to be great, but to be greater than someone else.

“In other words, the joy of true greatness has been perverted by sin into the carnal pleasure we sinners get when others praise us and when we think we are greater than others are. Jesus sees this in his disciples and instead of destroying the whole distorted thing, he describes a pathway on which it will be radically transformed into something beautiful.”

There are 5 things we should do in our small groups: Worship, Bible study, Prayer, Sharing and Accountability. Jesus was holding the disciples accountable.

trans: Some people seek greatness by trying to be great in the eyes of other people.

2. Greatness in the eyes of God is the one who humbles himself before God and others and becomes the servant of all.

Jesus also loved his disciples enough to challenge them to make a radical change in their definition of success. v. 35 "And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."

Sitting was the usual position for Jewish teachers.

Pride is lifting oneself up against God, assuming a position not given by God.

Piper: “Jesus Radically Transforms the Quest for Greatness. He says true greatness is not wanting to be first while others are second and third and fourth, but true greatness is the willingness to be last. And true greatness is not positioning yourself so that others praise you, but true greatness is putting yourself in a position to serve everyone—to be a blessing to as many as you possibly can.

III. Corrie Ten Boom used to tell the story about a proud woodpecker who was tapping away at a dead tree when the sky unexpectedly turned black and the thunder began to roll. Undaunted, he went right on working. Suddenly a bolt of lightning struck the old tree, splintering it into hundreds of pieces. Startled but unhurt, the haughty bird flew off, screeching to his feathered friends, "Hey, everyone, look what I did! Look what I did!"

This old woodpecker reminds me of people who think more highly of themselves than they should. Usually they are so busy bragging about their achievements and their greatness that they fail to recognize God as the source of all their abilities. They are suffering from spiritual delusions of grandeur. Without the Lord no one amounts to anything, and in our own strength we cannot please Him. [Topic: Pride Subtopic: Examples of Index: 1723]

Pride can get you into a lot of trouble: Former heavyweight boxer James (Quick) Tillis is a cowboy from Oklahoma who fought out of Chicago in the early 1980s. He still remembers his first day in the Windy City after his arrival from Tulsa. "I got off the bus with two cardboard suitcases under my arms in downtown Chicago and stopped in front of the Sears Tower. I put my suitcases down, and I looked up at the Tower and I said to myself, "I'm going to conquer Chicago."

"When I looked down, the suitcases were gone." [Topic: Pride Subtopic: Examples of; Index: 1723]

The kind of love Jesus is talking about demands humility and sacrifice.

trans: Greatness in the eyes of God is the one who humbles himself before God and others and becomes the servant of all.

3. The person that receives life in Jesus Christ and the Heavenly Father receives in Jesus' name all people, to the least of them all.

Jesus loved his disciples enough to bring the truth to a practical level. Look at the two things Jesus did:

Mark 9:36-37 "Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, 37 "Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me.""

ESVSB: "The attitude of heart Jesus is teaching does not even overlook a lowly child (at times marginalized in ancient societies) but receives, and thereby cares for, such a little one in Christ's name. In contrast to the status-seeking of the disciples (v. 34), Jesus is showing them they should willingly take on lowly, often unnoticed tasks and care for those who have little status in the world."

“Anyone who does this, Jesus says, receives me and in so doing also receives the Father (him who sent me). Humbly caring for people of lowly status out of obedience to Christ (“in my name”) will be rewarded by rich personal fellowship with both the Son and the Father”

The key to honoring others is to love God first. Then we can accept others as representatives of Christ.

Oswald Chambers wrote that Humility is what we will be unconsciously when we become rightly related to God, and are rightly centered in Jesus Christ.

When we humbly accept Christ, we accept others whom we might otherwise consider unworthy of our time or attention, those whom our natural tendency it is to try to avoid or get rid of them.

Do you and I sometimes seek greatness by trying to be great in the eyes of other people?

Greatness in the eyes of God is the one who humbles himself before God and others and becomes the servant of all.

The God-given desire for a greatness that will make you really alive is satisfied when you humble yourself before Christ, the resurrection and the life!

And the person that receives life in Jesus Christ and the Heavenly Father receives in Jesus’ name all people, to the least of them all.

Action: Ask God to show you if you have been seeking greatness in the wrong place.

If you find have, repent of it.

Ask Jesus Christ to give you His love to serve all kinds of people.