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Text: Mark 10:32-45
Series: Who Jesus Is & Why He Matters
Section: What Jesus Taught His Disciples
Title: About Life in the Kingdom of God (KOG)

INTRODUCTION

In this passage Jesus delivers a reality check – effectively it is a realignment of His disciple's expectations regarding life with Him in the KOG (kingdom of God).

If we bring a humble heart and a teachable spirit to this passage this morning, Jesus can use it as a correction to our own expectations that may need a little refinement or even a major overhaul.

In the course of our Christian lives, we interface with all sorts of Christians each with their own misunderstandings of truth. Because of this, it is easy to pick up some pretty coo-coo ideas about what life in the KOG is all about.

We pick up these crazy ideas from

- false teachers who have their own agendas which are different than God's;
- from teachers who have been more innocently mis-taught themselves;
- from those who are quick to speak their opinions but really have no basis for their views other than an unfounded confidence of their own personality; and
- from our own slippery ability to spin things the way we'd like them to be.

This past week I heard of a professing Christians who said that marital fidelity is nothing that God really holds us to, after all He knows my heart.

Yeah He knows your heart. [Jeremiah 17:9](#) -- "The heart is more deceitful than all else; And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?"

The point being we can pick up some pretty wacko ideas about how we are to be and live in the KOG. We can see ourselves in positions Jesus never intended for us. And unless we give ear to His teaching about life in His kingdom we are going to miss what He has for us and we may misrepresent Him to others – may neither of those possibilities ever be in any of our lives.

So let's give ear to Jesus in this passage as He continues to train His disciples of the 1st century and those of the 21st century.

As we give ear to this passage let's push off the old man and let the Holy Spirit continue to transform our minds as we listen to the voice of God in this passage of Mark 10:32-45.

[read the passage]

I. Jesus forecasted His own humiliation and exaltation -- a third time (32-34)

The first time He predicted his suffering and death Peter pulled Him aside and rebuked Him (8:32); which cost him a stinging counter rebuke from the Lord "Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's." The second time He spoke of these things the disciples didn't understand and were afraid to ask for clarification (9:32). Here Jesus forecasts what we have before labeled His **humiliation** and **exaltation**; and He does so with the greatest detail, and with the greatest sense of urgency, determination and betrayal. Listen for these in v. 32bff:

- 32b And again He took the twelve aside
and began to tell them what was going to happen to Him,
33 saying, "Behold,
we are going up to Jerusalem,
and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes;
and they will condemn Him to death
and will hand Him over to the Gentiles.
34 "They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill Him,
and three days later He will rise again."

A. Life in the KOG would require the death and resurrection of its King

The first thing to note besides the direct facts of the teaching, is the irony that life in the KOG would require the death and resurrection of its King.

As ironic as this sounds to us it, should not have caught the people of Israel off guard since throughout their history God had communicated that life in communion with Him was to be secured by a substitutionary death. So it was with Abraham and Isaac, at the first Passover when God delivered the people from their bondage in Egypt and with all the sacrifices required by the Law.

- God asked Abraham (Gen 22) to sacrifice his only son through whom God had said would come His promise to bless all families of the earth. After Abraham had counted Isaac as dead, God Himself provided a substitutionary sacrifice of a ram caught in a thicket. And Abraham received Isaac back from the 'dead.'
- At the First Passover – Ex 12 – when God had the people of Israel kill an unblemished lamb and place its blood on the doors of their houses and He would pass over those houses so marked and not require the life of its first born son.
- The sacrifices required by the Law – Ex 29 esp. v. 36 – Instead of requiring the deserved death of the sinner, God accepted the death of an animal as a substitute in the sinner's place. This is the concept of atonement. God making provision to forgive man's sins accepting the shed blood of a substitutionary

sacrifice as His required means to the end of reconciling His people to Himself.
(cf. Ez 18:20 and Lv 4:20; 16:1-15)

All this could have / should have prepared Jesus' disciples for his now 3 time teaching that He must suffer and die and then rise again. But it doesn't appear that His disciples grasped the meaning of even this the third and most precise of the teachings. Their misunderstanding was evident in the following interchange. Coming on the heels of Jesus prediction of His laying His life down to bring about the KOG His disciples are preoccupied by the prospect of how this will benefit them.

II. Jesus humbles His disciple's errant hopes for high positions in the kingdom (35-40)

[read 35-40]

A. What They Wanted

The disciples hoped for high positions in the KOG!

While Jesus had looked forward and seen the cross upon which He would suffer to atone for the sins of the people of God, Jesus disciples had their eyes on positions of power and prominence in a kingdom they misunderstood.

1. Verses 35-37

2. What They Wanted: Positions of Power and Privilege in the KOG

They may have been confused about the nature of the KOG but they were convinced that Jesus was the King and God's Christ, the One in the line of David that would establish the kingdom that would never end... and they wanted in.

But Jesus had to pop their bubble... He did NOT say, "God helps those who help themselves, so, sure, since you asked, you can have that privilege." Instead, He said, "No." and then He told them...

