

## Daily Bible Study

*“Take #2 on ~ Who Is The Greatest?”*

*Mark 10:35 - 45*

*September 11 – September 17, 2011*

**THE LORD’S DAY & MONDAY** –We take for our text this week **Mark 10:35-45** as we look at a very important lesson and teaching from our Lord; a lesson so important in fact it is repeated often throughout Scripture, most recently to us from **Mark 9:33-37**. This specific lesson is entitled *“Take #2 on ~ Who Is The Greatest?”* The title alone tips us off concerning the more general but very important teaching we find developed in this text concerning humility, and servant hood. The message of **10:35-45** contrasts big time with the previous verses, **10:32-35**. In **10:32-35** we find Jesus in His voluntary humility and humiliation while in our current text we see the disciples’ longing, craving, and yearning for exultation. To their credit the disciples appear to understand that Jesus will be victorious over sin and death through His humiliation but they are concerned about being right there next to Him in His glorious exalted place on the Throne. Jesus speaks of these places at the right and left already being *prepared* by Divine predestination. Jesus drives the point of this lesson home again to these men by telling them that only in losing oneself, giving away oneself, and not being concerned and consumed with rank and status meanwhile dedicating your life to God in humble servant hood is the only way that true greatness can be attained. This in fact was the example of Jesus which they and we are to wholeheartedly follow. **Mark 10:35- 45** *“Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, “Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask.” And He said to them, “What do you want Me to do for you?” They said to Him, “Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory.” 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?” 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; 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.” And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. 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. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”*

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

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*Suggestion for Prayer:* *Father God, teach and feed me from Your Word this week. Help me see and learn that the way up is in fact achieved by going down in humble service to You and others.*

**TUESDAY** – **Mark 10:35- 37** “*Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, “Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask.” And He said to them, “What do you want Me to do for you?” They said to Him, “Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory.”* This story is also recorded for us in **Matthew 20:20** where we learn that *James and John* also had their Mother involved in the asking of this ambitious request. In reference to this scene and question asked the JFB commentary says, “The thought was doubtless suggested to her sons by the recent promise to the Twelve of “thrones to sit on, when the Son of man should sit on the throne of His glory” (Mt 19:28); but after the reproof so lately given them (Mk 9:33, &c.). they get their mother to speak for them.” As sinful people ourselves, we can understand the desire these men have to be exalted and we can relate to how they will connive and get others involved to see that their bidding is done. Again I would say to their credit, the disciples appear to be somewhat tracking concerning Jesus’ victory and the kingdom being both a reality and glorious but they are blinded in large part to the details and timing due to their sinful pride. How we can learn today from that fact; so many squabbles, misunderstandings, and even fighting among brothers in Jesus due to our ego problem. They are not completely confident in their approach as we see the caution in the statement, “*Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask.*” If you have kids you have heard this approach! Jesus being God knew their question already but He has them state it before everyone to use this opportunity to teach a great lesson. He says, “*What do you want Me to do for you?*” They then get to their request, *Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory.* Concerning the disciples’ relationships we can say that James and John were in the “inner circle” if you will; John being the one who leaned on Jesus at the table. But perceived self-worth is no basis for presuming the two highest places of honor in glory. How do you perceive yourself in relation to God’s grace; deserving or undeserving? Read **Luke 17:10**.

*(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?*

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*Suggestion for Prayer:* *Father, help me to understand that all I have in You and from Your hand is because of Your love, mercy, and grace. Help me Jesus be a humble servant like You.*

**WEDNESDAY** – **Mark 10:38-40** “*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?” 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; 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.”* The character of our Lord is displayed clearly to us in His response. His gentle, compassionate, and patient response is all the more incredible, especially in light of the present circumstances where He just

