

## Shaped by Humble Service (Mark 10.35-52)

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March 22, 2026

**Dominant Thought: Jesus saves by sacrifice.**

**Objectives:**

**I want my listeners to understand the saving work of Jesus.**

**I want my listeners to feel challenged by the countercultural ways of Jesus.**

**I want my listeners to serve someone this week who would not expect or demand it. (Adapted from *Core 52*, by Mark Moore, page 207).**

If Jesus asked you the question, “What do you want me to do for you?” how would you answer it? [Ask congregation to answer question out loud.] For some, maybe you want to be out of debt. Others, you have a family member or friend who is far from Jesus, and you desperately want them to come to trust Jesus as Savior and king. Others may want healing from cancer or sickness. Others you miss loved ones and want to be reunited with them.

In the second half of Mark 10, Jesus asks the question, “What do you want me to do for you?” two different times. The first is addressed to two brothers. The second is asked to a blind beggar. *Through these conversations, we will discover three lessons about our desires.*

***First, our desires reflect our heart (Mark 10.35-42).***

James and John, two brothers—two of the inner three disciples, come to Jesus asking Him to grant their request. “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask” (Mark 10.35). Jesus replies, “What do you want me to do for you?” The answer, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory (Mark 10.37).

This request comes immediately after Jesus shared for the third time that he would go to Jerusalem to suffer and die. These two disciples apparently forgot the road to glory is a road of suffering.

Jesus corrects them with a mild rebuke and a couple questions. He says to them, “You don’t know what you are asking.” Then Jesus asks them two

questions: 1) Are you able to drink the cup I drink? and 2) Be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized? They replied, “We are able.”

Jesus tells them they will drink the cup and be baptized with the baptism He will be baptized. However, He says to them, “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” (Mark 10.40).

The image of cup probably connects with suffering. In Isaiah 51:17, we read, “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.”

The next time Jesus talks about cup in the gospel of Mark, he will pick it up at the last supper. The cup represented His “blood of the covenant which is poured out for many” (Mark 14.23). Later in the garden, Jesus will pray, “Remove this cup pass from me” (Mark 14.36). The cup is suffering and death.

The image of baptism could go back to Mark 1 when Jesus was baptized. To be baptized is to be submerged under water. The suffering will be overwhelming like drowning in water.

James and John request to sit as the right and left of Jesus in His glory. Jesus says it is not His to grant but given to those for whom it is prepared.

Later as Jesus hangs on a cross, Mark narrates the event this way, “And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left” (Mark 15:27).

Our desires reflect our heart. James and John forgot the way to glory is a way of suffering. They were focused on special places of honor. When word of their request got back to the other ten disciples, they were not happy with James and John. “They began to be indignant at James and John” (Mark 10.41).

Jesus called them together to give them a lesson. Much like James and John wanting places of honor, so those who are considered rulers and great ones lord over their power and authority over people.

In this lesson with the twelve, Jesus shows them His desires, His way.

***Second, Jesus reorders our desires (Mark 10.43-45).***

As Jesus highlighted the leaders of their day who “lord it over them” and “exercise authority over them” (Mark 10.42), Jesus says, “But it shall not be so

among you” (Mark 10.43). Followers in His kingdom will act and speak differently than the rulers and great ones of our day.

We live in a world of threats, killing, wars, and terror. Jesus says, “Not so with you.” Our words, vocabulary, and lifestyle are different. He says, “whoever wants to be great [Mega] among you must be your servant” (Mark 10.43). “And whoever would be first among you must be slave of all” (Mark 10.44). Those do not sound very exciting and enticing. Followers of Jesus will look like servants and slaves.

In contrast to the rulers, great ones, kings, governors, presidents, and prime ministers, followers of Jesus will look like servants, custodians, servers, and volunteers.

Then, we come to Mark 10.45, a verse I encourage everyone to memorize and take to heart. Mark 10:45, “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Son of Man is the favorite image Jesus prefers to describe Himself. It is loaded with lots of imagery from the prophet Daniel.

### **Daniel 7:13–14 ESV**

“I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.

And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Jesus turns our expectation upside down. Jesus, the Son of Man from Daniel 7.13-14, is the king of all authority. He has dominion, glory and a kingdom that will not be destroyed. Peoples from all nations and languages will serve Him. He came not to be served, but to serve. He came as a servant and slave of all. The word for serve in Mark 10.45 is where we get our word for deacon. It means to wait on tables. The next time you are at a restaurant with a server, think about Jesus as your server. You may want to give them a better tip.

Who is someone you could serve this week in the name of Jesus? Who is someone you could serve that would not expect or demand your service?

Jesus had the rights to be served, but He gave them up to serve and to give. What did He give? He gave His life as a ransom for many. Mark 10.45 has echoes from the prophet Isaiah 53.10-12. I've highlighted the words that connect between these two passages of Scripture.

### **Isaiah 53:10–12 ESV**

Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his **soul** makes an **offering** for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

Out of the anguish of his **soul** he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my **servant**, make **many** to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore, I will divide him a portion with the **many**, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he **poured out his soul to death** and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of **many**, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

Back in Mark 10.45, one of the key words is “ransom.”

