

A Course Correction.
Mark 10:41-45.
Sunday morning, June 8, 2008.

I. The anger of the ten disciple with James and John. Vs. 41.

- A. James and John, with the help of their mother, had asked the Lord for the two most important positions in His kingdom. See vss. 35-40.
- B. They had done so in spite of the teaching of the Lord in Ch. 9:33-37.
1. There the disciples had disputed among themselves which one of them would be the greatest in the Lord's kingdom.
 2. The Lord had taught them that anyone desiring to be first should be last, and the servant of all.
 3. The reality of this teaching would not come home to the disciples until after they understood what the Lord had done for them by His life, and suffering, and death.
 4. Similarly with us; we will not embark upon a life of humble service for Christ until the reality of the incarnation and the doing and the dying of Christ comes home to us.
- C. The other ten disciples are angry with James and John. Why?
1. They felt that James and John had plotted against them.
 2. They felt cheated out of potentially receiving these positions for themselves.
 3. They desired these positions no less than James and John. They just had not been as bold to ask for them; maybe they didn't have their mothers nearby to help them out.
 4. As such the state of the hearts of the ten was no better than that of James and John.
 5. It shows us that as fallen creatures we are all cut from the same sinful cloth. By nature we are all in pursuit of personal gain and glory, and we feel angry when others snatch away a piece of gain or glory that we had our eyes and expectations set upon.
 6. It also shows us how easy it is for us to recognize this sin in others while we excuse it in ourselves. It takes a Nathan (the prophet who confronted David about his sin with Bathsheba) to point this out. 2 Sam 12:1-23; Rom 2:1-3.

II. The Lord's instruction. Vs. 42-45.

- A. A touch of Irony. Vs. 42.
1. "Those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles..."
We might translate: "Those who are the so called rulers over the Gentiles..."
 2. From the perspective of the kingdom of God these are not rulers at all.
They are imposters and tyrants who occupy the place of rulers.
 3. "Lord it over them..." lit. "Lord it down on them..."
The way of the world is to fight your way to the top and then to make all others feel the weight of your authority.
 4. "Their great ones exercise authority over them," lit. "keep them under their

despotic power.

of
5. Luke 22:25 uses this same touch of irony as Luke records this same teaching
the Lord saying, “And those who exercise authority over them are “(so) called benefactors.”
While lording down the crushing weight of their authority on their subjects they want them to believe that they have nothing but their best interest in
mind;
that they are “public servants.”

B. The contrast with the kingdom of heaven. Vs. 43-44.

1. “Whoever desires to become great shall be your servant...” (diakonos, deacon)
Greatness in God’s kingdom comes not by way of personal gain or addition; rather it comes by subtraction.
2. “Whoever of you desires to be first, shall be the slave (doulos, personal,
humble
attendant) of all.”

Slavery was the safety net in the society of the Old testament economy. It ought to be thought of as Social Security in ours. If you could no longer take care of yourself and your family, you became the property and responsibility of someone else. Ideas such as lack of freedom; forced labor, and cruel treatment, were not inherently a part of the institution.

“Bondservants” made themselves, and everything they had, voluntarily the property and care of their masters. It is this way the Epistles picture the Christian life.

C. The example and the motivation. Vs. 45.

“Even the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve...”

1. The example.

If He who is our Savior and Head came and lived this way, putting on His apron and washing His disciples feet, how much more should we! If He came to His glory along the pathway of emptying himself of His privileges and voluntarily giving Himself to a life of humble service and suffering, how much more should we!

2. The motivation.

First, look at the end of your Master, “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name...” Phil 2:9.

He who made Himself voluntarily the least was made the first.

Secondly, look at the wretched masses of your brothers and sisters in so many hostile places in this world, and remember that you will come face to face with them before the judgment seat of Christ. Will your possessions and your lifestyle and your life-choices turn into so many indictments on that day?

Are you willing to make yourself a servant to them?

D. How do I get there?

“The Son of Man did come... to give His life a ransom for many.”

He came to buy your heart back for Himself and to set it free.

Free from your possessions and free from this world, and free to present yourself as a doulos, a bondservant to the Lord and to His people. To do so voluntarily.

The Law asks for our 10%, but the gospel makes us a “doulos,” a bondservant with the whole of our being, and it teaches us to own, to voluntarily take this identity on ourselves, and to live out of it.