B. What They Would Get

1. Verses 38-39

2. The Cup & the Baptism

a) The Cup of Suffering & Death (see endnote ii)

b) The Baptism of Death and Resurrection (see endnote iii)

c) Suffering unto Death and Resurrection unto Eternal Life

3. Verse 40 – But Not the Positions they Wanted

a) This privilege was NOT Jesus' to give

b) This privilege was ALREADY given to another

Speaking of this privilege, Jesus says in v. 40, “it is for those for whom it **has been prepared.**” (This is in the perfect tense indicating an action which has taken place in the past with continuing effects into the future.) They were asking for a position God the Father (Mt 20:23) had already prepared for some other. Mat 25:34 speaks of God having prepared the kingdom for certain people “from the foundation of the world.”

This was clearly an example of the one created and redeemed trying to influence the design of the Creator/Redeemer. Sort of like a teenager asking for the master bedroom, or the guest asking for the seat of honor when it has already been assigned by the host to another.

C. What We Want

1. Common to all of us

a) We want life, even our life with Christ, to work to our advantage

(1) ILLUS. – Driving: We drive with no concern for others except how others effect us. I don't care about the guy ahead of me, unless he is going too slow; or about the guy behind me, unless he is following too close... Driving down the road of life we don't really care about others and we bring this egocentric selfish attitude into our life with God

D. What We Will Get

1. Suffering, death and resurrection (new life out of death)

2. This then becomes a heads-up on the cost of discipleship

E. What We Need

Along with this reminder that comes from reading these words of Jesus, maybe we could benefit from a quick attitude adjustment or a realignment of our

expectations. We should expect that following Jesus will cost us our lives. We should remember that the KOG is not designed for my glory but for God's.

James and John put it out there and caught the correction from the Lord for us. The rest of the disciples, as you might expect, weren't too pleased with them – sort of like the one bachelor who didn't think to run towards the bachelorette in a recent Bachelorette TV program. He wanted the girl! He was walking with another competing bachelor to meet the prize and share a double date. When the two bachelors got into eyesight of the woman one broke out and ran to meet her, leaving the other bachelor wondering if he should run too, to show that he liked the girl as much as the first guy, but that would look goofy and very second place. He just walked up behind, but he was ticked at Mr. Run On Ahead. This is not unlike James and John, two of Jesus inner circle of disciples. Let's read...

Let's read 41-45 and see how...

III. Jesus redefines true GREATNESS in the Kingdom of God (41-45)

A. Contrasting Life in Gentile Kingdoms w/Life in the KOG

1. The Way It Is in Gentile Kingdoms – 42

- a) Rulers “Lord it **Over**” Subjects
- b) “Great Men Exercise Authority **Over**” Lesser Men
- c) Trans. – v.43a Adversative
“But it is not this way among you...”

2. The Way It Is In the KOG and Why – 43b-45

a) The Way – 43b-44

(1) The one who aspires to greatness shall be a servant to the others

(a) Note: “Be a Servant” not serve – being, not action

(b) **diakonos**

(2) The one who aspires to first position shall be slave of all

(a) “be” – as above speaking of who you are

(b) “first” indicates...

(c) “slave” =

(d) “all”

b) The Why (The reason the KOG is different) – 45

⁴⁵ “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served,

[He came] but [instead]
to serve, [diakonesai]

and
to give His life a ransom for
many."

Trans. – What a right side up world Jesus is building and how we have gotten used to living in an upside down world. True greatness is bound up in being a servant like Jesus who entered glory through suffering on behalf of us. But this still falls short of the ultimate lesson of this passage which presents itself most clearly in what Jesus said about Himself in relation to us in v. 45...

B. Jesus Is Servant and Savior – Our Servant & Savior

As much as Jesus is teaching His disciples about the importance of being servants and even slaves, there is a more significant truth and a more important lesson here for us: **Jesus came to be our servant and our savior!**

1. Jesus is Our Servant

Who is Jesus? Verse 45 teaches that He is our servant. And contrary to what we may think sounds noble, we are not to serve Him. Frankly, He does not need our help. Acts 17:24-25.

We are to be servants of each other like He serves us and with His help.

The only way we can be servants to each other is to be first the recipients of His service to us. It is not about doing acts of service, it is about being a servant even a slave enabled by the infusion of strength that comes by receiving the ministry of Jesus! This is in line with Jesus previous teaching about entering the KOG as a dependent child with nothing to offer and as a rich man who has divested himself of all his riches and has given himself to the simple pursuit of coming to and following Jesus bringing nothing to the table but the dignity God has planted in his being as an image bearer of Him.

2. Jesus is Our Savior = The One Who Ransomed Us

Who is Jesus? Verse 45b teaches that He came "...to give His life as a ransom for many" – this is another way of saying He is our Savior.

3. Knowing Him Yields The Rest

Just as a branch that remains attached to a healthy vine will naturally produce the fruit of that vine (John 15), so knowing Him first hand as our servant and savior will produce the fruit of service and all other forms of obedience.

