

SRM14041

4/6/2014

"The Road to Resurrection: Victorious Humility"
Mark 10:32-45

Think for a moment about your dream home, your dream job, or your dream family. We all have in our mind what it would be like to have "arrived". It is a place of luxury and comfort, or a position of authority and importance, or a relationship or relationships that are satisfying, enjoyable and gratifying.

Some version or combination of these probably sums up success for you. In the battle of life, these would be what victory looks like.

Is it realistic to go after them? If there is a God, does He want human beings to have such things, and does He have the ability or interest in giving them to us or helping us get them?

According to what I read in the gospels, we long for such things because we are made that way, but what we dream about is in fact less than the best there is to be had, and the way by which we can come to enjoy such things, grasping for ourselves all the material wealth, pleasures and influence we can, is the opposite of the correct way to acquire them.

Jesus came to the world announcing the coming of a great kingdom. People followed Him because of their dreams of what that meant.

What He actually was offering was not what many thought it was, but something better, and He taught that the generally accepted means to success and victory in life is not in being the one who works hardest for oneself.

On that first Palm Sunday, many cheered for Jesus to be king, but for all the wrong reasons.

They had many things they wanted from Jesus, but were unwilling to give up what was most important to them: their right to serve themselves.

The episode in Jesus' Road to the Resurrection recorded in Mark 10:32-45 reminds us that there is no new life without a radical humbling; a death must occur before new life can take place.

As I meditated on this passage this week, the best expression I could come up with for it was Victorious Humility.

1. Victorious Humility began with Jesus Christ.
Mark 10:32-34

A. Jesus announced His walk toward death.

For Jesus to be recognized as king and Lord, he had to go to Jerusalem, but Jerusalem held the threat of death because it was in the control of those who opposed Jesus: Mk. 10:32 "And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus

was walking ahead of [leading] them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid."

The disciples were "amazed" at the courage of Jesus, because he knew the danger.

"those who followed" were probably Jews going to Jerusalem for the Passover, and they "were afraid" they might be in danger to be with Jesus

B. Privately, Jesus predicts His victory over death through His own sacrificial Humiliation:

32b "He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him: 33 "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; 34 and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again."

This is the 3rd time Jesus predicts his death & Resurrection (cf. 8:31 & 9:31).

It is the most explicit, mentioning for the 1st time Jerusalem & the role of the Gentiles.

ESVSB: Jesus speaks of a double deliverance: God will hand him over to the Jewish leaders, who, in turn, must hand him over to the Gentiles (the Roman authorities).

The important thing to see is that Jesus is teaching his own humbling is necessary as a Sacrifice.

You and I are sinners, and no amount of good works can make up for that. Rom 3:23 says, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," and Rom 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord."

Only the Sacrifice of a perfect man could pay this price for another, and only a divine being could count for more than one human life.

Jesus was willing to do this out of his perfect love. Ryle: "There was nothing involuntary and unforeseen in our Lord's death. It was the result of his own free, determinate and definite choice"

He was ready and willing to be utterly humiliated, suffering as a Sacrifice for sinners!

ILL. William Barclay, in his commentary on the Gospel of John says."It is told that in the First World War there was a young French soldier who was seriously wounded. His arm was so badly smashed that it had to be amputated. He was a magnificent specimen of young manhood, and the surgeon was grieved that he must go through life maimed. So he waited beside his bedside to tell him the bad news when he recovered consciousness. When the lad's eyes opened, the surgeon said to him: "I am sorry

to tell you that you have lost your arm." "Sir," said the lad, "I did not lose it; I gave it -- for France."

Jesus was not helplessly caught up in a mesh of circumstances from which he could not break free. Apart from any divine power he might have called in, it is quite clear that to the end he could have turned back and saved his life. He did not lose his life; he gave it. The Cross was not thrust upon him; he willingly accepted it -- for us. [Topic: Sacrifices Index: 3107-3111]

Even though this was Jesus' 3rd prediction, Luke 18:34 says (ESV) "But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said." This is confirmed by what follows.

Trans: Victorious Humility began with Jesus Christ.

2. Victorious Humility is the calling of Christian Leaders: vv. 35-40

v. 35 "Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask." 36 And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?" 37 They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory."

A. They still think Jesus' goal is to set up an earthly Kingdom.

But before we too quickly judge these leaders, James and John's ignorance, let's admit that most people start out in the Christian life in order to improve our situation in life, and even later on, "we are apt to forget the cross and the tribulation, and to think only of the crown." -Ryle

B. Jesus' reply is in v. 38: "Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

"drink the cup I drink" = a Jewish expression meaning to share another's trouble & suffering. In the OT, the cup of wine was a metaphor for God's wrath against sin.

"the baptism" (immersion) is a deluge of troubles.

