

## **The sermon**

### **Intro**

Our goals, our ambitions, give shape to our lives.

One goal might be the people we want to become. The sin we want to kill. The fruit we want to emerge. Another goal might be the things we want to accomplish. I want to share the gospel with this person. I want to get the church siding in order before winter.

This morning we'll see there's Christlike ambitions to embrace and worldly ambitions to discard. Jesus speaks to what's supposed to be in the church.

This morning we'll consider, why did Jesus come, and what does this mean for how we do life together as church?

### **READ PASSAGE**

#### **BIG IDEA: Jesus Came to Give His Life as a Ransom for Many**

#### **Body**

##### **Point 1: A self-seeking request (10:35-37)**

*And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." – 10:35*

Two of the apostles have a request for Jesus. It's a private request away from the 12. We want you to do whatever we want. Pretty bold.

*And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" – 10:36*

No immediate correction. Please share.

*And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." – 10:37*

Note this request is an expression of faith. They believe there's a time coming when Jesus will sit in glory. Meaning they believe Jesus will reign when the kingdom comes. They believe Jesus is the promised Messiah, the king who will reign on David's throne forever and ever.

They're asking these things because they believe Jesus' words.

What's meant by sitting on the right and the left? These would be places of high position, places of honor. They're asking to have the best seats in the kingdom.

The picture is kind of like the first to ask gets what they want. If the kid's the first to ask for the best piece of cake, they'll get it. I need to ask Mom before anyone else does. Or the idea of shotgun when riding in a vehicle. When you're riding with your friends the first to call shotgun gets the front seat. Never got that one. Never said shotgun once. Thought it was dumb. So I always sat in the back seat.

### **Application**

What's going on here? They want the place of honor. They want glory for themselves. But should we be seeking our own glory? Is this the purpose of life? Is this what Jesus commends? Or should we be seeking something else?

## Point 2: Suffering not honor (10:38-40)

*Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" – 10:38*

Jesus isn't talking about drinking a cup of water. Or being baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. He's talking about the suffering he's going to face on the cross.

Jesus' pattern is suffering then glory.

In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed to the Father, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will" (Matt 26:39). Jesus' cup was the cross and all it involved. The verbal abuse, being spit on, being slapped, being punched repeatedly, the crown of thorns, being scourged with a whip that tore his flesh, being crucified on the cross.

In the Bible, the cup is a picture of God's punishment of the wicked.

*And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, <sup>10</sup> he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. <sup>11</sup> And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name." – Revelation 14:9-11*

*And they said to him, "We are able." And 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, <sup>40</sup> but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." – 10:39-40*

"We are able" = brash, ignorant self-confidence.

### Their cup and baptism

Even with no seat, the cup and baptism are coming. Our pattern is suffering then glory. Their cup/baptism, was similar to Jesus', but not identical. Jesus previously said this to the apostles:

*Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, <sup>18</sup> and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. – Matthew 10:17-18*

Acts 12:2 records that James' cup included death by the sword. Either beheaded or run through with the sword. John, on the other hand, died from old age (John 21:22) after experiencing this persecution Jesus spoke of.

### Greater authority

Regardless, Jesus can't grant their request because he doesn't possess the authority to grant their request. Here we see ordered relationships within the Trinity. It isn't within Jesus' jurisdiction to give these seats away. The Father decides who's seated where.

### Application

There's a similar message for all disciples.

*And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. – Mark 8:34-35*

The Christian life is following our Savior in suffering. Jesus modeled self-denial, not self-seeking. Jesus modeled suffering, not glory hunting. In fact, Jesus willingly veiled his divine glory by coming to earth and taking on human flesh. We sing about this in *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*.

Jesus chose suffering over glory! The point is we're not saved to make much of ourselves. Our purpose lies elsewhere.

### **Point 3: Service not selfish rule (10:41-44)**

*And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John.* – 10:41

Indignant means they were angry. No one likes the person who's always angling for the best piece of cake, the best seat in the car. No sibling likes the sibling who's angling for a greater piece of the inheritance.

*And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them."* – 10:42

The way of the world is people seeking power to have control over others. People in power using their power to keep others down.

*But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant,* – 10:43

"*But*" indicates a contrast. The apostles shouldn't be in it for control. The apostles should be in it to serve. True greatness is serving the well-being of others.

"*servant*" is the word for deacon. One who helps others by ensuring their needs are met. Every believer is supposed to "deacon." Some "deacon" in an official capacity.

*and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.* – 10:44

Christian, we should view ourselves as slaves. "*slave of all*" meaning slaves to the believing community. "*among you*" = among the church. The immediate context is how we do life together in the local church.

What does a slave do? They serve the wishes of another. What does a deacon do? They serve the interests of others. The implication is obvious: greatness in the church is serving one another.

### **Application**

What does this mean for us?

1. Good authority seeks to bring others up, not keep them down.

Elders/pastors exist to serve your spiritual good, to help you thrive spiritually. Not for personal gain or glory.

2. Consumerism in the church is a bad thing!

If we treat the church like McDonald's, I'm going somewhere else if I don't get what I want here, we're not following Jesus' counsel. There's nothing wrong with wanting Bible-based teaching. There's nothing wrong with parents wanting edifying children's content. There's nothing wrong with wanting good Christian friendships. There's nothing wrong with someone wanting to use their spiritual gifts in a way that conforms with Scripture.

