

# Ransom for Many

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[ 0 : 00 ] Welcome to Built on God's Word, the preaching and teaching ministry of Highland Park Baptist Church in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.! Elder Lee Roberts teaches on Mark 10, verses 35-45.

We're going to set up tonight's passage by rereading the three verses that we covered last week. Here are Mark 10, verses 32-34.

Mark 10, verses 32-34 say, Jesus has been talking about his death and resurrection for three chapters.

The verses we just read contain the third time that Jesus told the disciples what would happen to him. However, the disciples have been blind to what Jesus was saying, and they've been afraid to ask Jesus to help them see it.

But now in the passage we'll cover tonight, James and John finally work up the courage to ask Jesus a question. And so we'll get the answer to this question. Could this finally be the moment when they will ask for help with their unbelief?

[ 1 : 37 ] Tonight's passage answers that question, and let's go ahead and read Mark 10, verses 35-45. So here are Mark 10, verses 35-45.

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. And he said to them, What do you want me to do for you?

And they said to him, Grant us to sit, one at your right hand, and one at your left, in your glory.

Jesus said to them, You do not know what you are asking.

Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?

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. 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.

[ 2 : 40 ] And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. 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.

But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Consider how the disciples responded to Jesus' three predictions about his death and resurrection. Peter had responded to Jesus' first announcement by arguing with Jesus.

After the second announcement, the disciples responded by arguing among themselves over who was the greatest. This time, they had just heard Jesus say that he was going to get mocked and spit upon and flogged and killed, but they still don't get it.

They thought Jesus was a king who was about to conquer Jerusalem. The disciples wanted positions of power for themselves in that king's new regime. James and John get one thing right, but they get everything else wrong.

[ 4 : 01 ] They are correct that Jesus is headed for glory, but as for how the glory will come, they don't have a clue. Mark's original readers and hearers likely also had difficulty in understanding the full significance of Jesus' death and resurrection.

They needed to realize that Jesus' first disciples had a similar difficulty. Mark's repeated references to the comprehension of the original disciples are his way of helping his readers and hearers understand the truth.

This section specifically develops the significance of Jesus' death by providing Jesus' present and future disciples with an exhortation to humility, servanthood, and perhaps even martyrdom.

Here's the main idea for this passage. Truly saved people exhibit the character of Christ who willingly became the atoning sacrifice for the sins of all who believe in him alone for salvation. Once again, truly saved people exhibit the character of Christ who willingly became the atoning sacrifice for the sins of all who believe in him alone for salvation.

[ 5 : 11 ] Because Christ sacrificed himself for us, we must also be willing to serve others. We'll break tonight's passage into three sections, starting with Mark chapter 10, verses 35 through 37.

In those verses, we see the selfish request. The selfish request is the first thing that we'll look at. Here are Mark chapter 10, verses 35 through 37 again.

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. And he said to them, What do you want me to do for you? And they said to him, Grant us to sit one at your right hand and one at your left in your glory. Before we look at the request, listen to Matthew's account of this same event.

Matthew chapter 20, verses 20 and 21 tell us that someone else also made the request on behalf of James and John. Here are Matthew chapter 20, verses 20 and 21.

[ 6 : 23 ] Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked him for something. And he said to her, What do you want?

She said to him, Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand, and one at your left, in your kingdom. Some people teaching this passage criticize James and John for having their mother join them in this request.

Those who take that view say that James and John were mama's boys who were afraid to ask the question without help. Based on other passages of Scripture, characterizing James and John as mama's boys seems wrong.

In Mark chapter 3, verse 17, you may remember that Jesus gave the nickname Sons of Thunder to them. Luke chapter 9, verses 51 through 56 also give us insight into James and John's personalities.

In that passage, Jesus and his entourage visited a Samaritan village. Luke chapter 9, verse 53 tells us how the village reacted to Jesus.

[ 7 : 34 ] The next verse says what James and John wanted to do to that village. So here are Luke chapter 9, verses 53 and 54. But the people did not receive him, of course that's Jesus, because his face was set toward Jerusalem.

And when his disciples, James and John, saw it, they said, Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them? James and John hardly seem like mama's boys here, so why then did they have their mother make the request with them?

Based upon what we will learn about the four women who were at the foot of Jesus' cross, James and John's mother was Salome, who also was Jesus' aunt.

