

“The Servant of All”
(Mark 10:35-45)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. Last week,

- a. Our Lord gave us a lesson in how to overcome fear:
 - (i) Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem
 - (ii) Knowing what was waiting for Him there,
 - (iii) And yet He led the disciples with such confidence
 - (iv) That they were amazed.
- b. Where did Jesus get such courage?
 - (i) He knew His life was in His Father’s hands.
 - (ii) He knew He was doing what His Father sent Him to do.
 - (iii) He knew He would help Him.
 - (iv) And He knew He would reward Him.
- c. This is the only path in which you can find courage.
 - (i) By remembering and applying
 - (ii) The same things to your own life:
 - (a) That God is sovereign over your circumstances
And has ordained them for a good purpose.
 - (b) That He has a good purpose for your life
That He intends to fulfill,
 - (c) That He will help you
In all He calls you to do,
 - (d) And that He will reward you
For everything you do for Him.
 - (e) This morning, we’re going to see
 - (f) How you can increase that reward.

2. Two weeks ago

- a. We saw a lesson Jesus gave His disciples in humility.
 - (i) The rich young ruler
 - (ii) Couldn’t give up his possessions to follow Jesus,
 - (iii) But the disciples could and did.
 - (iv) Because of this
 - (v) Jesus said their reward would be great.
- b. To keep them from becoming proud of that fact,
 - (i) He taught them the parable of the vineyard.
 - (ii) He wanted them to know
 - (a) That even though they would have a greater reward,

- (b) They would have to endure more difficult circumstances
- (c) To become the servants of those who would follow.
 - (1) This morning, we're going to consider
 - (2) Another lesson in humility and service.

B. Preview.

1. Next we see
 - a. James and John seeking honor for themselves in the wrong way,
 - b. And Jesus teaching them the right way to do it.
2. This morning we're looking at:
 - a. How you can be great in God's kingdom.
 - b. The only way is this: Become the servant of all.
 - c. First, we'll consider what this means,
 - d. And then we'll apply it.

II. Sermon.

A. First, you can only be great in God's By becoming the servant of all.

1. The first thing we see is James and John's request:
 - a. They said to Jesus
 - (i) We want you to do something for us.
 - (ii) Before He agreed,
 - (a) He first asked what they wanted.
 - (b) It's always best to find out
 - (c) What you're agreeing to do
 - (d) Before you do it.
 - b. They said, let sit on your right hand and left:
 - (i) In other words, grant us the places
 - (ii) Of greatest honor in Your kingdom (vv. 35-37).
 - (a) Jesus had just told them
 - (1) They would sit on twelve thrones
 - (2) Judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28).
 - (3) They just wanted the best seats.
- (b) The Lord says ask and you will receive:
 - (1) But sometimes you should be careful
 - (2) What you ask for.

2. Second, we see Jesus' answer:
 - a. "You do not know what you are asking:
 - (i) Are you able to drink the cup that I drink?
 - (ii) Are you able to be baptized with the baptism
 - (iii) With which I am baptized?"
 - (a) Notice, honor in God's kingdom

- (b) Is based on suffering/servanthood.
 - (c) Jesus would undergo the greatest suffering:
 - (1) He would drink the cup His Father would give Him,
 - (2) Undergo the baptism of His wrath.
 - (3) And as a result,
 - (4) He would receive the greatest honor.
 - (5) The more you serve and suffer for it
 - (6) The greater your reward will be.
- b. They told Jesus they were able.
 - (i) Jesus replied they would
 - (a) Drink His cup,
 - (b) And be baptized with His baptism.
 - (ii) They wouldn't go through
 - (a) Exactly what He would,
 - (b) But something like it.
 - (c) All who live godly, will suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12).
 - (iii) But those places of honor
 - (a) Were not now His to give
 - (b) In answer to a request:
 - (1) Jesus doesn't say it wouldn't be theirs.
 - (2) He just says it was for those
 - (3) For whom it had been prepared.
 - (c) God has a plan
 - (1) That includes what His people will do:
 - (2) Including the service they will render
 - (3) And the suffering they will go through.
 - (4) The one who serves and suffers the most
 - (5) Will be honored the most.
- 3. Third, we see the others became angry (v. 41):
 - a. They wanted the same thing as James and John.
 - (i) Maybe they were upset because they asked first.
 - (ii) Our flesh naturally wants the best for itself
 - (a) And becomes jealous when someone else
 - (b) Seeks that place for themselves.
 - (1) It's funny how we can't see it in ourselves
 - (2) But can so easily see it in others.
 - (3) Just look at yourself
 - (A) Next time someone pulls in front of you on the road
 - (B) Who could have moved in behind you.
 - (C) It's like a race track out there,
 - (D) Because very few want to take second place.

