

The Model Sacrifice
Mark 10:28-34

This morning we return to Mark chapter 10, and we basically catch up the tail-end of what we covered last week, that is the tail-end and the extended conversation that followed after Jesus' dialogue with the rich, young ruler - that well-known account that is not just here in Mark but also in Matthew and Luke as well. In all three of the synoptic gospels there, you have this account of the rich, young ruler, this dialogue, this discussion. And Jesus discussing not just with him what it means to inherit eternal life and to enter into the kingdom, but also for the disciples to hear this as well, to give consideration and thought to themselves, to be challenged and understand, and for Jesus to elaborate more on what riches do to people in terms of their own acceptance of the kingdom and how difficult it makes them.

So, since we are kind of tagging on to that from last week, I figured we could start our reading from verse 17 once again, to remind us all, jog our memory, of the context here, and then we'll go through to verse 31, and then later on, we will read verses 32-34 and see how that section does in fact connect to what we're covering today. So, starting in Mark 10:17-31; "And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, 'Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' And Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.' And he said to him, 'Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.' And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, 'You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.' Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, 'How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!' And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, 'Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.' And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, 'Then who can be saved?' Jesus looked at them and said, 'With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.' Peter began to say to him, 'See, we have left everything and followed

you.’ Jesus said, ‘Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.’ ”

This is our account here of Jesus’ dialogue with the rich, young ruler, and if we could summarize it and recognize what this man’s problem was (as you recall what caused him in verse 22 to go away disheartened by what Jesus had to say, sorrowful, devastated even by this interaction so that he did not in fact have the confidence that he had inherited eternal life), it was Jesus’ challenge to him; “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” Jesus challenged the man. He challenged the rich, young man and He told him, “sacrifice.” Be willing to sacrifice in anything that you have, anything and everything that you own needs to be set aside for the sake of following Me. And for this man, it was his possessions, his material gains, that which he owned. Jesus tells him, get rid of it. Sell it. Give it to the poor. And this man could not take it. He could not receive Jesus’ saying, and he went away sorrowful. He was not willing to sacrifice; that is what we saw, not willing to sacrifice.

And today, as we pick up where Peter is then asking this question and engaging more with Jesus, we find this theme of sacrifice continue, this necessary theme, the theme that really is seen throughout Scripture - that is modeled in Christ’s own life, One who came to this earth as a sacrifice. So, to begin this, we’ll see this dialogue between Peter and really Jesus’ response to him in verses 28-31 where we find the expectation of sacrifice (the very expectation of sacrifice that the rich, young ruler was not willing to do) is now then spoken of in a universal sense for all those who wish to follow Christ. And it begins with Peter as he’s watching all this. He’s witnessing it. He’s acknowledging everything that’s taking place in this dialogue. He’s seeing Jesus and the rich young ruler, and then he’s listening to what Jesus has to say to them, and then he speaks up. He can’t help but speak up, and that’s what we find in verse 28, the response - the response to this, what we’ve covered last week, the response to this dialogue, to this discussion about riches and the kingdom, and so Peter has to speak up after Jesus has chastised this man for not being willing to sacrifice; “Peter began

to say to him, ‘See, we have left everything and followed you.’ Behold. See, behold, we’ve left it all. You’re telling this man that he needs to be willing to sell what he has and give to the poor and follow You. Well, that’s what we’ve done. We’ve left everything. We have done this. What about us? What does this mean for us? Where do we fit in all this because we came into this with a completely different paradigm?

Jesus in His interaction here is challenging the disciples even before Peter says these words because the disciples were so convinced that rich people were blessed by God. Rich people were right with God, and thus their riches were a confirmation of that. God was showering blessings upon them in a physical sense because they were right with Him. Jesus obviously challenged that and talked about how riches are actually a difficulty for man to enter into the kingdom because they hold on to their riches. They’re not willing to relinquish. They’re not willing to let them go. They’re not willing to sacrifice. Peter acknowledging this lesson now says what about us? We’ve left everything and followed You. He wants to be certain that Jesus has actually noted their sacrifice. Peter not the only one of course. He’s there with his other disciples, his comrades, and saying we had a fishing business. We had a family, and we had this money coming in and relationships there and houses, and we’re not there anymore. In fact, for the last several months and years, we’ve been with You, following You around, living this nomadic life style. What about us in terms of sacrifice.

