

This Is Church

[Service- Mark 10:35-45]

Introduction

This Is Church:

For the next several weeks we will look at the DNA of our church and any church: worship, community, and service.

Read [Acts 2:40-47]

Selfish Questions (10:35-38)

Immediately in our text of Scripture today we see **selfish human nature** rear its ugly head in the life of an individual. But these men are not just any men, these are in the inner circle of the disciples who surround Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 53:6 reminds us that this selfish tendency is not unique to the first century or even the last millennium: **6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way;**

Modern drivers remind us that selfishness is at the core of every vehicular operator. Try setting at a greenlight for 5 seconds after it has turned from red. Why? Because we have to get where we are going. No matter the circumstance or situation.

So the selfish nature of the disciples – scratch that—our selfish nature leads to a selfish questions. They have the spiritual boldness/naivety to ask God: do whatever we ask!

This might seem bold/brash or even blasphemous until we realize they have already heard Jesus say: **33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**

And yet how often do we come to the throne of God without thought of His holiness, our shortcomings, and only have one thought on our minds: **do for ME!**

I believe James, John, and Mom remind us of this key truth: we can **never stop fighting selfishness.**

They are literally walking to Jericho—then to Jerusalem—to the cross. They are walking along on the way to the cross and they are concerned about their kingdoms.

“They were expecting him to enter into the kingdom, but not to go to the cross and death” –Chrysostom

We must constantly remind ourselves that God’s kingdom is not about us! **We must remind ourselves to look up from the road we are walking long enough to remember the destination is the Cross!**

I need to look at myself in the mirror every day and remind myself it is not about me. To speak over my heart the words: To live is Christ and to die is gain. Its not about Josh it is about Jesus!

A selfish heart will always lead to selfish requests

This was true of the Sons of Thunder. They asked Jesus about a **question of rank involving an inflated understanding of their own position.** In **the Ancient World, the place of honor was the seat on the right and the next important position was the left side of the host.**

Are you behaving selfishly?

Maybe your prayer life is only concerned about you. Maybe you are constantly asking things of God and never asking for His will or his plan.

Maybe your lifestyle is wrapped up around you (its called narcissism). How can I self-diagnose selfishness? **Listen to the questions you ask.**

Selfish Answers (10:39-41)

Fortunate, or unfortunately, Jesus (God in the flesh) answers their petition. Reminder: be careful when you ask selfishly of the Lord because He sometimes answers.

Jesus' answer is very simple: what do you want? He might as well have said "I am going to give you a chance to think about what you are asking." So, they clarify and give greater detail. And Jesus graciously answers again: You don't know what you ask!" And they respond: yes we do!

We see a second eternal truth unfolding in this narrative: selfish hearts lead to selfish answers.

We are all guilty:

Lord if you will give me this house, job, health, wealth, opportunity, the right church then I will live for you!

Or we tend to make heaven and eternal glory about us. We "follow" Christ because we want our mansions just over the hilltop or the streets of God.

Or we walk an aisle because we don't want eternal punishment and want to avoid hell. Listen, to gain heaven ≠ to seek Jesus. To avoid hell ≠ to seek Jesus. To gain status and prestige (to gain a seat at the table) ≠ to seek Jesus Christ.

Rather: "For the homeland is on high and the way to it is lowly. The homeland is life in Christ; the way is dying with Christ. The way is suffering with Christ; the goal is abiding with him eternally. Why do

you seek the homeland if you are not seeking the way to it?" – Augustine

A selfish heart always leads to a selfish answer

Not to be outdone, we now have the other Ten join the fray. Apparently, they heard the discussion and not knowing any better (mind your business) they participate in the discussion.

I learned a long time ago – when brother is in trouble --- stay away!

The ten were upset at James and John. Now, prima facia, it appears this is an appropriate response. How often do we see others living selfishly and a spiritual emotion wells up in our lives.

Yet, the other ten disciples were indignant because they were jealous of their own dignity and fearful lest the two brothers should secure some advantage over them (NICNT).