(E) This is often true even in the church.

- b. Jesus saw this as an opportunity
 - (i) To teach them perhaps the most important lesson
 - (ii) Having to do with honor in His kingdom.
 - (a) You won't gain it
 - (b) By asking and seeking
 - (c) For that honor on earth.
 - (d) You will only reach it
 - (e) By seeking for the lowest place.
- c. As a negative example, He pointed
 - (i) To the best current example of what not to do:
 - (ii) Don't do as the nations do
 - (a) Who do not know God or His ways:
 - (1) The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over their subjects.
 - (2) And their great men exercise authority over them.
 - (b) Is it wrong to have authority or use it?
 - (1) No, but it's wrong to use it in the wrong way.
 - (A) These men used it to lord it over those under their charge –
 - (B) To force them to do their will,
 - (C) To make themselves look good
 - (D) So that they would advance.
 - (2) The right use of authority
 - (A) Is to use it to serve those under you
 - (B) For their good
 - (C) That they might be better,
 - (D) That they might advance.
 - (c) Jesus says, this isn't how it is with you.
 - (1) Whoever would be greatest among you
 - (2) Must be your servant.
 - (3) And whoever wishes to be first of all,
 - (4) Must become the slave of all.
 - (d) This is just the opposite
 - (1) Of what James and John were asking.
 - (2) They wanted that honor and authority
 - (3) For themselves.
 - (e) Jesus says in His kingdom
 - (1) It's those who serve others –
 - (2) Who take great pains
 - (3) And endure great hardships

- (4) To bring glory to God
- (5) And do good to the souls of others –
- (6) That will be first in His kingdom.

d. Finally, Jesus rounds off His teaching

- (i) With a good example.
- (ii) He points to Himself.
 - (a) He was the One who would receive
 - (1) The greatest position of honor and authority
 - (2) In the kingdom of heaven.
 - (b) Why?
 - (1) Because He took the role of a servant.
 - (2) He did not come to be served,
 - (3) But to serve
 - (4) And to suffer.
 - (c) Just consider His life.
 - (1) He was rarely served.
 - (2) He did receive the contributions
 - (A) Of those who ministered
 - (B) To His needs and those of His disciples,
 - (C) So that He could minister.
 - (3) He did allow Martha to prepare a meal for Him,
 - (A) A woman to anoint His feet with her tears
 - (B) To prepare Him for burial,
 - (C) His disciples to bring a donkey
 - (D) For Him to ride into Jerusalem.
 - (E) Someone also put vinegar on a sponge
 - (F) To give Him a drink
 - (G) While He was dying on the cross.
 - (d) Jesus wasn't often served:
 - (1) He didn't come to be served, but to serve:
 - (A) And to lay down His life
 - (B) As a ransom for many.
 - (2) His whole life was that of service
 - (A) Of suffering for that service.
 - (B) And for that reason
 - (C) He would be given
 - (D) The place of greatest honor and authority
 - (E) In the kingdom of heaven.
 - (F) The one who serves and suffers most
 - (G) Will receive the greatest honor.

B. Application.

1. If you want honor in God's kingdom
 - a. You'll not find it in the path
 - b. Of seeking honor for yourself –
 - (i) You'll only find it
 - (ii) In serving the Lord and others
 - (iii) And by suffering for that service.
 - (iv) The one who serves and suffers the most
 - (v) Will receive the greatest honor.

