



Sermon, Sunday October 16, 2022

“Jesus Teaches about Serving Others”

SCRIPTURE: Mark 10:32-45 ³² They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them what was to happen to him, ³³ saying, “Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the gentiles; ³⁴ they will mock him and spit upon him and flog him and kill him, and after three days he will rise again.” ³⁵ James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” ³⁶ And he said to them, “What is it you want me to do for you?” ³⁷ And they said to him, “Appoint us to sit, one at your right hand and one at 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 or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” ³⁹ They replied, “We are able.” Then Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized you will be baptized, ⁴⁰ but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to appoint, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.” ⁴¹ When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. ⁴² So Jesus called them and said to them, “You know that among the gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. ⁴³ But it is not so among you; instead, whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Introduction: Jesus Predicts His Death

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ! It is such a beautiful autumn day. May the grace of the Lord come to you in abundance every day in your life.

The Gospel of Mark in today's text follows the road to the cross of Golgotha as a whole. Jesus had to go up to Jerusalem to open the way for salvation. Jesus Predicts His Death in Mark chapters 8, 9, and 10, which is an essential part of the Gospel of Mark. Today's text is the last of Jesus' Predictions of Death. The disciples' response to Jesus' Predictions of Death were always far from the response the Lord wanted. Today's text also shows the reaction of the disciples who did not understand the way of the cross of Jesus.

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to Jesus and said to Him, **“Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” (v.35)** And He said to them, **“What is it you want me to do for you?” (v.36)** And they said to him, **“Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.” (v.37)**

In response to the request of James and John, the Lord knew that the disciples did not properly understand the way of Jesus and said: **“You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” (v.38)** The question Jesus is asking His disciples is if they can be united with the Lord and carry their cross. The disciples answer this question of Jesus, **“We are able.”**

But the Lord makes it clear to the disciples that the way the Lord must go is different from the way the world is going. Jesus said to His Disciples: **“For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.” (v. 45)**



In today's text, the disciples answered that they were able to walk the way the Lord walked with Jesus, as if they could go, but they could not. It was because there was no clear foundation for service in their hearts. So, how can we live a life of service to our neighbors?

Body: Three Foundations for a Life of Serving Our Neighbors

Galatians 5:13-15 says: “**You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. (v.13) The entire law is summed up in a single command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' (v.14) If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. (v.15)** These verses clearly show what we must be prepared to do to serve our neighbors.

First, the foundation for serving our neighbors is the joy and power of salvation.

The Apostle Paul says in **Galatians 5:13**: “**For You, my brothers, were called to be free.**” If we have not experienced God's life-changing power and grace before serving our neighbors, our service to our neighbors will inevitably be limited. This is because, instead of serving our neighbors with the strength and power that the Lord gives us, if we try to serve our neighbors with our own strength and power, our habits and wounds can turn into hatred toward our neighbors.

That is, if we do not experience the freedom of being forgiven by the Lord, we serve others for the purpose of gaining approval from others, running away from our own suffering, and achieving our own righteousness. Such service will bring us pain and suffering. So, to serve our neighbors, we must experience the joy and power of salvation.

Second, we must beware of selfishness that hinders us from serving our neighbors.

The Apostle Paul warns us in **Galatians 5:13**, “**Do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature.**” We often feel that we do not have enough time and energy to devote to serving our neighbors. The reason we think this way is because of selfishness.

James and John, the sons of Zebedee in the Gospel of Mark today, also followed Jesus for the fulfillment of their worldly aspirations. They did not think about the weight and suffering of the cross that Jesus had to bear for the salvation of the world. If we are driven by our instincts, driven by our selfishness, the world will become a jungle of “**biting and devouring each other**” (**Galatians 5:15**). In the end, if we live only according to our selfishness, we perish together.

Third, the motive of serving our neighbors must be love.

At the end of **Galatians 5:13**, the Apostle Paul said: “**Serve one another in love.**” And today's text is **Mark 10:43-44** says: “**But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant (v.43), and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all (v.44)**”

This is an important key to building a community. Serving without love is nothing in the sight of God. **1 Corinthians 13:3** says: “**If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.**”

The Lord cares more about what motives we have for service to our neighbors, rather than how well we serve our neighbor. The Lord always looks at our heart. So, to serve our neighbors well, what we need is a willing heart, sincere love, and a grateful heart.



In today's Gospel of Mark, the other disciples hear a conversation between Jesus, James, and John. However, the reactions of the other disciples are interesting. They were angry. Why were they angry? Because the other disciples wanted to be glorified like James and John. The sons of Zebedee, James, and John, and all the other ten disciples, are the same in that they sought their own glory rather than offering devotion and glory to the Lord. We need to think about our motives for serving our neighbors. Is it love or something else?

Conclusion: Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

Now let's summarize today's sermon. Jesus said that he did not come to be served, but rather to serve. This is the Lord's true promise, which is different from the lies and promises we often make.

In fact, humans always crave high places. We, who are aware of the Lord's Word, often live with a hypocritical heart. However, as Christians, we must live in imitation of the service of Jesus, who confirmed His love for us through his death on the cross.

The Lord commands us to be servant and slave. **Hebrews 12:2 says: "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."**

Like this verse, I hope we each take up our cross and live like Jesus. We hope that we will walk that path to the end, looking only at the Lord who is the example of our service and sacrifice.