Having their mother join in the request was a shrewd way to put some family pressure on Jesus. In Mark chapter 10, verse 35, James and John ask that Jesus grant their request before they tell him what that request is.

Typically, when someone prefaces a request like that, the person knows that the request is likely to be denied if the request is made known first. Jesus is too smart for that move.

[ 8 : 49 ] Look at how he responded. Here are Mark chapter 10, verses 36 and 37. And he said to them, what do you want me to do for you? And they said to him, grant us to sit, one at your right hand, and one at your left, in your glory.

To be seated at a king's right hand was to take the position of most prominence. The person seated at the left hand ranked just below that. James and John were asking for the two highest ranking positions just below Jesus.

That request is shockingly selfish, but it shows that the disciples had heard at least some of what Jesus had been teaching them. earlier in Mark chapter 10, we saw Jesus talk about how hard it is for rich people to enter the kingdom of heaven.

In Mark chapter 10, verse 28, Peter said in response, see, we have left everything and followed you. Matthew's record of what happened next provided more of the conversation between Peter and Jesus.

Here are Matthew chapter 19, verses 27 and 28. Matthew chapter 19, verses 27 and 28 say, Then Peter said in reply, See, we have left everything and followed you.

[10:10] What then will we have? Jesus said to them, Truly I say to you, in the new world when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Jesus had promised the twelve apostles that they would sit on twelve thrones with him in the kingdom. That, however, was not enough. James and John wanted the two most honored thrones. In spite of all the plain warnings of our Lord, they clung obstinately to the belief that Christ's kingdom on earth was immediately going to appear. The request certainly was a selfish request that showed the disciples' incomplete understanding.

However, we do need to give some credit where credit is due. James and John showed their faith. The two men actually believed that Jesus was the Messiah and that he would one day rule in glory upon the earth.

Not many believed that great truth at this time, but they did. Let's move now to the second section of the lesson. After the selfish request, we see the sobering responses.

[11:26] The sobering responses are what we will look at next. Listen to Mark chapter 10 verses 38 through 44 again. 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? 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. 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.

And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. 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.

But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.

[12:41] The section heading is plural because we see more than one sobering response in the text. Jesus' initial response certainly is sobering, as are his later ones.

But so are the responses from the disciples. With their words, the disciples show that they have yet to fully comprehend what Jesus is teaching them. We'll take the section in chunks starting with verse 38 and the first sobering response.

Verse 38 says, Jesus' first sentence is easy to understand.

It's a nicer way of saying that James and John are clueless. Let's focus on what Jesus means by drinking his cup or being baptized with his baptism.

drinking a cup with someone speaks of sharing in that person's fate, experiencing that person's destiny. The cup was also a common picture of the wrath of God in judgment.

[13:52] Similarly, Jesus' passion and death were a baptism. They speak of his being overwhelmed or flooded and immersed in the destiny planned for him by his father.

Jesus' cross was a divine appointment. Here are some Old Testament cross-references to show that the people of the Old Testament times understood that meaning of the cup and baptism.

The disciples would have been familiar with all of these references. First is Psalm 75, verse 8.

Psalm 75, verse 8 says, For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup with foaming wine well mixed, and he pours out from it and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs.

Listen to Isaiah chapter 51, verses 17 through 20. Here are Isaiah chapter 51, verses 17 through 20.

Wake yourself, wake yourself, stand up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the Lord the cup of his wrath, who have drunk to the dregs the bowl, the cup of staggering.

[15:07] There is none to guide her among all the sons she has borne. There is none to take her by the hand among all the sons she has brought up. These two things have happened to you.

Who will console you? Devastation and destruction, famine and sword, who will comfort you? Your sons have fainted. They lie at the head of every street like an antelope in a net.

They are full of the wrath of the Lord, the rebuke of your God. Here are Jeremiah chapter 25, verses 15 and 16.

Jeremiah 25, 15 and 16 say, Thus the Lord, the God of Israel, said to me, Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it.

They shall drink and stagger and be crazed because of the sword that I am sending among them. For flood references that picture of being overwhelmed by God's wrath, think about Genesis chapters 6 and 7 and the actual flood in Noah's day.

[16:17] Also consider Psalm 69, 2 and Psalm 69, 15. Psalm 69, 2 says, I sink in deep mire where there is no foothold.