It appears that Peter and the disciples had in fact been willing to repent and believe. They had left everything and followed Jesus. They had turned from everything to believe in Jesus alone. And Jesus responds to Peter in verses 29-31, and He essentially affirms what Peter is saying here in this concept of sacrifice. We see it discussed in verse 29 to begin with, affirmed in the reduction - the reduction - the sacrifice of reduction in losing and turning from that which one has. In verse 29, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel...” As we take the first half of this phrase, this large phrase, that Jesus utters here; “Truly, I say to you...” Another signal, another wake up call for the disciples and for us as we read. Another opportunity to take heed to what Jesus has to say. This is an important concept coming our way, an important principle that we need to latch onto. This is worthy of our attention; “There is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands...” What

Jesus essentially does is He addresses the reality of sacrifice. He addresses the reality of what Peter is saying. He acknowledges what the disciples have in fact gone through, what they have given up. For an extended period of time, they have left these things. They have left these things that He lists off right there. They have left their houses. They have left family, relationships, the tightest bond they have, left the lands that they've owned and the other things that they have. If you list these things out, and really what you have is homes, relatives, and property. Most people have a home. Everyone had a family or relatives of some sort, and some people that were particularly affluent and rich actually owned extra land as like we see even of the people today that own extra real estate and probably like the rich, young ruler had who was not willing to sacrifice and give that up.

Jesus acknowledges these things, and He acknowledges that what the disciples have done is sacrificed on this level. They have set aside homes. They have set aside people, relationships, family. They have set aside lands and other assets and possessions that they have. They've done this, and Jesus acknowledges that, and He has something to say to them. He wants to speak to them. He wants to speak to the importance of sacrifice. And it's worth noting here, as we see Jesus saying these words, the Christian life involves sacrifice. That's what Jesus will in fact go on to affirm in our text, but we need to just realize this for ourselves. Even as we are here removed from the scene, this is still true for us. The Christian life involves sacrifice. No one can call himself or herself a Christian unless they've embraced this reality of sacrifice. It's real. It's necessary. It's inevitable. It will happen. How? How are followers of Christ, how are people like you and me, how are we sacrificing? We don't just have the list of examples that Jesus gives here, but you start to add things up and think about all the different pursuits that you might have, the desires and passions that run through your mind, the different tendencies that you find yourself engaged in, even the selfish lusts that you might have, the ambitions, the goals. Not only the wants that you have, but the very needs that you state that you have, your own needs, your family's, your relationships, your friends, the possessions that you own, the money you have, the very time that you've been given, your job, your career, all these things, all these things to some degree or another are sacrificed. We sacrifice, and we need to be willing to sacrifice any and all of the above for the sake of Christ. Sacrifice is to be expected when following Christ.

Unfortunately, so many Christians just don't like that word. Right? Sacrifice, ough! Just hard to say, don't even want to think about that concept. So, what's their alternative? Do both, walk the tightrope, ride on the fence, try and do both, try and actually uphold the Master, God Himself and His Son Jesus Christ, while upholding another master in your life, some relationship you have, the family that you have been given, the time that has to be me time and used for you? All these things are potential threats to letting Jesus and God Himself be the Master of our lives, and it's essentially what Jesus has to say in Matthew 6:24; "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." As Jesus gives the application there; "You cannot serve God and money." "You cannot serve God and..." Anything else, I don't care what it is, throw it out. It won't work. It's not possible to serve God and ... To be a true follower of Christ involves sacrifice. In making decisions, you're saying no to other things. We experience this on small levels all the time, but this is the largest level ever. In saying yes to Christ, you are saying no to everything else. Jesus has taught this already before, this idea of living for two masters, and trying to do it as some people claim they do. It's not possible based upon what Jesus describes as the reason for these sacrifices. Why were the disciples doing this? Why must true and genuine followers of Christ abandon, sacrifice, and desert all these things for the sake of Him? It's what we see; "...for My sake and for the gospel..." as He says at the end of verse 29; "...for my sake and for the gospel..." "...for my sake and for the gospel..." The reason for sacrifice is for Christ's glory and the advancement of the gospel among the lost.

