For Even the Son of Man

Mark 10:32-52

Key Verse: 10:45 “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Last week Jesus taught us who can enter the kingdom of God and inherit eternal life through children and a rich man. Those who have simple faith and a pure heart like children can enter the kingdom of God. Those who leave everything for Jesus and the gospel and put their treasure in heaven can inherit eternal life. However, his teaching sounds unrealistic to us who are too young to think about eternal life and who have too many things to deal with on this earth. Here Jesus teaches us what is most precious and important in our lives. Yes, it is our life, the salvation of our souls. Today, Jesus teaches us what he is going to do in Jerusalem for the salvation of our souls.

First, leading the way to Jerusalem (32-34) Look at verse 32. “***They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him.”*** Jesus and his disciples were on their way to Jerusalem.According to other synoptic gospels, this was Jesus' last trip to Jerusalem from Galilee. Jesus was leading the way to Jerusalem. The words ‘leading the way to Jerusalem’ has a more significant and deeper meaning than simply going to Jerusalem. Luke 9:51 says that Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. Why did Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem? Jesus was determined to take up the cross for the sins of the world. Jesus was not afraid of death. He was ready to fight against the power of death. He was like a triumphant general who was marching to fight against his enemy. Jesus’ disciples were astonished by Jesus’ overcoming attitude and fearless spirit, and those who followed him were afraid. As for them, Jerusalem was the city of both opportunity and danger.They knew that many enemies of Jesus were waiting for them in Jerusalem.

What did Jesus say to them? Look at verses 33-34. ***“We are going up to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise***.” This is the third time Jesus had predicted his death and resurrection. (8:31-32, 9:31-32) Jesus helped his disciples to prepare for his death by repeating it. What Jesus said was to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah 53. Jesus will be led like a lamb to the slaughter. He will be despised and rejected by mankind. He will take up our pain and bear our suffering. He will be pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities. By his wounds we will be healed. (Is 53😊-7) For this purpose Jesus was leading the way. He was determined to obey God’s will for world salvation. No one dared to stand against the power of death. But Jesus was leading the way to Jerusalem to stand against the power of death. Finally, he conquered death through his resurrection. Amen!

Second, ransom for many (35-45) James and John were the sons of Zebedee. They were top three among the Twelve along with Peter. They came to Jesus and asked, “***Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask.***” (35) They sensed that the hour of Jesus’ glory would soon come. They expected that Jesus would restore the glory of Israel by destroying the Roman government when he entered Jerusalem. So, they initiated position requests earlier than the other disciples. First come, first service! Jesus asked them, “***What do you want me to do for you?***” (36) James and John replied in verse 37. “***Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory***.” In other gospels their mother was involved in their request. They requested high positions in Jesus’ government when Jesus would conquer Rome. They revealed their political ambitions. How did Jesus answer them? “***You don’t know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with***?” (38) In this verse the cup means the cup of God’s wrath according to Jeremiah 25:15-17 and Rev 14:10. Drinking the cup of God’s wrath indicates death. The baptism of Jesus was also his death and burial. They did not know what they were asking. James and John answered in verse 39. “Yes, **we can**”. Jesus knew that James and John would die for him and the gospel in the future. So, he said, “***You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those whom they have been prepared***.” (39-40) Jesus admitted that they would participate in his suffering and death as he did. And he taught them that glory and honor in God’s kingdom belong to God the Father, not to him.