I have come into deep waters and the flood sweeps over me. This is Psalm 69, 15. The psalmist pleads, Let not the flood sweep over me or the deep swallow me up or the pit close its mouth over me.

With Jesus referencing the cup and the baptism, we might think that James and John would have had a similar response to what we just read in Psalm 69, 15.

Instead, Mark 10, verse 39 tells us that James and John simply said, We are able when Jesus asked them whether they were able to withstand those things.

Like two bobblehead dolls nodding their heads up and down, James and John overconfidently declared that they could handle whatever would be required. Their response to what Jesus said is sobering because their words demonstrate how clueless James and John really are.

[17:31] Jesus' response to their claim is even more sobering. Look at the end of Mark 10, verse 39 through verse 40. 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. 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.

Jesus reaffirms that James and John will suffer similar things to what Jesus will. Matthew's account of this episode tells us who will decide rank in the kingdom.

Here is Matthew chapter 20, verse 23. Jesus is the one speaking here in Matthew chapter 20, verse 23. He said to them, You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.

Here we see another example of how Jesus submitted to his Father's will during Jesus' earthly incarnation. We have more sobering responses to go.

[18:50] The other disciples' sobering response is summarized in Mark chapter 10, verse 41. Mark chapter 10, verse 41 says, And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John.

The other ten were indignant because they saw James and John trying to go around them to gain the highest positions under Jesus. The other ten show that they were just as selfish and clueless as James and John were.

Perhaps they were less bold or perhaps they just simply had yet to think about making a similar request, but they weren't happy that James and John beat them to that. Jesus uses the situation as a teaching moment.

Jesus' lesson must also have been a sobering response to those who were vying for earthly recognition and prestige. Here are Mark chapter 10, verses 42 through 44 again.

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.

[20:02] But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.

Like many people today, the disciples were making the mistake of following the wrong examples. Instead of modeling themselves after Jesus, they were admiring the glory and authority of the Roman rulers, men who love position and authority.

while there is nothing wrong with aspiring to greatness, we must be careful how we define greatness and why we want to achieve that greatness. We are wrong if we think that God's business is to be done like man's business.

God operates on different principles and practices and philosophies in ordering his rule over mankind. Jesus redefines the quest for greatness by redefining greatness.

He teaches the disciples about the upside-down kingdom once again. True greatness is not about how high you can climb as you step on or over as many people as possible.

[21:14] True greatness is about how low you can go in serving as many people as possible. This teaching is an expansion of what Jesus has been saying to the disciples all along.

Jesus in effect claims that the disciples are blind because they are wearing the world's blinders. The disciples fail to see the greatness of servanthood because they cannot see the servant of

Isaiah's prophecy right in front of them.

Instead of looking to the world to see greatness, they should look at Jesus. Believers serve Jesus because he first served us. In other words, this new way of life comes from a new creation work. When Jesus speaks to his disciples about kingdom realities, he uses the present tense. The ESV translation makes this very hard to see because Mark chapter 10 verse 43 says, but it shall not be so among you.

The verb actually is in the present tense there in the original writing and it should be, but it is not so among you. The contrast is not between what is and what will be.

[ 22 : 29 ] The contrast is between the way things are in the world and the way things are in Jesus' kingdom. Jesus is speaking about who kingdom disciples are, or said a better way, he's speaking about who he enables those disciples to be.

Jesus' teaching here in Mark matches what he has already taught in the Sermon on the Mount. For a couple of examples of that, listen to the first phrase of Matthew chapter 5 verse 13 along with the first phrase of Matthew chapter 5 verse 14.

Jesus said in Matthew chapter 5 verse 13, you are the salt of the earth. Then he said in Matthew chapter 5 verse 14, you are the light of the world.

Rather than saying that believers will be those things, Jesus said that believers are those things already. The key for believers is to live like Jesus has enabled us to live.

Back to our Mark text, look again at the end of verse 43 through the end of verse 44. Jesus said in Mark 10, 43 through 44, but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.

[ 23 : 59 ] So here's what Jesus is telling his disciples. He's saying, do you want to be great? Do you want to do something great for God? Do you want to please and honor me, the Lord Jesus, with your life?

