

To be Served or To Serve Mark 10:45

Introduction:

In Mark chapter 10 there is a series of tense situations that lead to one answer for all the problems.

First, Jesus discussed divorce with the Pharisees publicly and then with His disciples privately.

Next, Jesus rebuked His disciples for attempting to prevent some children from seeing Him while He received some children, blessing them.

Then, a rich young ruler desired eternal life but when instructed about what he must do, the man went away “grieving for he was one who owned much property.”

After the departure of the rich ruler, Jesus discussed the subject of riches telling His disciples “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God” (v. 25).

“On the road going up to Jerusalem,” Jesus “took the twelve aside and began to tell them what was going to happen to Him” regarding His betrayal, death, and resurrection.

In the final tense situation of the series in Mark 10, “James and John, the two sons of Zebedee,” asked a favor from Jesus.

They requested, “Grant that we may sit, one on Your right and one on Your left, in Your glory.”

Jesus had to say, “You do not know what you are asking...to sit on My right or on My left, this is not Mine to give.”

The Bible says, “Hearing this, the ten began to feel indignant with James and John.”

Jesus used this last tense situation to set forth the conditions for true greatness.

“Calling them (the twelve) to Himself, Jesus said to them, ‘You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all’” (Mark 10:42-44).

Greatness to them was the powerful lording of their authority over others.

True greatness, in the eyes of God, consists of becoming a servant to others!

Verse forty-five gives the punchline for any discussion about greatness or service.

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Greatness comes from serving and is the solution to the other issues.

Yet, if we think we will obtain greatness by serving with the least amount of effort or doing just enough to say we have served rather than been served, greatness will be missed.

The standard of greatness, by serving, has been set at giving one’s life for another person.

Are you here to be served or to serve?

I. The one who is served becomes a server.

Martha thought it was important to serve Jesus.

When she “welcomed Him into her home” she was so busy serving that she “was distracted with all her preparations” (Luke 10:38 and 40).

Having an ardent desire to meet the needs of the Lord, she said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone?”

Expecting His agreement, Martha said, “Then tell her to help me.”

“[Jesus] answered and said to her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.’”

Jesus was telling Martha that she must first be ministered to by the Savior before she could effectively minister for the Savior.

“Mary...was seated at the Lord’s feet, listening to His word.”

She was being served for soon enough the time would come for her to serve.

The person who is served becomes a server.

II. Serving Christ wins God’s pleasure and man’s approval.

Serving Christ wins God’s pleasure and man’s approval.

Paul said such in Romans 14:18; “For he who in this way serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men.”

A mature Christian is not to become a stumbling block to others.

He is not to allow good and lawful things to be viewed as evil and lawless (vv. 13-16 of Romans 14).

He is not to forget that love is more important than personal liberties (vv. 17 and 18).

A mature Christian is to become a stepping-stone living in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

He is to “pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another” (vv. 19-23).

He is to live and act from faith, firmly convinced about what he does.

A mature Christian is a stepping-stone to help others in their faith.

Serving one another in love serves Christ.

In Galatians 5:13 Paul stated, “For you were called to freedom, brethren;” through justification by faith, therefore heed this warning, “Only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh.”

Do not indulge in sinful desires of the flesh whereby we refuse to acknowledge God and are led to the doing of evil instead of good.

To avoid the abuse of freedom, “through love serve one another” or engage in mutual service.

Because we love one another, through an act of love we are to help one another.

III. Good servants are good stewards.

“As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10).

God’s gifts are not for the believer’s enjoyment and benefit alone.

They are given to a person to enable him to better serve fellow believers.

All Christians are to be “good stewards” of what they have been given, and the Christian community is to act responsibly with respect to all the gifts.

Use the particular gift you have received from God for the good of others.
Being a good steward of what you have will make you a good servant for Christ.
Good servants are good stewards.

IV. A servant of Jesus will be honored by the Father.

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth” (Matthew 6:24).

No one can rightfully claim two masters.

Trying to serve two masters results in loyalty being given to one over the other despite all efforts to be loyal to both.