We find here that **one person's selfishness, pride, and sin does not give me an excuse to sin myself.** Just because I live in a selfish world does not give me the right (as a Christ follower) to live, remain, or behave selfishly.

Jesus didn't suffer on the cross, die a criminal's death and rise again to give me **what a want**. He suffered to give me **what I need** –Forgiveness, redemption, and eternal glory.

How do I know I am selfish? Look at your answers to God. Are you living for your good or for His glory?

Have you been bargaining with God? In reality you are giving selfish answers to your own selfish questions.

Are you working, serving, living to appease or win God's favor? The root of this is self. **Thankfully, Jesus gives us all a clear remedy for the disease of self.**

A Selfless Savior (10:43-45)

Jesus transforms the question of rank and greatness into the task of service: only by service does one become great (NICNT).

So what is the remedy for selfishness? It's not sacrifice, it's not denial of self, equally it is not service, it is placing your complete trust in Jesus Christ the selfless Savior.

Jesus Christ himself affirms that He did not come to be served. First let's set things straight: **I/You are not Jesus**. If Jesus did not come to be served how much more so should be our attitude of humility.

Second, **Jesus is our model**. If he is our standard, the object of our faith, the lens by which we now see the world, then we are compelled to serve.

How did Jesus Christ serve?

He physically served the world. Jesus did not live a contemplative life that was filled with dreams and meditative structures and programs. He simply served.

When he was a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath he said to the man "stretch out your hand" and the man's hand was restored whole (Mark 3:5). When the demon possessed man living in the tombs ran up to Jesus he rebuked the demons and proclaimed "come out of the man you unclean spirit" (Mark 5:1-20). When Christ retreated to a deserted place for rest and thousands met him; he fed them with 5 loaves and 2 fish (Mark 6:30). When the gentile woman asked Jesus to heal her daughter and asked for merely a "crumb of faith." Jesus had compassion and healed (Mark 7:24-30)

We see modeled in our savior not a man who served when the time allowed. He served because this was his heavenly mission, his eternal purpose, and his divine passion and compassion.

We do not serve only if we see a need. We serve the world because Christ first served. We serve because the Lord has gifted us the Spirit of Life.

Does the World see the Son of God through your service?

Jesus not only served the world but **He served the heavenly Father.**

Jesus teaches us a valuable truth: true service to the Lord flows from being in the will of the Father. Jesus could have chosen to rebuke the pettiness of the disciples. He did not admonish a lack of faith, rather He poignantly showed that what they were asking was “not His to give.”

So our next question is then, “Isn’t Jesus God?” doesn’t he have all authority? Yes, but Jesus was bowing to and submitting to the will of His Father.

To serve the Lord you must be in the will of the Father and submit to His divine authority in your life. We can’t serve “our way.”

Jesus reaffirmed this when he prayed: “Father take this cup away from me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what you will.”

If you are waiting to serve on your terms you have not fully submitted your life to the one who knows best.

Third, we see Jesus serving by sacrificing. He served by giving His life.

The death of Jesus is presented as his service to God and as a victorious death for many in virtue of which they find release from sin (NICNT).

Service to God requires sacrifice. Not --might include-- but requires

I remember the oft told fable:

A Pig and a Chicken are walking down the road.

The Chicken says: "Hey Pig, I was thinking we should open a restaurant!"

Pig replies: "Hm, maybe, what would we call it?"

The Chicken responds: "How about 'ham-n-eggs'?"

The Pig thinks for a moment and says: "No thanks. I'd be committed, but you'd only be involved."

God doesn't want or even need our involvement. His glory, the death of His one and only Son demands our committed sacrifice.

Phil. 2:17 Yes, and if I am being poured out *as a drink offering* on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.

How is the Lord asking you to sacrifice today? It is not if, but how.

My Response

The ultimate sacrifice and service is not something you can give. Its was a sacrifice and a ransom given for you.

The prevailing notion behind the metaphor is that of deliverance by purchase, whether as a prisoner of war, a slave, or a forfeited life is the object to be delivered (NICNT).