What was the response of the other disciples toward James and John? Verse 41 says that when the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. This shows that they also had the same ambition and desire as James and John did. They wanted to rule over others and exercise their authority when Jesus sits on the throne of king. They followed Jesus with these hidden ambitions. They simply wanted to become great. Jesus taught them who a truly great man is. Look at verses 42-44. “***Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you, Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.***” From a worldly point of view those who exercise authority look great. But from Jesus’ point of view those who serve are truly great. Jesus’ eyes are different from the eyes of people. Jesus showed them an example of a truly great man in verse 45. “***For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many***.” Jesus called himself the Son of Man. The Son of Man indicates the promised Messiah who would come from the offspring of a woman in Genesis 3:15 and the descendant of Abraham and David. The Son of Man also implies his perfect humanity whereas the Son of God does his perfect divinity. Jesus humbled himself by calling himself ‘the Son of Man’. Even though he is the Son of God, Jesus came to serve sinners as the Son of Man. Jesus is worthy to be served, praised, and worshiped as the Son of God. Still, he humbled himself and served sinners until he gave his life as a ransom for many. Here ransom is a payment for freedom. In a slave market people paid a price for a slave. God paid the price by the blood of Jesus to purchase us from the slavery of sin and death. Jesus gave his life as ransom payment.

People seek recognition from others through their wealth or achievements, or something visible in this world. The rich man in this chapter sought for more possession including eternal life. Eternal life was on his shopping list. James and John sought recognition for power and authority. They were despised fishermen in Galilee. They dreamed the glorious seat of Jesus’ kingdom. But they did not know that true happiness and greatness comes from serving others behind the scenes. There is joy when we lord over others. But there is more joy and happiness when we serve others (behind the scenes.) Those who serve others, even though they deserve to be served, are truly great. Jesus did not seek human glory because he lived before God. Some of our church members serve others behind the scenes even though they don’t get any visible fruit or reward. They spend their time and energy continually for Jesus and the gospel. Even though they are not recognized from this world, they are truly great in the sight of God. Our happiness does not come from visible things from this world, but from recognition from the invisible God. Our reward is not visible on this earth, but invisible in the kingdom of heaven.

Third, Lord, I want to see (Your faith has healed you.) Jesus and his disciples arrived at Jericho. While they were leaving the city, a blind man, named Bartimaeus, was sitting by the roadside begging. (46) **When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!**” (47) Bartimaeus couldn’t see, but heard all sorts of things about Jesus of Nazareth. He heard that Jesus had opened the eyes of a blind in Bethsaida. (8:22-26) He believed that Jesus could open his eyes, too. But many rebuked him and told him to be quiet. They thought that the blind disturbed Jesus’ procession. But the blind didn’t give up. He shouted all the more, “***Son of David, have mercy on me***!” (48) He did not want to lose his once in a lifetime chance. He overcame all obstacles by faith. His outcry stopped Jesus’ procession. Jesus stopped and said, “***Call him.***” So they called to the blind man, “***Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you***.” (49) People changed their attitude toward the blind man after seeing Jesus’ favor on him. The blind man threw his cloak aside and jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. (50) We wonder how this blind man could even jump to Jesus’s feet. Not a problem! His faith made it possible to know the exact spot where Jesus stood. Jesus asked him, ***“What do you want me to do for you?***” The blind man said, “***Rabbi, I want to see.***” (51) James and John did not know what they wanted. They did not know what they really needed. But this man knew what he wanted and what he really needed. He wanted to see. He needed his sight. Before we come to Jesus with a request, we have to know what we ask for and what we really need. We often do not know what we are asking for in our prayer.

How did Jesus answer him? Look at verse 52. “***Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road***.” Jesus blessed his faith. Jesus blesses those who come to him by faith. Jesus blessed a woman who was subject to bleeding for 12 years. Jesus said “*Daughter, your faith healed you. Go in peace!*” (5:34) Jesus blessed her faith and healed her. Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem. His heart must have been burdened by the upcoming cross. Still, he did not save himself to save others. Still, he welcomed those who came to him by faith. Still, he served sinners until he gave his life as a ransom for many.

One of the greatest virtues of Christianity is sacrificial love. God loved this world and sacrificed his One and Only Son Jesus on the cross. Today is Mother’s Day. We appreciate all mothers’ sacrificial love. They served us and loved us behind the scenes. Without their sacrificial love, there is not even one here who survives. Today Jesus showed us a good example of how to live a truly great and blessed life in the sight of God. They are those who serve others behind the scenes namelessly and sacrificially for the sake of Jesus and the gospel. They are true disciples of Jesus who gave his life as a ransom for many. Amen! Let us read verse 45.