

Ransom

Mark 10:32-45

February 25, 2018

DAY 1: Ransomed!

1. On at least three distinct occasions, Jesus told His disciples that He came to die. He was quite specific and quite graphic.

Mark 10:32 They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him.

Mark 10:33 "We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles,³⁴ who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise."

2. If you have followed us in the study of Mark over the last few weeks you've read of Jesus' prophetic words about His upcoming death and resurrection previously.

3. Take a moment to underline every particular detail in His prophetic words, in Mark 10:32-33.

4. When He finishes this discourse Jesus tells the disciples the prime "why" of His coming death.

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

5. "Ransom" is not a word we use much nowadays, unless it applies to a kidnapping. The core idea of "ransom" is substitutionary sacrifice, for the release of a victim or the guilty.

6. Our spiritual and personal situation, by analogy, is something like this. All of us find ourselves a prisoner (of sin). We have unwittingly and wittingly put ourselves in harm's way, where due to our own foolish choices, made it possible to be taken captive. Release is impossible. Worse yet, we're not all that motivated to be released from our captivity, that is, until we become so sick of our captivity, our loneliness, emptiness, brokenness, hopelessness, meaninglessness, or some other "ness" that we finally look for a way out. There is none. No one knows where we are; we're presumed dead. There is no hope of release.

7. The dungeon grows darker by the season. We are in a urine-stained cell, little food, little light, not enough human contact.

8. Our captor comes to us with news. Someone, an unknown benefactor has liquidated His entire estate to purchase our freedom. Your days in the dark dungeon are over. You hear the clanking of keys in the cell's metal lock, followed by the words, "You're free. Someone paid dearly for your release."

9. What thoughts and feelings come to you? What would you want to do next?

DAY 2: The sinfulness of man contrasted with the glory of Jesus

1. Almost immediately following Jesus' macabre words of His coming demise, James and John utter these audacious words:

Mark 10:35 Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask."

2. If you had just announced some upcoming details regarding your own death, say, from cancer and your kids asked you about your will, what would you want to do next?

3. Jesus responds to him.

Mark 10:36 "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.

Mark 10:37 They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory."

4. What is the essence of their request? What is it you think they want Jesus to do for them?

5. After His death and resurrection they see and bright and cushy future for themselves.

6. James and John are clueless as to what they ask. Their request says, "in your glory." They were assuming His glory would be in heaven, sitting on the throne. In one sense that was true, but it wasn't the greatest or deepest truth. When would the height of the glory of Jesus Christ be seen? It would be when He voluntarily and willingly takes on the sin of humanity while hanging on a cross, bleeding out over six hours!

7. The glory of God is most seen in the perfection of His attributes. On the cross of Jesus the glory of divine justice will be on display, as well as the glory of divine love Who will give everything He has at the greatest cost to Himself, while gaining the greatest benefit to those who will turn to Him in repentance and faith!

8. Ironically, there would be two men on either side of Jesus "in His glory," but they wouldn't be James and John. They would be two common thieves!

9. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 3: The cluelessness of human sin

1. The disciples remain clueless as to what they asking.

Mark 10:38 "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"

2. Jesus uses two metaphors that would have been familiar to these Jewish men.

a. "Cup" is almost always used as a metaphor for God's judgment to put an end to evil.

(1) Jesus is saying, "Are you willing to drink the cup of God's judgment for sin, to take all of humankind's sin on yourselves?"

(2) Jesus is going to take the brunt of the judgment of God upon man's sin. He will drink *that* cup!

b. "Baptism" is used as a symbol of immersion. We'd say, "all in." Jesus is saying, "I am going to go to the ultimate lengths there are to bring about the salvation of people."

(1) Jesus is saying, "Are you willing to go to any lengths to bring about the salvation of people? Are you willing to go "all in," even if it costs you your life?"

(2) Jesus, of course, is all in!

Mark 10:39a "We can," they answered.

3. Their answer indicates how clueless they are to the whole concept.

Mark 10:39b Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with,

4. Jesus tells them that they will be involved in the kingdom process, but not in the way they imagine, the way of the glory of sitting in seats of prominence in heaven someday.

Mark 10:40 ... but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared."

5. As to what they are asking, there is no answer on which they can bank.

Mark 10:41 When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John.

6. The other nine disciples became indignant with James and John, not because of the audaciousness of their request, or the impertinence. They were indignant because they got their requests in first! O, human nature, may you find your only salvation!

7. What strikes you from today's verses?

DAY 4: The most effective method of influence

Mark 10:42 Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.

1. All around the world, in every nation are great political struggles. Those in power trying to keep their power, and those not in power trying to overcome and take their power.

2. The best that can be said is that these power-seekers are trying to bring about what they honestly consider to be a better future for their country. They see future influence as dependent on the wrangling of power.

3. And how effective is that? Even the best of governmental solutions are, at best, only partially effective in dealing with the darker sides of human nature. How many well-meaning federal programs quell human evil? Solve human problems?

4. Fraud, waste and abuse runs rampant in our governmental responses. How much change actually occurs? How effective is political and governmental power in bringing about needed influence?

5. If Jesus thought that was a good method, we would have seen Him producing a ground swell of support. Instead, time after time, He tells folks to keep the miracles He's done a secret. We would have seen Him put an army together, raised up generals, secured armaments, drawn up war plans against the Roman empire. NONE of that occurs. Here's why...

Mark 10:43 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.

6. The most effective way to bring about change in human beings, in human nature is not by force of law or army. It is to bring about a change inside a human's heart. And how does that happen? Through force? Through servanthood, the heart of a someone who wants to serve, who humbles themselves instead of clamoring for their "rights."

7. And Jesus is giving them a living example. He will die for His enemies, in their place!

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

8. What strikes you from today's verses?

DAY 5: The surprise solution to the human nature problem

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

1. Two thousand years later, we can see the effect of Jesus, not exercising power but yielding power, not claiming His rights to be served, but His life being one of service.

2. This is a very different kind of influence. It is not an influence by any of the following:

- a. Coercive,
- b. Legal,
- c. Force, or
- d. Imposed,

3. The influence Jesus brings about is not an influence from "outside" us. It is the power to influence the "inside" of us, to influence and bring change to our human heart, to the essence of who we are, what we deem important, and the fundamental shift in our purpose, priorities, and character!

4. Everything we genuinely need to prepare for heaven, to anchor us in their world, and to unleash the divine power needed to change us and ignite us to engage with lost people is rooted in the cross! (Not pop psychology, not "thinking good thoughts," being an optimist instead of a pessimist, achievement, being religious, doing good works, etc.)

*2 Peter 1:3 (RSV) His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,
4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature.*

5. What strikes you from today's devotional?