By dying on the cross for us, in our place, Jesus frees us from an imprisonment from which man cannot free himself.

This is the Gospel – Jesus taking your place on a cross designed for you – to bring freedom from sin – abundant life – and adoption into a heavenly family.

Have you received and accepted the sacrifice?

How are you serving the Savior?

World—Will – Sacrifice

There is only one answer to our selfishness His name is Jesus of Nazareth

Two ways to respond: In this service or by card.

Notes

The disciples had failed completely to grasp the significance of Jesus' teaching that he would be treated with contempt and be put to death (NICNT)

Mark 10:35 Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask."

Mark 10:36 And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

Mark 10:37 They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory."

The question of rank, involving an inflated understanding of their own position, is best explained in the context of royal messiahship (NICNT).

The place of honor is the seat on the right, and next to it, the seat on the left (NICNT).

Mark 10:38 But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

It must be stressed that the question of v. 38 calls for a negative reply (NICNT).

Their desire to share the messianic glory of Jesus, without taking account of the distance which separates them from their Master, is insensitive that this

would entail participation in his sufferings and in his messianic death for the salvation of men (NICNT).

Mark 10:39 They said to Him, “We are able.”

So Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; ⁴⁰ but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but *it is for those* for whom it is prepared.”

To share one’s cup was an ancient expression of sharing one’s fate (NICNT).

In the OT the cup of wine is a common metaphor for the wrath of God’s judgment upon human sin and rebellion and this understanding was kept alive into the first century (NICNT).

There must be a solidarity between the Son of Man and his disciples and this is expressed not only by their grateful acceptance of his protection and favor, but also by their following his example of humility and service, if necessary to the extent of death (NICNT).

Jesus’

Cup

In the OT it is used both of joy (Ps 23:5) and sufferings (Ps 75:9)

The use of the present tense I drink (lit “I am drinking”) is dramatic: and speaks of an experience already begun. (ABC).

Mark 10:41 And when the ten heard *it*, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. ⁴² But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.

The other ten disciples were indignant because they were jealous of their

own dignity and fearful lest the two brothers should secure some advantage over them (NICNT).

⁴³ Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. ⁴⁴ And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

It shall not be so= “that is not the way with you.”

The order of life for the common dealings of the disciples is to be love expressed in the form of service (NICNT).

Jesus transforms the question of rank and greatness into the task of service: only by service does one become great (NICNT).

The death of Jesus is presented as his service to God and as a vicarious death for many in virtue of which they find release from sin (NICNT).

Ransom

The prevailing notion behind the metaphor is that of deliverance by purchase, whether as a prisoner of war, a slave, or a forfeited life is the object to be delivered (NICNT).

It speaks fo a liberation which connotes a servitude or an imprisonment from which man cannot free himself.

Give himself

A common Greek description for the death of soldiers, and it is found in 1 Macc 2:50 (ABC).

Illustrations

“They were expecting him to enter into the kingdom, but not to go to the cross and death” – Chrysostom

“For the homeland is on high and the way to it is lowly. The homeland is life in Christ; the way is dying with Christ. The way is suffering with Christ; the goal is abiding with him eternally. Why do you seek the homeland if you are not seeking the way to it?” –Augustine

“He is our sanctification, as himself being purity, that the pure may be encompassed by his purity. He is our redemption, because he sets us free who were held captive under sin, giving himself as a ransom for us, the sacrifice to make expiation of the world. He is our resurrection, because he raises up, and brings to life again, those who were slain by sin.” –Gregory Nazianzen

“He shared with us our punishment but not our sin. Death is the punishment of sin. The lord Jesus Christ came to die; he did not come to sin. By sharing with us the penalty without the sin, he canceled both the penalty and the sin” –Augustine

Application

We as human beings are communal beings. We cannot find real fulfillment in life unless our community life is meaningful (NIV). Therefore, groups, both within and outside the church, that encourage strong community life often experience growth (NIV).

True hospitality comes before pride. It has nothing to do with impressing people, but everyone to do with making them feel welcome and wanted (NIV).