- We know Him as our Savior when we come to Him as a child (Mk 10:13-16).
- We know Him as our Servant when we receive His help/service. (32-45)
- We receive His service as we respond in faith and obedience to His Word; i.e., He provides us with the resources we need to do what He calls us to.
- We hear His word as we sit at His feet (Lk 10:38-42) and pay careful attention to His voice in the pages of Scripture through study, meditation and prayer.

Conclusion

This passage calls for NOT the ten things we should DO to serve like Jesus, but the one thing we must know in order to be like Jesus; and that one thing is Jesus Himself!

We must know Jesus as our servant and as our savior. We must receive His service. We must let Him be our ransom

If there is one action I want to provoke you to, it is the desire to pursue knowing Jesus as your intimate. I want you to cry out, "Jesus, I want to know You!" Then, go and be with Him.

You who are rich in things and thoughts that keep you away from following Jesus as His intimate friend, divest! Divest and allow the Holy Spirit to bring you to Him as a new born babe to the arms of its mother. Come to Him empty handed with nothing to give or do and everything to receive from Him who did not come to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many!

Let's pray...

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Jesus' Sufferings Foretold

32 They were on the road going up to Jerusalem,
and Jesus was walking on ahead of them;
and they were amazed, [What caused their amazement?]
and those who followed were fearful. [Fearful of what?]
And again He took the twelve aside
and began to tell them what was going to happen to Him,
33 saying, "Behold,
we are going up to Jerusalem,
and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes;
and they will condemn Him to death
and will hand Him over to the Gentiles.
34 "They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill Him,
and three days later He will rise again."
[v35ff seem disconnected from 32-34. Was it a time-space disconnect or a disciple-Jesus
disconnect?]
35 James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, came up to Jesus, saying,
"Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask of You."
36 And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?"
37 They said to Him,
"Grant that we may sit, one on Your right and one on Your left, in Your glory."
38 But Jesus said to them,
"You do not know what you are asking.
Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, [What is the cup that Jesus drinks?]
or
to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?"
[What is the baptism?]
39 They said to Him, "We are able."
And Jesus said to them,
"The cup that I drink you shall drink;
and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized.
40 "But to sit on My right or on My left, this is not Mine to give; [a limit on Jesus scope of authority?]
but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." [Who is the preparer but God the Father? See Mt 20:23]
41 Hearing this, the ten began to feel indignant with James and John.
42 Calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them,
"You know that
those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them;
and their great men exercise authority over them.
43 "But [now know this as well]
it is not this way among you,
but [rather it is this way]
whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant;
[diakanos]
44 and
whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. [dulos]
45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served,
but
to serve, [diakonesa:]
and
to give His life a ransom for many."

Endnotes

ⁱ What did that mean to the disciples? JP: They were asking for positions of honor in Messiah's reigning kingdom. Jesus had previously taught of His humiliation and exaltation and in 8:38 He had referred to His coming in "glory". Did James and John understand at this time that Jesus would die and be raised and come again in glory at a future date? Were they asking for this exalted position recognizing that this could only be later after Christ came again? Or were they not understanding the coming humiliation of Christ and choosing to continue to think that He would establish the David like political national kingdom and begin that rule now? At the very least there was confusion as 9:32 indicates. Whether they had in mind an earthly or a heavenly kingdom, their question is asking for the top two positions under His own.

ⁱⁱ **the cup that Jesus drinks** – Jesus at the last supper spoke of the cup of His "blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." Mt 26:28. See also [Luke 22:20](#) -- And in the same way He took the **cup** after they had eaten, saying, "This **cup** which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood. Jesus in the garden, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will by as You will." Mt 26:39 cf. [Mark 14:36](#) -- And He was saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this **cup** from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will." Even as Peter tried to prevent Jesus arrest: [John 18:11](#) -- So Jesus said to Peter, "Put the sword into the sheath; the **cup** which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?" Paul would later ask: [1 Corinthians 10:16](#) -- Is not the **cup** of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ? Conclusion: The cup Jesus referred to was the cup of His suffering and death; that which was spoken of in 33-34.

ⁱⁱⁱ **What is the baptism?** -- [Romans 6:4](#) -- Therefore we have been buried with Him through **baptism** into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. [Colossians 2:12](#) -- having been buried with Him in **baptism**, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. [1 Peter 3:21](#) -- Corresponding to that, **baptism** now saves you-- not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience--through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

^{iv} "not mine to give" – After Jesus was resurrected He said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth...." Mt 28:18. Was this His after His resurrection and not before? Or what was Jesus saying in v.40? Could He have just been showing His disciples that He was carrying out the plan of God the Father and was not to be regarded as operating independently from Him. This is much like [John 5:19](#) -- Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, **unless** it is something He sees the **Father** doing; for whatever the **Father** does, these things the Son also does in like manner. [John 6:65](#) -- And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me **unless** it has been granted him from the **Father**." This could also indicate that God even Jesus may have already given it to others making this a predetermined plan as indicated by "has been prepared"