

Study of the Gospel of Mark

Chapter 10 (Part 2)

Background

This chapter records the final journey of Jesus from Galilee to Judea. He has been preparing His disciples for what will ultimately take place on Calvary in just a few days. In the section we are now considering Jesus will again speak of His impending and previously prophesied death, warns them of the danger of pride, and demonstrates the depth of His compassion by giving the gift of sight to a blind man He meet along the way.

1. Read Mark 10:32-34. Mark tells us that the people were “amazed” and “fearful.” This may not make sense to us at first. Remember that Mark is a fast-paced Gospel and He leaves many details out. While Mark has recorded the growing hatred of the Jewish leaders toward Jesus he leaves out several other events that would have contributed to the amazement and fear of those who were traveling with Him. (Read John chapters 10-11). What is the reaction of the Jewish leaders to Jesus in these two chapters? What is the feeling of His disciples about Jesus going to Jerusalem?

2. With this fear in the mind of His disciples, Jesus takes them aside once more to assure them and confirm the work that He had come to do. Compare the words of Jesus recorded in Mark 10:33-34 with previous statements of His death in Mark (Mark 8:31-32; 9:9-10; and 9:31-32). What is different in this description from previous statements of Jesus? What is the same?

3. The reminder of Jesus' death may have prompted the following question from James and John. Once again pride surges to the surface. Notice the confident, self-sure words of the two: “Lord, we want you to do something for us.” This is not a request, it is a statement. Notice also that they do not immediately offer their request. What does this tell us about James and John?

Note: James and John were probably the cousins of Jesus (see Matthew 27:56 with Mark 15:40; John 19:25) and may have thought they deserved a special place in His kingdom because of their relationship.

4. What does Jesus refer to when He asks, "Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with" (v.38)? (See Luke 12:50 for some help with Jesus' use of the word "baptism".)

Note: Having heard Jesus predict His death, James and John probably understood part of what Jesus meant by this question when they answered in the affirmative (v.39). But it is clear that they were not yet ready for this cup as is clear from their actions in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus is taken into custody by the Jewish mob (Mark 14:43-50).

5. What does Jesus mean by His words recorded in verse 40? What are we to understand from these words about the power and authority of Jesus?

6. The words of Jesus (v. 42-45) are repeated on numerous occasions by Jesus throughout His public ministry. Jesus has already discussed this with his disciples when they discussed which of them was the greatest (Mark 9:33-37). He would discuss it again on Maundy Thursday evening in the upper room (Luke 22:24-30). Why do you think this was such a problem for the disciples?

7. What lesson can we learn from Jesus' words? Give of specific examples of how you fall into the sin of pride as well. What does Jesus offer to help us in the fight against pride?

8. Matthew also records this healing (Matthew 20:29-34), but says that there were two men instead of one. Mark focuses only on the one man named Bartimaeus. Notice the contrast between the reaction of the crowd (v. 48) to the reaction of Jesus (v.49,51) to the shouts of Bartimeaus. What does this reveal about Jesus?

What can we learn from Jesus' example in this regard? What kind of reaction should we have when our neighbor is in need? (See 1 John 3:16-18)
