

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Mark: Jesus, The Perfect Servant Of God

Part II: The Perfect Service Of Jesus, The Perfect Servant Of God, Mark 1:1-10:52

QQ. Christ's Teaching And Exempling On Righteous Ambition In Serving God (Mark 10:35-45)

I. Introduction

- A. We learned in the first lesson in this series that Mark's Gospel presents the perfect service of God's Perfect Servant, Jesus, with Mark's focus of having rebounded unto upright Christian service from personal failure.
- B. Mark had abandoned Barnabas and Paul on their missionary journey (Acts 13:13), disillusioned over some unsavory issue(s) that may have countered his own ambitions of service, a problem that can affect us today.
- C. Christ in Mark 10:35-45 taught and exemplified the right ambition in serving God, an important lesson for us:

II. Christ's Teaching And Exempling On Righteous Ambition In Serving God, Mark 10:35-45.

- A. Two of Christ's disciples, James and John, Zebedee's sons, approached Jesus, asking that He would do for them whatever they desired, so Jesus asked them what they wanted Him to do for them, Mark 10:35-36.
- B. They asked that He grant that they sit, one on His right hand and the other on His left, in His glory, Mk. 10:37.
- C. Jesus replied that James and John did not know what they asked (Mark 10:38a), an understatement in view of the fact that in God's program, the principle on gaining positions of leadership as signified in this case of sitting on either hand of Christ in His Kingdom is that suffering must precede exaltation, 2 Timothy 2:12a.
- D. Jesus thus asked if these men if they were able to drink of the cup He would drink and to be baptized with the baptism with which He was baptized, figures for the great suffering He was about to face in going to the cross, and James and John, obviously unaware of what was involved, said they were able, Mark 10:38b-39a.
- E. Accordingly, Christ replied that they would indeed drink of His cup and be baptized with His baptism, clearly not in the same way as Jesus who would substitutionally die for the sins of the world on the cross, but that they would suffer for the cause of Christ, Mark 10:39b. In fulfillment of this prediction, "James was the first apostle to be martyred (cf. Acts 12:2), whereas John, who endured many years of persecution and exile, was the last apostle to die (cf. John 21:20-23; Rev. 1:9)," Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 153.
- F. However, even with such suffering by these men, Jesus could not promise that they would sit on either side of Him in His Kingdom, that such an honor would be granted by the Father as He willed, Mark 10:40.
- G. When the other ten disciples heard this request by James and John, they began to be very "indignant" (*aganakteo*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p., 4) with them, Mark 10:41.
- H. Jesus saw the selfish ambition not only in James and John, but by their reaction to them the same problem in the other ten disciples, so He called them all (*proskaleo*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 168; *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 722) to Himself (Mark 10:42a) to teach on righteous ambition in godly service, Mark 10:42b-45:
 1. Jesus explained that leaders in the pagan world practiced "subduing, lording over" (*katakuriuo*, *Ibid.*, p. 413) and "exercising authority over" (*katexousiazō*, *Ibid.*, p. 422) their subjects, Mark 10:42b.
 2. However, Jesus rejected this pattern of leadership for His disciples, Mark 10:43a: "rather" (*alla*, *Ibid.*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 37-38), in contrast to the pagan world's style of leadership, Jesus taught that whoever wished to be great among His disciples should become the "house servant" (*diakonos*, *Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., N. T.) of them "all" (*pas*, *Ibid.*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 636-638), and that he who wished to be "first in rank" (*protos*, *Ibid.*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 732-734) was to be the group's "slave" (*doulos*, *Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 154), that is, "one who forfeits his own rights in order to serve any and all," *Ibid.*, Mark 10:43b-44.
 3. Jesus Himself would be the ultimate illustration and example of this leadership style: He as the "Son of Man," the messianic title of Daniel 7:13-14 Who would rule on heaven's throne, would first not be served by people, but rather (*alla* again, *Ibid.*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T.) serve and give His "earthly life" (*psuche*, *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 901-902) a ransom for sin for many by His dreadful death on the cross, Mark 10:45.

Lesson: *Opposite worldly selfish ambition where one lords over others for selfish gain, Jesus taught and exemplified selfless ambition where one willingly submits to doing God's will in bearing the costly burdens of other believers at great suffering or cost to one's self, resulting in God's elevating him as a reward to a place of honor and oversight.*

Application: *May we abandon selfish ambition to serve the Lord with great suffering and/or cost to ourselves as required for the welfare of others if we would expect to gain God's reward in His elevating and promoting us.*