Do not be misled by the term “money” or “mammon” at the end, the words of Jesus are concerned with property in general, “money, profit, wealth” or anything purchased by them cannot be worshipped or served by a person serving God.

John 12:26 records these words of Jesus, “If anyone serves (or is serving) Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves (or is serving) Me, the Father will honor him.”

This is the only occurrence where John speaks of the Father honoring someone.

We do read of the honor that people pay either to Jesus or to the Father (John 5:23 and 8:49).

But here, the Father honors the believer as a reward for the servant’s faithful service to Jesus.

“There My servant will be also” refers to the results of one’s service.

A person who serves money will work himself to death in the pursuit of more money with no reward; comparably a servant will follow his master even to death but there receives his reward.

Jesus instructed the church in Smyrna, “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Revelation 2:10).

“*Be faithful* means ‘Be loyal to your Christian commitment,’ ‘Be faithful Christians,’ ‘Be faithful to me,’ or ‘Never give up believing in me,’ that is, acknowledge me as your Lord and obey me.”¹

“Until death,” not the normal end of life but death as the result of persecution and punishment establishes the duration of faithfulness to the Lord that brings on the reward Jesus will give, “the crown of life.”

A servant is ready to meet the extreme penalty of death if it should come to that.

A real servant will be faithful even if he is not called upon to give his life for his faith.

The faithful will receive eternal life as the crown, the prize, the reward.

Peter asked upon one occasion, “What then will there be for us?” (Matthew 19:27).

Peter acknowledged, “Behold, we have left everything and followed You.”

In other words, we (the apostles) have chosen you as our only master, we are serving you only; “What then will there be for us?”

¹ Robert G. Bratcher and Howard Hatton, [*A Handbook on the Revelation to John*](#), UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 49.

Jesus said you will be honored by sitting “upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

To “everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms” (Luke 18:29 says, “for the sake of the kingdom of God” or Mark 10:29 says, “for My sake and for the gospel’s sake” or Matthew 19:29) “for My name’s sake,” Jesus said, “will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life.”

Listen now to verse thirty, “But many who are first will be last; and the last, first.”

Servants in this part of life will be honored in the age to come.

A servant of Jesus will be honored by the Father.

Application:

Have you taken the time to learn Jesus?

There are priorities in life.

A tricky part about priorities is that they change.

There is a time for preparing a meal and a time for being taught how to prepare for life when the guest is gone.

There is a time for serving and a time for listening.

There is a time for being served and a time to serve.

Become the servant Jesus taught us to be.

Have you begun to serve Christ and one another through love?

Christian service is about striving to meet the needs of others.

The service is rendered because of love and given through love.

Are you using what you have been blessed with to bless others?

Being a good steward of what God has loaned you, leads to being a good servant.

Good servants are developed from good stewards.

Have you left the things that would distract you from following Jesus?

The fishermen willingly and quickly gave up their nets (Matthew 4:20-22).

You may not need to give up everything, but maybe there is something you should give up.

Then again, you might need to give up everything.

The rich young ruler was unwilling to sell all his possessions (Mark 10:21-22).

Holding on to positions, power, or possessions indicates that one is looking to be served.

Giving up positions, power, and possessions indicates that one is looking to serve.

Have you denied yourself, taken up your cross, and followed the teachings of Jesus?

He said, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me” (Mark 8:34).

Serving self is to be served by yourself and any reward can only come from self.

Serving Jesus requires the renouncing of serving self.

Taking up one’s cross establishes a sharing in the suffering and death of Jesus for His cause.

Following Jesus means learning from Him and imitating His behavior.

This service will be rewarded by the Father.

Conclusion:

Jesus said, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Jesus served us and taught us how to serve so we could become servants.

Serving Him wins God's pleasure and man's approval.

Good servants are good stewards.

Thus, a servant of Jesus will be honored by the Father.

Jesus paid the price to release many from the bondage of sin.

Will you allow Jesus to serve you, taking care of your salvation needs?

Will you then serve others as Jesus taught those who follow Him?