Then become a servant, a slave of all. Become a table waiter, a household servant. Become a slave. Such a person will have the mind of Christ, esteeming others more than himself, not giving attention to their own interest, but to the other's interest.

The word for servant there is the word from which we get the word deacon. And the word for slave is a word that means exactly that, a slave.

Listen to this quote from R.C. Sproul. I think it probably reflects what most of us would say. He said, what then is the manner of leadership that is to be practiced among believers?

Jesus said, whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. Then he said, I do not like this text.

[ 25 : 12 ] I prefer the secular way because in my heart, I prefer to be served rather than to serve. But Jesus will have none of that. He said that if we want to be great, we must be small.

If we want to be exalted, we must be abased. If we want to rule, we must serve. That is the ethic of Jesus. Leaders have to see themselves as slaves.

If we as believers are honest, we all would have to admit that we dislike Jesus' teaching here. We're getting into some pretty heavy requirements for believers, but fortunately for the disciples and for us, Jesus continued his teaching beyond Mark chapter 10, verse 44.

We would have no hope of following Jesus' teaching without Mark chapter 10, verse 45. So far, we have seen the selfish request and the sobering responses.

In the last verse of our text tonight, we see the selfless ransom. The selfless ransom is what we'll cover last. Check out Mark chapter 10, verse 45 again.

[ 26 : 33 ] Jesus said, For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. John Piper says, Mark chapter 10, verse 45, is what turns Christianity into the gospel.

Remember that the word gospel simply means good news. To more fully understand the impact of Mark chapter 10, verse 45, we need to remind ourselves why the gospel is such good news.

The Bible clearly says that all humans, except Jesus, have sinned against God. The Bible also says that all humans deserve death because of those sins.

That puts us into a hopeless situation because we can do nothing to rescue ourselves from God's wrath. But then we come to Mark chapter 10, verse 45.

Listen to Jesus' words again. For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

[ 27 : 44 ] Jesus has told us that he will die in Jerusalem. Now he tells us why. Jesus makes a promise that no other religious leader in the world has made or could make.

He came to serve you and me not just as our example, but as our ransom. For even emphasizes the remarkable humility and service of the one who should by all rights be honored and served himself.

Here again the Son of Man title is joined to the ransom for many language. This radically redefines who and what the Messiah would be. Jesus is a suffering Messiah, a servant Messiah.

The word ransom in the culture of Jesus' day was a financial term. If you owed a debt, you could sell yourself into slavery and work to pay off that debt, or someone could pay a ransom to release you.

Humans have a debt they cannot pay. That's the debt of sin, and when that debt comes due, there truly will be hell to pay for it. But for everyone who has put their faith alone in Jesus' work, Jesus took our place.

[ 29 : 01 ] He paid the debt that we couldn't pay. The highest person took the lowest place to serve, rescue, and ransom hell-bound humanity. The word for ransom there occurs only here and in Matthew 20, verse 28, in the New Testament.

It's the price of release, and it refers to payment to secure the release of slaves or captives from bondage. It also includes the concept of substitution.

People are captives under the power of sin and death from which they cannot free themselves.

Jesus' substitutionary death paid the price that sets people free.

Remember to whom that ransom was paid. The ransom was paid to God the Father. Christ gave himself to satisfy the demands of God's justice, so he purchased our freedom from the just wrath of God.

This is why Paul declares you were bought with a price. That comes from 1 Corinthians chapter 7 verse 23. Thus we who were hopelessly in debt to God are not required to pay.

[ 30 : 18 ] The debt has been paid for us by the suffering servant of Israel. Mark chapter 10 verse 45 tells us that Jesus' sacrifice was a ransom for many.

Now that we've looked at the significance of the word ransom, let's consider what Jesus meant when he said that he will pay that ransom for many. The preposition for there is used only here in Mark.

It reinforces the idea of substitution. The original word means instead of or in the place of. Jesus gave his life in the place of those who believe in him for salvation.

Many is used in inclusive sense of all who will put their faith in Jesus alone for salvation. It emphasizes how a large number derive redemptive benefit from the single sacrifice of one redeemer.

Jesus' death as a ransom extended beyond his own people to all peoples including those of us who believe in him today. Listen to part of what J.C.

[ 31 : 34 ] Ryle had to say about this verse. He said, Jesus' death was no common death like the death of a martyr or of other holy men.