2. How different this is
 - a. From the attitude of most "believers" today.
 - (i) Who go from church to church
 - (a) Looking for that congregation
 - (b) That will best serve them.
 - (ii) If they have the best programs

For them and their children,
 - (iii) If the worship
 - (a) Has the right kind of music
 - (b) The kind they enjoy listening to,
 - (iv) If the pastor preaches
 - (a) The kind of sermons they want to hear –
 - (b) The kind that make them feel good about themselves –
 - (c) Then they'll stay.
 - (v) Most aren't looking for a place to serve.
 - (a) They're looking for the place
 - (b) Where they will be served.
 - b. How are we doing in this area?
 - (i) When there's a need
 - (ii) Do we wait to see
 - (a) If someone else will meet it first,
 - (b) Rather than being the first
 - (c) To step up and do the work?
 - (iii) Do we like to be served
 - (a) Rather than to serve?
 - (b) Granted, there are times
 - (1) When we need the service of God's people
 - (2) To refresh us because we're tired.

- (c) But we need to be careful
 - (1) That we don't constantly excuse ourselves
 - (2) From working in the vineyard.
 - (3) And avoid service all together.

3. Let me ask you this question:

- a. Do you want honor
 - (i) In God's eternal kingdom?
 - (ii) Do you want a measure of recognition
 - (a) Throughout all eternity
 - (b) In the eyes of your Lord
 - (c) And the saints?
 - (iii) Do you want a greater reward
 - Than what you can now expect to receive?
 - (iv) It's true that it will be wonderful
 - (a) Just to be in God's kingdom
 - (b) And not have to suffer in hell
 - (c) Forever for our sins –
 - (d) Which is what we really deserve
 - (e) But for the grace of Christ.
 - (f) The Lord is already giving us
 - (g) Far more than we deserve.
 - (v) But He is willing to give you more:
 - (a) If you are willing to honor to Him,
 - (b) He will honor you.
- b. The more you drink from the Lord's cup
 - (i) And are baptized with His baptism
 - (ii) The more you will be honored.
 - (iii) This only comes through serving –
 - (a) Not just your brothers and sisters
 - (1) For the Lord's sake –
 - (2) Though this is important –
 - (3) But by serving potential brothers and sisters
 - (4) By bringing them the Gospel.
 - (b) Those the Lord will honor the most will not have suffered
 - (1) Merely because they gave food to the hungry,
 - (A) Or clothing to the naked,
 - (B) Or because they wanted to build a house
 - (C) For someone who didn't have one.
 - (D) The people of the world
 - (E) Applaud that kind of work all the time.
 - (F) He will reward you for this

- (G) But this isn't how you receive the greatest rewards.
- (2) They will have suffered for the same reasons
 - (A) Jesus suffered:
 - (B) Because they were willing to speak the truth.
 - (C) They were willing to tell others
 - (D) Of their danger
 - (E) Of God's judgment for their sins,
 - (F) And of their absolute need of Jesus Christ.
- (c) This is a greater service to the Lord
 - (1) Than anything else you can do.
 - (2) When you do this
 - (3) You open yourself up
 - (4) To the possibility of suffering.
- (d) Instead of looking at this
 - (1) As a reason to avoid service,
 - (2) You should instead see it
 - (3) As an opportunity to gain honor.
- (e) That's what Paul did, which is why he was willing to suffer.
 - (1) "For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ" (2 Cor. 1:5).
 - (2) "*We are* afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor. 4:8-11).
 - (3) "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions" (Col. 1:24).
 - (4) "From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus" (Gal. 6:17).
- (f) That's what the early martyrs did.
 - (1) They believed there was a greater reward for their sacrifice,
 - (2) And so they were willing to suffer.
- (iv) If you want to be great in God's kingdom,
 - (a) You must achieve it in this life.
 - (b) If you want to achieve it in this life
 - (1) You must be willing to serve,
 - (2) You must be willing to serve all,

- (3) And you must be willing to suffer for it
- (4) If that's what the Lord should will.

(c) The more you serve

- (1) And the more you suffer
- (2) The more you will be honored in God's kingdom.

(d) May the Lord give each of us the grace

- (1) To seek more after that kind honor
- (2) By giving our lives to do His will
- (3) And by being willing to suffer for His glory. Amen.

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