These things are not simply abandoned out of convenience. This isn't a teaching from Jesus that we get to read and say, yes, I finally have an out, and I don't have to hang out with my family anymore. I can sacrifice that, I guess because I'm committed to Christ. That's not what He's saying. We obviously know Scripture affirms the commitment we must have to loving and serving our families in other places; however, one's commitment to Christ and the gospel message must be prioritized and greater than one's love and devotion to family. All sacrifice in the Christian life, no matter what it is, it has to be done with this aim, with this ambition, with this goal in mind. Any sacrifice that is done is not for self. It's not for others. It's not that people might see and acknowledge that and give you a pat on the back. It's not for the praise of men. It's not for your own enjoyment. All sacrifice in the Christian life must be done for Christ who is our king. So much so

that you can actually say and mean what Paul says in Philippians 1:21, “For to me to live is Christ...,” and you don’t just say that, but you mean it, and if you were to die, it would be gain because you would be with Christ.

And all sacrifice in the Christian life must lead to an expansion of gospel ministry and proclamation. Again, there’s no other motive. There’s no other goal in mind. Whenever we give up whatever it is, the dream, the ambition, the relationship, whatever it is, it is for these purposes. It’s not for ourselves. We will make sacrifices like the apostle Paul makes, and as he says in 1 Corinthians 9:23, “I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.” Paul could’ve, as an apostle, received money. As he was preaching the gospel and going from place to place, he could’ve easily had that. He had every right to, especially based on what Scripture teaches, but he chose not to. He chose to sacrifice that. He chose to forsake that because of gospel advancement, for the message to go forth unhindered with no stumbling block, no obstacles, so no one could come back to Paul and say I know why you’re doing this. You get to travel the world for free, and you get paid. What a gig. That’s nice. You got that, Paul. That’s not Paul’s agenda. Paul says I will gladly give all that up because I care too much about the gospel, and I care too much about the purity of this message and about Christ’s glory and renown. The Christian life demands sacrifice, and it demands it not for our sake, but for Christ and the gospel.

Praise God that Jesus goes on in verse 30 and talks about more than just the reduction and the sacrifice, but He talks about the reward - the reward as we continue to read and pair these verses together, starting again from verse 29; “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.” The backend of this statement where you have the reward clearly spelled out, it doesn’t have to be this way. God didn’t have to create it like this. He owns us all. He is the Creator. He has every right to do whatever He wants. He could’ve just said, this is the way. It is. I’m God. You’re not. Deal with it. Sacrifice, that’s what I call you to do. But instead, He goes the next step and actually says there’s reward with this. With sacrifice comes reward. And what can we see about this reward as far as what Jesus says? First of all, you see the reward is one hundredfold. It’s substantial. It’s massive. It’s not double. It’s one hundredfold. It’s greater

than whatever one has sacrificed for Christ's sake and the gospel. That is a good God, and He gives far more than we deserve. He's generous. He's gracious. He's kind in how He rewards those who have sacrificed for Him. What else do we learn about the reward? Not only is it a hundredfold and substantial, it is now. It is "...now in this time..." as he says, "...now in this time..." It clearly shows that what we're reading here and studying, these rewards, are for the current life, current life on earth at least until Christ comes back and establishes His kingdom with His own presence on earth, What else? The reward makes up for what was lost, more than makes up for what was lost. Notice the repetition of houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands; He repeats all these things as rewards.