I'm not saying the church will never serve you. The problem is when everyone's a consumer. If everyone wants to be a consumer, what happens? Not very good. What happens if everyone wants to serve? Pretty good. When everyone's aim is to serve, all will be served.

Jesus is saying our mindset has to be service. How can I care for this people? How can I love this people? Not how can I get glory for myself? You don't preach for your own praise. You don't deacon for applause. You don't play the piano for recognition.

The local church thrives when our goal is to serve one another in ways that accord with God's word.

#### **Point 4: A self-giving Savior (10:45)**

***For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.***" – 10:45

This is why Jesus came.

**"For"** = an explanation, the cause/reason.

We ought to live a service-oriented life, not a consumer, not a glory seeking life, because Jesus came neither to consume nor to seek glory. Coming for Jesus meant giving up glory!

**"the Son of Man"** = Jesus' self-designation. A claim to be the son of man of Daniel 7. Of that son of man, it's said:

*And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.* –

**Daniel 7:14**

Jesus gave up his glory to come to earth. He'll get his glory back. Jesus served us by dying in our place as a sinless substitute. Jesus will be served by all who believe forever and ever. Jesus was destroyed on the cross. Jesus' eternal kingdom will never be destroyed.

**"came"**

Jesus came from a distant place: heaven, the place where God dwells. **"came"** means he existed before he was in Mary's womb. He's always existed because he's God the Son.

**"not to be served"** = Jesus didn't come to earth so we could serve (= deacon) him. Jesus didn't come because he had unmet needs we could fill. Other way around.

**"but to serve"** = contrast. **"serve"** = to deacon. Jesus came to serve us. We're the ones who are needy.

Christian, being lost sheep, spiritually blind, and captives to sin, we needed to be rescued from the penalty and power of sin. But how?

**"and to give his life"**

Jesus came to give, not to take. Jesus came to give his life. Meaning his death on the cross. Yes, the Jews sentenced him and the Romans carried out the crucifixion, but this was God's plan before the foundation of the world. This is what Jesus resolved to do. But why?

**"as a ransom for many"**

**"ransom"** = the money required to set a slave free. The picture is we're a captive, a slave to sin. And in order for us to be rescued, a sum of money needs to be paid to secure our release. But no amount of money could satisfy the Father's wrath against our sins. The only payment worthy to satisfy God's wrath was the crucifixion of the unblemished Lamb of God.

**"for"** = in place of. The idea is replacement, substitution. On the cross, Jesus suffered the Father's wrath in the place of others. Jesus, coming to give and to serve, stepped in as a substitute so that the many would not have to suffer wrath.

“*many*” = a great/large number of people. Jesus died for a lot of people. Many ≠ all. The idea is Jesus died on the cross for an abundance of people, but a limited group of people. Meaning Jesus died for a specific group of people.

One of those postcard Christmas verses says the same thing.

*She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” – Matthew 1:21*

Who will Jesus save? His people. The many are his people, the church (Acts 20:28; Eph 5:25), the sheep the Father has given to Jesus (John 10:11, 15 – see John 6:37, 39; 10:27-29). “*the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost*” (Luke 19:10). Jesus doesn’t fail to find. Jesus doesn’t fail to save. Jesus will, without fail, save his people.

If you’re trekking with me, I know this raises a number of questions. All I can say at this time is many means many. And in coming to die for the many, Jesus gave and served. If you find yourself a born again Christian today, Jesus came to die for you specifically. Jesus came to give his life for your life. Jesus came to serve your greatest need: forgiveness of sins. Theologians call this substitutionary atonement.

Jesus, your **substitute**, died in your place. Jesus **removed** your guilt. Jesus **appeased** the Father’s wrath against your sins by taking the wrath for you. This is good news!

### **Application**

Jesus’ ransom illustrates how we’re supposed to do life. Live to give. Live to serve. Don’t live for glory, fame, recognition, applause. Paul says:

*Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. – Philippians 2:4*

Be on the lookout for ways to do good to your brothers and sisters in Christ. Immediate application is “*among you*” (10:43) meaning the believing community. The way we do life together is supposed to be different than the world!

This is a matter of spiritual sight. How do you see life? Is the goal of your day your own pleasure? Is it what’s in it for me? Do your brothers and sisters have a place in your focus? Jesus says greatness is found in giving and serving. You exist, I exist, to serve the practical and spiritual needs of one another.

Each of us needs a vision for serving the practical and spiritual needs of this church. Perhaps your leadership needs to give you some guidance as to what this might look like?

### **Non-Christian**

The good news is Jesus came to ransom a group of people on the cross. On the cross, God the Father treated Jesus as if he lived our sinful life. If we repent and believe, God will treat us as if we lived Jesus’ perfect, sinless life. Become one of those people. Become one of the many.

Turn from your sin, turn from doing life your own way, by trusting in Jesus’ death and resurrection, not yourself. And keep coming back week after week so that you can begin to and serve these people who Lord willing will serve you.

### **Conclusion**

We’re saved to give and serve. Our brothers and sisters have to be in our gaze.