**Mark Sermon #6**

**The Cost of Discipleship**

Theme of Mark:

Jesus: Messiah and Son of God: suffering servant and savior of mankind.

Theme verse: Mark 10:45 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.

We have seen Jesus as the suffering servant.

We have seen Jesus as a kind of superhero, traveling around, healing people.

We have seen Jesus who has power over nature (calmed the storm).

We have seen Jesus as one who has power over the spiritual/demon world.

We have seen Jesus telling us to show mercy before sacrifice—caring about the person rather than the rule, even if the rule is from God.

We have seen Jesus explaining and demonstrating discipleship

Today, more teaching on discipleship. But first…

[Mark 10:1-12 Teaching on divorce.

Q: What is the lesson for us?

1. God does and always has hated divorce. (Malachi 2:16 For I hate divorce NASV ) Marriage is about having one flesh! Don’t even think about it!!!! I have known of men (and women?) who almost hope that their spouse will give them an excuse to end the marriage.

2. More importantly, he is rebuking their attitude. Their attitude is this: What is permitted by God? What can I get away with?

Wrong question: What is God’s desire and will?

Q: Do you ask what is permitted/allowed?

-dating

-finances

-gambling, drinking, clothing, language,…

Mark 10:13-16 Jesus and children.

In the ancient world (including, unfortunately the Jews, the man was king, wives were second class citizens and children were third or fourth class citizens...

(Note: this illustrates why, under the Law of Moses, only men could write a certificate of divorce—because of their hard hearts.

Q: Why does the kingdom of God belong to those like children?

Child-like, not childish.

In the Near Eastern context, probably Jesus is not so much referring to the positive qualities of children (humility, willingness to trust, teachability), but to their low status. We need to adopt the attitude of littleness (Phil 2:4f) God works powerfully through our weakness, not through our strength.

Mark 10:17-31 The Rich Young Ruler

“Good Teacher” Probably this man thought of himself as good. His question is something like this: How can I turn my goodness to advantage in the afterlife?

No one is good except God alone. Jesus: Do you know what you are saying? An enigmatic statement. Is Jesus claiming to be good? Is he claiming to be God?

Illustration: The man who told me, as he neared death, that he was the best person he had known.

Jesus said no one is good. Romans 3:19-23

Q: Are you good?

v. 19-20 Keep the commandments and you will have life! Leviticus 18:5 “Keep my decrees and laws, for the person who obeys them will live by them.”

The man: Well, I guess I am good to go! Is he being arrogant—a prideful dog? Apparently not, because looked at him and loved him.

Because he loves him, Jesus tells him, not what he wants to hear, but what he needs to hear. And that is what Jesus would do to you today if he were here.

Being in the top 1% is not good enough!!! Q: Do you really understand that?

Jesus: Go and sell everything you have and give it to the poor. Q: Are we to take Jesus literally here? What about my car?

Ex: Zachaeus. Why did Jesus not ask him to go and sell all he had.

Q: What do you value more than God? God wants you to give that thing up, literally!!!

Result: He counted the cost and was not willing to pay it! What about you?

v. 23 How hard it is…

Us: Yeah! You tell those rich people!

The apostles were shocked, because they assumed rich people are closer to heaven than poor. (Prov 10:22 “The blessing of the Lord brings wealth”) If it hard for them, then what about me…

Jesus dropped a bombshell here, almost as great as his statement that he would suffer and die!

Q: What about you. All of us know intellectually (and by experience?) that money does not buy happiness, but is there a part of which still clings on to the desire for more money—we still want more….

v. 24 Dear children. Affection, but also, how much do children desire money? How wise they are in this area!

How hard is it to enter heaven by our own righteous deeds? Like a camel (the largest animal in the Near East) going through the eye of a needle. Ie. impossible!!!!

Note: Preachers have always tried to downplay this statement. There is the famous illustration about the “Camel’s Gate” in Jerusalem, which was low enough that you had to unpack your camel to get through the gate. There is one problem with this illustration. It is not true. It was invented by a preacher who wanted to soften this statement by Jesus.

So: What must you do? Nothing you do. Only God can do this. Do you get this?

We cannot buy our way into the kingdom. We only enter it by submitting fully to the king.

Peter: Feeling like he cannot make it. He has given up everything. He has made Jesus Lord.

Have you ever been like Peter? I have given up everything. Is it REALLY worth it?

You will receive 100-fold. Q: Quantity or quality?

I have received 100-fold. We can go anywhere and find family. Even watching a dumb basketball game gains meaning. My car is useful to the kingdom. I can use my hobby (hiking) to build up the kingdom.

Re-read Mark 10:32-35 Jesus the suffering servant and savior of mankind.

Mark 10:35-45 James and John (but not Peter!) make a request

Jesus: We have just a teensy little favor to ask.

We would not be so bold, but are we like them?

Remember Mark 8:27-33 They are still thinking that Jesus’ role as Messiah will lead them to glorification, not to suffering and death. They think of his ability to calm the storm and to defeat demons as evidence that he is a kind of superhero. They are SO wrong. They are still half-blind.

Q: What about you? Is your Jesus one who brings victory or is he a suffering servant? Are you a suffering servant?

Luke 17:10 So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, “We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.”

Matthew 25:23 Well done, good and faithful servant.

Quote from Genesis Targum on p. 326 of Mark Commentary.

Mark 10:45 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.

This is discipleship, folks. To walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

Summary:

Let us have childlike hearts, and let us have the attitude of littleness—God working through our limitations and weaknesses.

Let us understand that if we are good at all, it is only because God makes us good, and let us count the cost so that God can work in this way.

Let us rejoice in the great blessings we have in Christ (and remember that we have them only in Christ)

Let us identify with Jesus, the suffering servant and savior of mankind.