You may have sacrificed relationships in coming to Christ. You may have had to go through this difficulty in order to devote yourself fully to Jesus, and you might think the reward is hard to see, but the reality is you sacrificed whatever relationships you had for the sake of Christ, and here you are amongst brothers and sisters in the body of Christ, adopted into the family of God with a more intimate bond possible because it goes beyond blood. It is unified on Christ and His finished work. It's beautiful. You're in a beautiful new family. You have been accepted by God, and you are in the family. Perhaps earthly possessions though, you think, I've sacrificed earthly possessions. I've had to give up certain things, and I don't feel like the possessions are coming back to me necessarily. The reality is if you have sacrificed in whatever way, the result is now in being part of the body of Christ and in His family. There is sufficient care found among the community of Christ's church. You lack food? It will be supplied to you. Clothing, shelter? You are around people who are more than eager to help in this regard. We love to rise up and serve one another in this manner not just because it's commanded of us, but because we're family. We're brothers and sisters in Christ. This is where we are now. It's interesting to note that the relationship of father is left out when Jesus repeats these rewards that come. He doesn't repeat father, and perhaps the best understanding is because we have a Heavenly Father now, one whom we are at peace with and no longer enemies with when we are in the family of God.

What else do we learn about this reward? It's substantial. It's now. It more than makes up for what was lost. Also, the reward includes hardship, suffering, persecution, and you sit back, and you, say, ahh, there's the catch, always a catch. You ain't gonna fool me. Some of you read this, and you go,

why Jesus? Why those words, "...with persecutions..." Let's just cross that part out. Do we really have to deal with that? Did You really have to say that? "...with persecutions..." And so naturally, our default is to think, well, this couldn't get more negative. This is a pretty terrible to have to be dealt with. Sure, we get rewarded in other ways, but then we're stuck with this "persecutions." Well, maybe it's possible that we're actually looking at it from the wrong perspective. Maybe, as we ought to need to do, we need to adopt God's understanding and agenda when it comes to things like suffering and persecution. Maybe it is possible that persecutions are actually part of the reward. They actually are for the believer who has sacrificed all for Christ. This is not just what Jesus seems to be saying here, but it's what the New Testament goes on to teach. Think of what Paul says in Romans 8:16-17; "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him." Part of us being heirs, having this inheritance along with Christ, this goal of being glorified with Him, is this process of suffering.

In fact, Paul goes so far as to say something just outrageous in Philippians 1:29 when he says, "For it has been granted to you..." Like a gift it's been given to you, like a grace gift; "...that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake..." Is Paul just pretending? Is he putting on a smile and trying to say something cheery when he really knows this is a terrible thing? No, the guy's in jail, and he means this when he writes this. This is a gift for you, a gift that you should suffer for His sake. Jesus says it's a reward for you that you have persecutions come your way. As one commentator states: "Persecutions are in reality part of the blessings. It has been the common experience that persecutions only sweeten the rich, social and religious fellowship enjoyed by the saints." And isn't that the testimony of the early church? As we've looked through the book of Acts and as we've seen them in their preaching of the gospel from the start in Jerusalem and in Judea, it was not received warmly from the Jewish audience. Instead, there was persecution. There were arrests. There were interrogations. There was incarceration, thrown into jail. There was murder, martyrdom.

All this for the early church, but how did they respond to this? There was joy. There was joy. As we read in Acts 5:40-42; "...and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the

name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.” What an amazing teaching, that as believers we have this one hundredfold reward, and it is wonderfully fulfilled in these events of what we have even right now as brothers and sisters together in this room, but it’s also fulfilled in the difficulties you’re going through right now. It’s also fulfilled, this reward is fulfilled in the hardship you’re yet to face this week. That’s what Jesus says. That’s what the Scriptures teach. That’s how God sees this, and if we take our mind out of what the world thinks and out of what we’ve been just indoctrinated by the teaching of men, and instead, we see what God thinks and what He says, we realize this is in fact a reward. Any persecution or suffering we have come to has only brought us closer together as a body. It only has unified. It has deepened our fellowship. It has been for our good. The reward doesn’t even stop there. That’s how convinced we can be of the reward in this life, the substantial reward that comes to us for those who are suffering and persecution.