***Jesus saves by sacrifice.***

***Third, saving faith desires Jesus (Mark 10.46-52).***

Jesus and His disciples come to Jericho. It's one of the oldest cities on earth. It's 846 feet below sea level. It's the lowest place on the planet. It's part of the West Bank of the Jordan River region. It's the last stop before one ascends the mountain to Jerusalem. It is in the lowest place on earth where Jesus shows the disciples what true greatness is.

It's in Jericho, we meet a blind man named Bartimaeus. His name means “Son of Timaeus.” In one language (Greek), his name could mean “Son of Honor.” In another language (Hebrew), his name could mean “Son Unclean” or “Unclean Son.” He's a blind beggar. He's on the road and he “heard” Jesus was Nazareth was coming by with a great crowd.

Twice Bartimaeus calls out to Jesus, “Son of David, have mercy on me.” Son of David. It’s the first time in Mark’s gospel Jesus is called Son of David. Son of God, Son of Man, and now here Son of David. David the name of Israel’s great king. The young boy who slew Goliath. The one who conquered tens of thousands. Through David’s family, the Savior of the world would come. Son of David, have mercy on me.

Many of the people rebuke Bartimaeus and try to keep Him quiet. He cried all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” They call out to Bartimaeus, “Take heart. Get up; He is calling you.” Take heart—cheer up, take courage, be confident. Get up; Jesus is calling you.

Bartimaeus leaves his cloak and jumps up to come to Jesus (Mark 10.50). He left his cloak which was his livelihood. The Old Testament would not allow a creditor to seize a cloak overnight because it was viewed as essential for existence (Exodus 22.26-27; Deuteronomy 24.12-13). He left his cloak with the possibility of not finding it again since he was blind. His actions sound similar to Andrew and Peter and James and John who left their nets to follow Jesus (Mark 1.18,20). Levi left his tax collector’s booth to follow Jesus in Mark 2.14.

Interesting that Bartimaeus left his cloak. Something the rich man earlier in the chapter was unable to do. Maybe James and John needed the reminder from when they first started following Jesus. They left the family business to follow Jesus. Now, they are clamoring for special seats in glory.

Here a blind beggar who wants to see believes Jesus and is healed. Jesus replies to Bartimaeus, “Your faith has made you well” (Mark 10.52). Another way it can be said, “Your faith has saved you.” Your faith has made you whole.

Immediately Bartimaeus received his sight and followed Jesus on the way. And as we turn the page to Mark 11, the way ends in Jerusalem. It will start with a joyous parade. But the political currents will turn and the cup of suffering will come. Jesus will drink it. His disciples will flee. Jesus will have two robbers on His right and His left as they all hang on crosses to die.

The words of Jesus will come true. Mark 10:45, “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” The ransom for sin will be paid on the Friday. And on Sunday, Jesus will rise from

the dead as a victorious King. But the lesson for James and John, and the ten, and the crowd in Jericho, and for blind Bartimaeus who now can see Jesus...the lesson is Jesus saves by sacrifice.

As Jesus is on the road to Jerusalem where suffering and execution are waiting, Jesus is “never too hurried to notice a person in need” (Scot McKnight, *The Jesus Shaped Life*). What would it look like if you slowed your pace of life to make time for vulnerable people in need? (question adapted from Scot McKnight)

Last week, I drove to the hospital for a visit. I was listening to an interview with two preachers talking about feeding hungry children. It’s a cool ministry called, “Boone Brothers” after Daniel Boone. See [www.boonebrothers.org](http://www.boonebrothers.org). The leader of the ministry said, “Hungry children become angry adults.” They partner with hunters who donate their harvests to process it into jerky. It’s in Kentucky but will be expanding to half of the country in the next year or so. I’m listening to this podcast. I’m pulling into the hospital parking lot, and I see a lady in a wheelchair and a gentleman lying on the sidewalk.

I thought to myself. I probably should check on them. The Holy Spirit and I had a little wrestling match. I chose to walk out of my way 50 yards and check on them. They were hungry. I chose to drive down to country market and get them some fried chicken. The gentleman was thirsty for a Pepsi, so I got them both a Pepsi.

I dropped food back to them, said a prayer for them in the name of Jesus. It took about 30 minutes out of my day and a few dollars. I say that not to shine the spotlight on me, but to give you an example from my life of what serving could look like. It may look like calling the St. John’s Breadline to sign up to serve lunch to those in need in our community. You could partner with Inner City Mission in Springfield. You could look across the street and see if there is a need. The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many.

Here’s a simple prayer some believe was found inscribed on the walls of an ancient prayer cell in the Egyptian desert: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.”

What do you want me to do for you? It’s the same question given two different times. Two groups. One group from the inside. And one on the side of the road.

One wants seats of honor. The other wants to see. The brothers think they know what they are doing but have forgotten a key part of following Jesus is suffering. The blind man receives His sight. Jesus tells him to Go your way; your faith has saved you. He chooses to follow Jesus on the way. It is a road to glory on the path of suffering.

So, if Jesus were to ask you today, "What do you want me to do for you? How would you answer?"