A BETTER WORD

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

A Study Through the Life of King Jesus | with Pastor Nick Gatzke

The Cruciform Life

◆ *Mark 10:31–52*

THE BIG IDEA

True greatness in God's kingdom is shaped like a cross: becoming last on earth is the road to being first in eternity.

SERMON SUMMARY

For the third time, Jesus told his disciples what was coming: betrayal, mockery, death, and resurrection. James and John immediately asked for the seats of honor beside him "in your glory," picturing a throne. But Jesus asked if they could drink his cup and share his baptism, because that glory would be flanked by two criminals on crosses. Then he told the indignant ten that whoever would be great must be a servant, "for even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark's gospel reveals a purposeful pattern, from children with no status to a rich man with every advantage to ambitious disciples to blind Bartimaeus, we see that the world's "last" were welcomed first and its "first" were called to become last.

DIGGING DEEPER

OBSERVATION

1. James and John asked to sit at Jesus' right and left in "your glory" (v.37). What did they likely picture by "glory," compared to who actually flanked Jesus at his greatest glory on the cross?

INTERPRETATION

2. Jesus answered by asking if they could drink his cup and share his baptism (vv.38–39). What events was Jesus describing? What does that reveal about what "glory" costs in God's kingdom?

3. Pastor Nick pointed out how Mark's gospel stacked these stories: children with no status, a rich man with every advantage, ambitious disciples, then blind Bartimaeus. What is Mark asking you to notice about who ends up "first"?

THEOLOGICAL CONNECTION

4. The title "Son of Man" (v.33; Daniel 7:13–14) points to the highest glory and dominion over all peoples. How does Jesus holding that title while predicting his own death reshape what glory means?

5. Jesus said whoever would be great must be a servant, and whoever would be first a slave of all, because even the Son of Man came to serve, not be served (vv.43–45). Where are you more concerned with being served than with serving?

LIVING IT OUT

HEART CHECK

A cruciform life is others-centered, not self-centered, and that shows up in ordinary places long before anything dramatic: credit at work, status among other parents, and recognition in your friendships. Are you more concerned with getting credit or giving it, with your own advancement or with serving others?

ACTION STEPS

— Pick one relationship or role, such as parenting, work, or a friendship, where you tend to seek status or recognition.

— Deliberately take the "last" position there by choosing to give away credit, serve without being noticed, or lift someone else up instead of yourself.

— Notice how it feels to go unnoticed, and bring that honestly to God instead of fishing for recognition.

"SO WHAT?" CHALLENGE

Greatness in God's kingdom doesn't look like a throne; it looks like a towel and a cross. Take the last place today, and let God do the exalting.

REFLECTION & PRAYER

KEY VERSE — TO MEMORIZE

"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

— Mark 10:45

PRAYER PROMPT

Ask God to reshape your instinct for status and recognition into a life of service, and thank Jesus for becoming last so you could be welcomed into his kingdom.

YOUR PRAYER