But Jesus goes on and ends saying, “...and in the age to come eternal life.” “...and in the age to come eternal life.” This connects our passage to kind of how this all got kicked off in verse 17. This is what the rich, young ruler was asking; “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Regarding the kingdom, regarding eternity, what must be done? And Jesus has now confirmed it; you sacrifice everything. You give up everything. You don’t hold back. You give it all up for the sake of Christ and the gospel. And what do you find? You find eternal life in the age to come. The sacrifice that the rich young ruler was unwilling to give was in fact the answer to the question about eternal life that he was not willing to receive. This is how God grants blessing in salvation, sacrifice. An abandonment of one’s life for Christ secures a spot in eternity as Jesus has said before and as we have examined. You lose your life so that you might save it in the end.

While such sacrifice is costly in this life, it is also rewarding to the extent that man’s greatest good and best life is actualized in living for the sake of Christ and the gospel.

The truth of what Christ is saying and the truth of what Scripture presents to us is that while the world is promoting what really looks like the good life,

Jesus says it's so far from it. The good life as the world would like to tell you is so far from what Jesus says it is and what God says it is. The good life is in fact filled with reward from God, and that reward involves persecution, hardship. In this sense, we are matured. In this sense, we come to bear the image more accurately of the One who created us. In this sense, we're sanctified, and we look more like Jesus. And in this sense, we truly live, and we don't fall for the worldly slogans of letting loose and giving into carnal passions and lusts, but instead we find ultimate joy, satisfaction, in Christ and living for Him and embracing whatever difficulty He has for us, knowing it truly is for our good, and we are truly living, at that point, the good life.

This gets summarized really in verse 31. Here where we see the realization of this, all the realization as Jesus gives this summary statement that is a common statement to many of us in verse 31; "But many who are first will be last, and the last first." He summarizes how His teaching directly opposes the teaching of the day in first century Judaism as we've been reminded. How did it work? If you were rich, you were blessed by God. You were doing something right. The disciples were believing this, and Jesus has to give this realization for the disciples. That's not necessarily true. Things are not as they seem. You look around, you watch, you observe, you see what people promote, and you see what people put forth as the model and as the way to live and as the ones who've actually made it, and Jesus completely cuts it underneath and says it's incorrect. It's wrong. The appearance of first and last will not always stay that way. It's a warning that the judgements of heaven may well upset the reputations of earth. There's a difference between what man sees and what God sees. Perhaps we could say it this way; the first in the world's eyes like the rich, young ruler will be last in God's eyes, and the last in the world's eyes like the disciples will be first in God's eye. Let's take the paradigm that the world has given you and turn it on its head. That's what needs to happen. This is what Jesus is teaching. It's a massive switch that will take place in the future, and it will catch the majority off guard. Mankind will be confused. They will be confounded by the truth that awaits them in the next life if they choose not to embrace it now.

Jesus didn't only teach this. This is seen throughout the Scriptures. We have the Psalmist who had dealt with this. He was just working through this in his own heart. In Psalm 73:12, he says, "Behold, these are the wicked; always at ease, they increase in riches." They look like they got it made. They have an

easy life. They have everything they could want, and they do evil, and it's all confused until he seeks God and finds the truth. In Psalm 73:18-19, "Truly you set them in slippery places; you make them fall to ruin. How they are destroyed in a moment, swept away utterly by terrors!" This is the true paradigm. It's God's paradigm for who is really first and who is last. This is even the case for those that not only have money or wealth or possessions but those who apparently look religious, that kind of had this spiritual side, the spiritual aspect figured out or so it seems. It's what Jesus has to teach in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 7:21; "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.' "

