

Greatness of Slavery

Mark 10:35-45

October 13, 2013

Introduction

Jesus repeats Himself numerous times to the disciples because they resist His teaching at times. This is especially true whenever Jesus talks about His death and resurrection. The problem is that they are self-serving and prideful. The passage before us is the most blatant example of their pride. This is not the first time that they have exhibited such shameful behavior, and sadly, this is not the last time either. They often jockey for position over each other and individually argue his own greatness over the other. They even argue with each other who is the greatest at the table when they have the Last Supper (**Luke 22:20**). This passage reveals their slowness of learning and hardness of heart. Jesus then teaches them a lesson on the greatness of humility or, as titled, the greatness of slavery. He talks about pride and humility.

Scripture has much to say about pride, especially Proverbs.

Proverbs 8:13 *To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.*

Proverbs 16:5 *The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.*

Proverbs 21:4 *Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin!*

Proverbs 6:16-17 *These six things the Lord hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: 17 A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood,*

Pride is the underlying sin that leads to all sins. All sins feed pride or the person's own self-love. Pride is the defining sin of humanity. All temptations are based on self-gratification.

On the other hand, God lifts the humble.

James 4:6 *But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."*

Psalms 138:6 *Though the LORD is on high, He looks upon the lowly, but the proud He knows from afar.*

Proverbs 15:33 *The fear of the LORD teaches a man wisdom, ad humility comes before honor.*

Anyone who wants honor and glory from the Lord, must first humble himself or herself before the Lord. We are to pursue humility (**1 Peter 5:5**); walk in humility (**Ephesians 4:1-2**). Our Lord Jesus is teaching the disciples the meaning of humility and uses Himself as an example, but He has a hard time getting the lesson to the Apostles. They see themselves as superior. They struggle with the concept of the Kingdom because they are thinking of the physical kingdom instead of the spiritual kingdom. We need to remember that these men are ordinary working men. When they follow Christ, they believe that He is the Messiah and the Savior, but they also are holding on to the idea that the Messiah will overcome Rome and establish an everlasting kingdom of peace in Israel. They desire prestige and glory. This is why they are seeking to elevate themselves above the others.

I. The Lostness of Self-Promotion (35-41)

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him. "Teacher," they said, "we want You to do for us whatever we ask."

- The request
 - James and John make a request
 - Blank check kind of request
 - Like children—Daddy, Daddy, say yes, please! I'm not telling the answer, just say yes!"
 - Why did they make this request
 - They are in the Inner Circle along with Peter
 - They could have thought they had the privilege
 - Interestingly, Matthew says that their mother makes this request on their behalf
 - Why is this important?

Matthew 27:56 *Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.*

Mark 15:40 *Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome.*

John 19:25 *Near the cross of Jesus stood His mother, His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.*

- This is an appeal to familial ties—Salome is Jesus' aunt (James and John, sons of Zebedee are His cousins)

36 *"What do you want Me to do for you?" He asked.*

- Jesus does not answer right away

37 *They replied, "Let one of us sit at Your right and the other at Your left in Your glory."*

- Ambitious request
 - Ugly request
 - Unloving—they do not consider about others
 - They did not learn from Christ' humility through His actions and His teachings
- Sit on your right and left hand
 - Ancient times—leaders would elevate people who performed the highest to sit on the left or right.
 - James and John both think they are worthy of such elevation
 - They want to be identified as the highest under Christ in the kingdom

Note: They wanted to be identified as the second and third most holy and exalted persons under Jesus.

38 *"You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"*

- Do you know what you are asking?
 - Drink the cup, baptize as Jesus about to be baptized
 - Cup refers to suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ
 - Drink the cup
 - OT idiom--taking it all in; drinking to the last drops
 - Baptized—plunge into
 - Go all the way under and suffer
 - You want the glory? Are you prepared to go all the way in suffering?

39 *"We can," they answered.*

- Over confident answer
 - We are able!
 - Over-estimation of their own abilities
 - Sounds like Peter when he boasted that he would never stumble

Matthew 26:33-35 *Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of You, I never will." 35 But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with You, I will never disown You." And all the other disciples said the same.*

Matthew 26:56 *But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted Him and fled.*

- When Jesus was arrested, they cleared out of the way and fled

"You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with,

- You will suffer
 - James was the first of the Apostles to be killed (**Acts 12:2**)
 - John suffered by being on the Island of Patmos for a long time (**Revelations 1:9**)

40 *but to sit at My right or left is not for Me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared."*

- Right hand and left hand honor
 - Jesus' humility
 - He left the decision to the Father!

41 *When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John.*

- Angry Apostles
 - They were mad that they did not ask first
 - They are competitive with James and John
 - This competitiveness continues on even to the Last Supper

Luke 22:24 *Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest.*

II. The Greatness of Slavery (42-45)

42 Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.

- Gentile rule
 - Do not be like the Gentile rulers
 - Lord it over—dictator style
 - Exercise authority—manipulation
 - This is familiar to disciples—Caesar of Rome and Herod's rule

Note: In some churches, pastors rule with an iron fist or some rule with manipulation.

43 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, **44** and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.

- Kingdom service
 - You cannot be like the Gentiles
 - You are part of the Kingdom

1 Peter 5:2-3 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; **3** not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

- You want to be great?
 - Be a servant
 - Diakonos—deacon (original use was not religious)
 - Means low menial servant
 - Hire deacons to clean up yard, clean house, take out trash
 - Serve everyone
 - Spend your life giving to people what they need
 - God is looking for those who willingly come to serve
 - Be a slave
 - Doulos—bondslave
 - In Roman times—slaves were owned; could be beaten and whipped for not doing their jobs...basically have very little rights (if any)
 - Slaves are less than servants
 - Servants have jobs—slaves are owned by masters
 - Consider everyone your master
 - For Christians to be a slave is a graphic demonstration of how committed they are to serve one another
 - This is your obligation

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

- The Model Servant
 - Greatest servant and slave = Jesus Christ
 - He served everyone
 - He was a slave to His Father's will

Philippians 2:3-11 *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! 9 Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

- He is exalted because of His total humiliation
- He forfeited His own comfort to meet the needs of the many
- What did Jesus do?
 - He gave His life as a ransom for many
 - Ransom
 - Price paid to free a slave

1 Peter 1:18-19 *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

- To whom was the ransom paid?
 - To God

Note: There are aberrant theologies out there that say that Jesus paid the ransom to the devil. This is not Biblical. If such teaching arises, correct it or leave.

- Why? Because He is the Judge who needed to be satisfied
- He needed to be appeased (propitiated)
- His wrath has to be dealt with
- Jesus died a vicarious substitutionary death on behalf of sinners
- Price paid to satisfy God, propitiate His anger, and settle His justice
- For many
 - Contrast to the One sacrifice
 - He came to save many
 - One Son of Man pays the ransom for many (us believers)

He calls us to be a slave. This is the way to greatness in the Kingdom of God. When we do this, He will bless us and lift us up.

John 3:30 *He must increase, but I must decrease.*