It was the public payment by an almighty representative of the deaths of sinful people to a holy God. It was the ransom which a divine surety undertook to provide to procure liberty for sinners tied and bound by the chain of their sins.

By that death, Jesus made a full and complete satisfaction for believers' countless transgressions. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree.

The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. When Jesus died, he died for us. When he suffered, he suffered in our place.

When he hung on the cross, he hung there as our substitute. When his blood flowed, it was the price of our souls. Do we really let that last sentence sink in?

[ 32 : 39 ] Listen to that last sentence again. When Jesus' blood flowed, it was the price of our souls. We need to see something else about Mark chapter 10, verse 45.

It shows that Jesus willingly served as our substitute. Listen to these words from Jesus again. For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. Jesus came to give his life. Nobody, neither God the Father, nor any human, forcibly took Jesus' life from him. Other biblical texts underscore Jesus' willingness to be the sacrifice for all believers.

Listen to what Paul wrote in Philippians chapter 2, verses 5 through 8. Here are Philippians chapter 2, verses 5 through 8.

1. 2. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

[ 34 : 08 ] How about Hebrews chapter 12, verse 2? Hebrews chapter 12, verse 2 says, Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

If you want even more proof, listen to Jesus' own words in John chapter 10, verses 17 and 18. Here is what Jesus said in John chapter 10, verses 17 and 18.

For this reason, the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.

I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father. Here's that first sentence of John chapter 10, verse 18 again.

Jesus said about his life, no one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. The voluntary sacrifice of his own life should make believers want to worship Jesus even more.

[ 35 : 30 ] The voluntary sacrifice of his own life should make believers want to love Jesus even more. Jason Meyer said, without the coming of Christ, we are incapable of love in the purest sense because we all need love like we need air and water.

We have an ulterior motive. We want to gain the love of others. The only person that could truly love with no strings attached is someone that does not have that need.

God doesn't need us because God is a trinity. He already enjoys within himself a relationship of perfect love between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

That is why the Bible says that God is love. He concluded by saying redemption came out of the overflow of that infinite perfect love.

This is how we know what love is. Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And that last sentence comes from 1 John 3 16.

[ 36 : 40 ] If you have yet to trust in Christ for salvation, the amazing news of Mark 10 45 can still apply to you. Recognize that you have sinned against God.

Repent of those sins. Rely upon Jesus' finished work on the cross alone for salvation. If and when you put your faith in Christ alone, Romans 10 9 and many other verses promise that you will be saved.

Remember the main idea of this passage. Truly saved people exhibit the character of Christ who willingly became the atoning sacrifice for the sins of all who believe in him alone for salvation.

If you are a believer you may be thinking even though I am saved I never will be able to exhibit the character of Christ. You would be correct in thinking that if you try to exhibit the character of Christ in your own strength.

We already have seen from Philippians 2 5 that believers possess the mind of Christ. And we know from Ephesians 2 10 that God already has prepared good works for believers to do.

[ 38 : 00 ] Here are Ephesians 2 8 10 God has already prepared things for us to do.

C.J. Mahaney says ultimately our Christian service exists only to draw attention to this source to our crucified and risen Lord who gave himself as the ransom for us all.

So anything we do to serve God should be done to draw attention to Jesus rather than us. We would like to think that after such clear words from Jesus tonight's text finally made the disciples understand what Jesus was teaching them.

Unfortunately as we continue along in Mark's gospel we will see the disciples keep fighting for worldly! position even on the night of the Last Supper. Eventually though the Holy Spirit enabled all the disciples except Judas Iscariot to understand what Jesus had taught them.

Listen to 1 Peter chapter 1 verses 13 through 21. In 1 Peter chapter 1 verses 13 through 21 Peter wrote this message to believers.

[ 39 : 39 ] Therefore preparing your minds for action and being sober minded set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ as obedient children do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance but as he who called you is holy you also be holy in all your conduct since it is written you shall be holy for I am holy and if you call on him as

father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds conducts yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile knowing that you were ransomed!

from the faith and hope are in God let's pray father we thank you for this reminder of what you expect for us and from us in your kingdom help us be willing to serve others as we serve you help us model Christ and when we struggle with that Lord help us remember the example that Christ set for us in

Jesus name we pray amen to learn more visit us in person or see the website