There is a way that seems right to a man. There is a way that man likes to promote. There's a way that man puts on a pedestal, and Jesus says it's false. It's wrong. It's a lie. Turn it on its head. And how easy it is to adopt the world's assessment of individuals, how we can fall right into it ourselves if we're not careful because people rise in prominence based on their success and their fame and money and looks and pretty much anything that looks visibly impressive. They're in the TV shows. They're the stars in the movies. They're on all the magazine covers. The news outlets tell us everything about their life. We know everything about when they're having trouble in the personal family and also when they go out to eat at Subway. It just gets promoted and promoted, and these people are put on a pedestal, but we have to adopt God's assessment, not the world's assessment. We have to do a course correction and allow ourselves to see what God sees which is thankfully laid out in Scripture over and over. Isaiah 66:2; "But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word." And stated multiple times in Scripture. 1 Peter 5:5; "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." What a different paradigm, a complete change that the disciples needed to hear. This is the realization that the rich young ruler is not all that he's cracked up to be. He's not willing to sacrifice, and he has forfeited eternal life.

What's interesting is as our text goes on and connects to verses 32-34, we see that Jesus is not one to just teach about this. He's not one to just explain and expect sacrifice. He's one to model it as well Himself, and that's what

we find in verses 32-34, the example of sacrifice. He Himself is willing to actually live this out not just state it but show it and live it. In verses 32-34, we read, “And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, ‘See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise.’ ” This is the example of sacrifice from Jesus.

First, we see it lived out in His own authority that He has. In verse 32, we see the authority of Christ on display. In verse 32, we’re reminded that they’re on a journey. They’re on the road going up to Jerusalem; “And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem...” And where is Jesus? “...and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid.” It reminds us again of this path that’s being traveled right now. So much of Mark’s gospel was taking place up north in Galilee, and now Jesus making His way down south, making His way down to Judea, to Jerusalem, to the temple to celebrate Passover, this festival for the nation. As they journey, they don’t go straight down through Samaria. They go around and they go outside and cross over the Jordon River into Pieria, and they’re coming down where they’ll hit the Dead Sea, cross over again, and then ascend the mountains and go up into Jerusalem where the temple would be. This is the path they’re on, and as they get closer, as they get closer to Jerusalem, as they get closer to Jesus’ death, what is Jesus doing? He’s not trying to hold it up. He’s not even just walking along with them, striking a casual conversation. He’s out in front. He’s eager for this next phase. He’s eager for what will be the culmination of His earthly ministry, “...walking ahead of them.” It’s amazing authority He has. It’s amazing courage and boldness He has.

And we see here that the disciples “...were amazed, and those who followed were afraid.” Not just the twelve, but other followers that had taken a liking to Jesus at this time as they all join this pilgrimage down to Jerusalem, and they’re stunned at Jesus in this position and what He’s doing, not necessarily just because He’s predicted this two times already, that He’s going to Jerusalem to die, but even more so because of what we learn from John’s gospel. Something has taken place in between that we haven’t caught in

Mark's gospel, and that is that they were down and getting close to, really, really close to Jerusalem earlier, and this was a time where Jesus was able to visit Mary and Martha, and Lazarus had passed away, and Jesus raised Lazarus back to life, and this miracle was obviously huge and got out, and so the people in Jerusalem heard, and the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem heard, and they weren't happy. They became even more hostile. They became even more determined in their plot to kill Jesus. So much so that Jesus had to retreat again, and He had to withdraw for some time, and now He's making His way back down to Jerusalem. The disciples are aware of this. Remember the last time we were here? Jesus, you almost got killed, and now we're going to approach the city again, and where's Jesus? He's out front He's ready. He's eager.