gave the sad announcement of His upcoming death. Jesus will teach the truth here to these sinful selfish men, He will give a penetrating response but as always, He will teach truth and exemplify truth consistently in love and grace (**John 1:14**). Jesus explains, *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?* In the Old Testament Scriptures, *the cup* is sometimes a symbol of joy and salvation (**Psalms 16:5; 23:5; 116:13**), but often it speaks of suffering and punishment, usually at God's hand (**Psalms 75:8; Isa 51:17-23, Jeremiah 25:15-17, 27-28; 49:12, Ezekiel 23:31-34**). The other word Jesus uses is *baptism* which is also connected with sorrow and grief. It carries with it the connotation of being forcibly plunged beneath the water and cast into the deep (**Palms 69:1-2, 15, 124:4-5, Isaiah 43:2**). It is used here by Jesus as a metaphor for being immersed in great calamity. Their simple answer of "*We are able*" has caused some to believe that they did not understand *the cup* and *baptism* as Jesus did but rather saw them in a celebratory fashion, as a token of God's blessing and prelude to the Kingdoms consummation. If we give the disciples the benefit of the doubt that they did understand Jesus to be speaking about suffering we can at least say they express some degree of loyalty toward Jesus, yet in the moment they are a bit to self-confident. Jesus says they would *indeed drink the cup... and be baptized...* but the distinction needs to be made that ONLY Jesus would be doing the sin bearing. This cup is exclusive to Him. Only the Suffering Servant of **Isaiah 53:1-12** could bear the sin of His people, come through the water and drink the cup of wrath yet stand victorious. As Donald English puts it, "This suffering servant, whose image comes to mind again and again in the words of Jesus about the Son of Man, is bearing for sinners what they cannot bear for themselves, the result of their sins in the wrath of God. This is the cup of the Son of Man."

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

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Suggestion for Prayer: Thanks You Suffering Servant for bearing the wrath of the Father for my sin. I may experience sacrifice in this life but You alone have suffered sins penalty & beat death.

**THURSDAY – Mark 10:41- 42** "And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. 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. Yet it shall not be so among you;" The other ten disciples may have at first even in silence be thought to have come out of this incident well, but we now see their sinfulness rise to the surface as they *heard it*, and *they began to be greatly displeased with James and John*. They were *greatly displeased* or in the Greek, *aganakteō* "to be aroused, indignant, angry". The attitude of the ten was no better than that of James and John. They most likely would have wanted to ask Jesus for this place of honor themselves. We need to see how easy it is for us to condemn in others what we excuse in ourselves. In His upcoming rebuke of the twelve notice that Jesus as the gentle caring shepherd is loving and tender in His care for His sheep. These knuckleheads, like us, have not heeded the already plain teachings of Jesus that address this subject yet Jesus takes the

time to reach out again and instruct them in truth. *You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.* Jesus points out this attitude of being in the place of recognized authority, doing everything you can to both get there and make sure everyone feels the weight of your authority once there is the way of the world and its system and not the way we as His people should live. Interesting is Marks rendering “*those who are considered rulers*”. Jesus words here may very well be laced with irony. Those in leadership are to be servant leaders and not crush (*lord it over*) those under them. Read **Luke 12:37**.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

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Suggestion for Prayer: Father, thank You for the ultimate example of servant leading seen in the life of Jesus. Help me to not be abusive in my leading of those under my care and authority.

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY** – **Mark 10:43- 45** “*Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*” In Christ’s kingdom greatness is found in pursuing a lifestyle completely opposite of that followed in the unbelieving world. If you desire to be first Jesus says, *be slave of all*, give yourself away to others, especially your brothers (*among you*) in sacrificial love for the glory of God (**John 13:34, 1 John 3:14, 1 Peter 4:8**). Commenting on this text, Hendriksen says, “It is the inverted pyramid, the believer being at the bottom—being the *servant*, the *humble attendant* “of *all*” (peculiar to Mark)—that symbolizes the position of the Christian as, with simple trust in God and love for all men, he continues on his way to the mansions of glory. In doing this is he not following in the footsteps of his Lord and Savior?” (**Luke 22:27, John 13:34, 35**) The final verse of our text emphasizes this very point of Jesus’ example being the ultimate in sacrificial service. Notice Christ’s humility and awareness of His condescension in His words, “*For even the Son of Man*”. He is the Son of God, God in flesh, yet He humbles Himself to be The Son of Man. Yet it is this very *Son of Man* to whom all authority, dominion and the kingdom was given (**Daniel 7:13-14**). Jesus served us His people in that He came in our place, gave His life, paid our debt.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

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Suggestion for Prayer: Jesus, thanks for your life & death for me. Help me be a servant like You.