

# A Servant of All

Mark 10:32-52 (CGS#17)

**INTRODUCTION:** We are closing out chapter ten in Mark's Gospel this week. So far, in chapter ten, we have seen Jesus engage with the Pharisees on the question of divorce (vv. 1-11). Their question wasn't really about divorce. It was aimed at tripping up Jesus. But Jesus offers us a masterclass on speaking truth with grace. He points to their stubborn and hard hearts and offers a deeper answer to their question, showing us that to follow Jesus means we need to take righteousness seriously by thinking with grace and truth. Then, in vv. 12-31, we see Jesus interact with the rich young ruler. In this moment, we come face to face with a truth we've already seen in Mark: following Jesus comes at a cost. The rich young ruler came to Jesus with religious zeal, worldly possessions, and status. But there was something about Jesus that showed him there was something more still to experience, eternal life. However, the call to salvation is the invitation of discipleship, and he wasn't ready for that because he had much to lose, a sobering reminder for us today. Finally, we come to the request of James and John in vv. 32-52. The disciples are finally going to bring a question. "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you" (v 35). Jesus has been talking about his death and resurrection for three chapters. For three chapters, the disciples have been blind to what he was saying. For three chapters, they have been afraid to ask him to help them see it. But now, James and John finally work up the courage to ask Jesus a question. Could this be the moment when they ask for help with their unbelief? <sup>1</sup> They came seeking glory and honor, and Jesus turned their request into a teaching about the greatness of serving. This isn't the first time we've heard this teaching from Jesus in Mark. Nor is it the only time it happens in the Bible. The opposite is true. The theme of the importance of serving is one that runs all through the Scriptures. Jesus himself embodies the fullness of radical servanthood. And so, we are to ask, are we following his example or the example of the world? Is it better to be served or to serve? Jesus will press us to the second one. It is indeed better to serve. And if we want to embrace that truth, we will need to make humility a priority. Jesus will show us that **in the Kingdom, to be great is to serve.**

**GETTING STARTED** – As a group, take time to answer this question. Who is someone who has shown you the greatness and the impact of being a servant?

**IN THE WORD** – Let's dig back into the passage(s). It is important to strengthen our muscles in reading God's Word. On Sunday, we walked through the passage in the sermon. Hopefully, that helped you to see the landmarks of the passage with fresh eyes. Now, with your group, go back through it and see what God is saying to you specifically.

First, before you read the passage, take a moment to ask God's Spirit to quiet your mind and heart and to illuminate the text to you. Second, read the passage aloud to the group. Then, follow the simple method below. (O.P.A)

**Observe:** Make 8-10 observations from the passage. Pay close attention to observe and note repeated words and phrases, names, places, and themes.

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<sup>1</sup> Jason Meyer, *Mark for You*, ed. Carl Laferton, God's Word for You (The Good Book Company, 2022), 162.

**Principles:** From your list of observations, what patterns or big ideas do you see emerging? Can you distill it down into 2-4 big idea truths?

**Apply:** Moving from your list of principles, it is time to apply God's Word. Remember, we believe that God's Word is living and active and that it can change the way we live Monday- Friday. What is one tangible way to apply a truth from your list above?

**Note:** Another way to approach your time together is to talk through the following questions. <sup>2</sup>

1. What are the defining traits and characteristics of a servant?
2. Compare and contrast James and John's request with Bartimaeus' request of Jesus. What stands out to you about them?
3. How can pride subtly creep into our lives and destroy our willingness to serve?
4. Think of some times when you cried out for mercy, and Jesus stopped and showed up in mercy. What mercy do you need in your life right now? What is keeping you from crying out?
5. Why is Bartimaeus' response so significant in the Gospel of Mark?
6. What things from this chapter would you share with an unbelieving friend?

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<sup>2</sup> Jason Meyer, *Mark for You*, ed. Carl Laferton, God's Word for You (The Good Book Company, 2022), 168.