I mean, what would take place? The disciples are confused, and they're amazed, and they're stunned, and they're scared because is this going to be a civil war amongst the Jews? What's about to happen? Are they going to be called upon to fight for Jesus or something like that? Is this going to be a unity of the Jews into an international war against Rome? What's going to take place? They were convinced of Jesus' power, but they were still uncertain of what will come. Jesus was determined. Even so, He was on mission. He was fixated on the task in front of Him, and that left His disciples amazed and afraid, and He does what is necessary and what He's already done before in verses 33-34, He predicts yet again His upcoming and inevitable death and resurrection - the assurance that He gives - the assurance of Jesus in verses 33-34, reminding them of what must take place, what will take place for the third time in Mark's gospel, and yet they are still slow to understand all this. He's says, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem..." and He calls Himself, "...the Son of Man..." the distinct Messianic title as we see from Daniel 7. He is the Messiah. He is still the Messiah although what awaits Him is death.

He "...will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death..." This is still too much for them to take, the thought of the Messiah suffering and dying is something they're still not ready for. They can't grasp it. They can't understand it. Luke's account says even after this third prediction they still are slow to understand what Jesus is saying. But what's interesting here is the extra information we get when Jesus says that the Jewish authorities will "...deliver him over to the Gentiles." It's a loaded phrase actually, that draws on some Old Testament

concepts. This is something that is explained often. When God was setting up for Israel to be His people, to walk in His commands, and He gave the Law to them, He said obey Me. And if you do, all is well, and you will be blessed in the land, but if you disobey, a curse will come upon you, and you will be handed over to the nations. You'll be handed over to the Gentiles. You will go into exile, and as history played out in the Old Testament, that's exactly what happened to God's people, Israel. Assyria came, and Babylon came, and they were distributed amongst the nations in exile.

This is what the writers of the Old Testament reflected upon after the fact. After this all had happened, they, too, understood this way. This was the language of one who is cursed. Psalm 106:31; "...he gave them into the hand of the nations, so that those who hated them ruled over them." Ezra 9:7; "And for our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands...", being handed over "...to the Gentiles..." That's what's going to happen to Jesus. In the way that Israel was handed over to the nations, being cursed by God, so too Jesus would be handed over to the nations, becoming a curse for the people of God, a curse for you and me even.

Jesus goes on to give more details; "And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him." And initially, we realize this is more details regarding the death of Christ, and we see that it is no doubt a humiliating and terrifying death to experience, but it is not just that this is not just an instance where Jesus knows the future, and He's just spouting off random facts about the future. This is something where Jesus is actually drawing from what God's Word has already been said on the issue. Jesus is actually saturated with Scripture, with Psalms, like Psalm 22, and Isaiah 50 and Isaiah 53. These passages that talk about the suffering the anointed One must experience. The suffering the Messiah undergo, that He will be scorned by mankind and despised by the people. He will be mocked. He will go through all this as Isaiah goes on to state in his passages regarding the suffering servant. He states how He will be disgraced and spat upon, and He will be crushed, delivered to death.

Jesus knew all this. He was fixated on Scripture, saturated in it. So much so that when He predicted His death, it was not just saying what was going to happen in the future, but knowing what must happen according to God's Word. And of course, the hopeful end, "And after three days he will rise."

... “And after three days he will rise.” The resurrection is predicted again as it has been in earlier predictions. This is the anchor. This is the wonderful hope undergirding all this, to vindicate Jesus and who He is and what He says, to validate that He is the real deal. He is in fact the Messiah. But the disciples - still slow to understand, still hidden from them, still not grasping all this. The Christian life demands sacrifice. Jesus has taught it over and over again; you can't have two masters. You can't hold on to the world and yet claim to follow Christ. You must be willing to abandon all for the sake of Him and for the sake of the gospel. The Scriptures teach that. Jesus has told us this, and He's also modeled it as He's out front leading the charge, going (as He's prophesied to go) to the cross for the sake of His people, for the sake of you and me. May we not allow ourselves to get so attached to things that are useless, pointless, and not of Christ and not of the furtherance of the gospel.