This is the question Christ asks of you and me: are you willing to share in Christ's suffering?

Are you willing to Sacrifice all that is precious to you, to follow Jesus? This is Repentance and Faith.

Humility is not paying God for what he has done, but a loving response to one who has given more than we can ever repay.

O. Chambers: "Sacrifice in the Bible means that we give to God the best we have; it is the finest form of Worship. Sacrifice is not giving up things, but giving to God with joy the best we have."

ILL. Abel's Sacrifice was acceptable because, unlike Cain's, it was the best he had, and he offered it in Faith:

Gen 4:3-4 (NKJV) "And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering,

Heb 11:4 (ESV) "By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks."

C. James and John's answer to Jesus' question is v. 39: "We can," they answered." They didn't know what they were saying!

Ryle: "We often misjudge our own ability to withstand temptation & trial ... and the result is that we often buy wisdom dearly. Let us not, like them, forget that there is a cross to be borne by every Christian": Acts 14:22 says, "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,"

D. Jesus indicates that the victorious places of honor would be dependent, at least in part, on the willingness of his followers to be humbled for his sake.

39b "Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; 40 but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared."

In the Kingdom of God, positions of privilege are given, not to those who grab for power, but to those who relinquish it.

Since Jesus so cheerfully died for us, it becomes a small thing to require Christians to live for Him.

ILL. David Livingstone wrote in his journal on one occasion concerning his "selfless" life:

"People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Can that be called a sacrifice which is simply paying back a small part of the great debt owing to our God, which we can never repay? Is that a sacrifice which brings its own blest reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind and a bright hope of glorious destiny hereafter? Away with the word in such a view and with such a thought! It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege." [Topic: Sacrifices Index: 3107-3111]

trans: Victorious Humility began with Jesus Christ. Victorious Humility is the calling of Christian Leaders, and

3. Victorious Humility is God's calling to every follower of Christ: vv. 41-45

A. The other disciples – no less ambitious.

v. 41 "When the ten heard about this, they began to be indignant with James and John."

To share in the Sacrifice of Christ is sometimes to rejoice when others are exalted, even when we are overlooked and passed by. Humility is not only God's calling to Leaders.

B. Listen to Jesus' correction of the other ten:

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

Unbelievers love to be in charge, but this is not the way in God's Kingdom.

C. Jesus himself provides the godly example:

(ESV) 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."

In this world, greatness is in the number of people you can control. In the Kingdom of God it is the number of people you can help

Even the Son of man is not exempt from humble service. In the Kingdom he is, in fact, the prime example of it. This is Victorious Humility.

"Ransom" = deliverance from bondage by the payment of a price. When His blood flowed, it was the price of our souls.

So Victorious Humility began with Jesus Christ it is the calling of Christian Leaders, and it is God's calling to every follower of Christ.

In closing, and to give you a fuller flavor of what the humble life is like, I'd like to share John Piper's responses to a few objections that the world may have to this emphasis on humility.

Objection 1: Humility makes a person gloomy, dismal, downcast, unhappy

Answer: No, gospel humility frees you from the need to posture and pose and calculate what others think, so that you are free to laugh at what is really funny with the biggest belly laugh. Proud people don't really let themselves go in laughter. They don't get red in the face and fall off chairs and twist their faces into the contortions of real free laughter.

Proud people need to keep their dignity. The humble are free to howl with laughter.

Objection 2: Humility makes you fearful and timid

Answer: No, the world thinks that, because they think the best source of courage is self-confidence. It's not. God-confidence is the best source of courage. And only humble people lean on God for confidence. "I, I am he who comforts you; who are you that you are afraid of man who dies, and have forgotten the LORD, your Maker" (Isaiah 51:12–13). In other words, fear of man is a sign of pride, not gospel humility.

Objection 3: Humility makes you passive and removes the driving motor of achievement

Answer: No, the world thinks that, because for them the driving motor of achievement is feeding the ego with accomplishments. But Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:10, "By the grace of God I am what I am . . . I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me."

"The power of God's grace in the heart of the humble believer who depends utterly on God produces incredible energy and industry. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12–13).

"So Gospel humility, grace-based humility, Jesus-exalting humility does not make you gloomy, or timid, or passive. It makes you joyful, and courageous and industrious.

"It makes you a servant—like Jesus. Only God can do it. And he does it through Jesus in the gospel. May he work this in us and unleash a tidal wave of service in our church and in the world.

There is no new life without being humbled, for a death must occur before new life can take place.

New life is founded on Christ's Victorious Humility.

New Life calls for living out the Victorious Humility of Christ. And when that step of Faith is taken ...

New Life results in Humility before others.

Action: Examine your heart for Christ-like humility.

Ask God how you can act out your humble service to God this week, and for the wisdom to carry it out.