

The Gospel According To Mark

Part Sixteen

Mark 10:32-34 [New King James] *“Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed. And as they followed they were afraid. Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him: ‘Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.’”*

Because Jesus Christ had just spoken to them about facing persecution as His disciples, the disciples were bewildered when they thought about what awaited them in Jerusalem.

The disciples heard the words of Jesus Christ, but did **not** really accept them because they did **not** fit their idea of the Messiah.

The disciples may have considered this was another of Jesus Christ’s Parables, which He would explain to them later.

What these descriptive words of Mark do show us is how alone Jesus Christ was as He walked ahead of them.

Jesus Christ had tried to share this decision He had to make with them but they just did **not** relate to what He was saying.

These words show the courage of Jesus Christ.

Three times Jesus Christ had foretold the things that were to happen to Him in Jerusalem [**Mark 8:31; Mark 9:31**] and how, as He led the journey to Jerusalem, [**Mark 10:33-34**].

Each time the picture became ever clearer in the mind of Jesus Christ the real cost of redemption.

This was not reflex courage, but a far higher deliberate facing the painful future courage.

Mark 10:35-40 [New King James] *“Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, ‘Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask.’ And He said to them, ‘What do you want Me to do for you?’ They said to Him, ‘Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory.’ But Jesus said to them, ‘You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptised with?’ They said to Him, ‘We are able.’ So Jesus said to them, ‘You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptised with you will be baptised; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared.’”*

It was with the wrong concept of what the Messiah was that prompted this request, as the rest of Jews at that time believed the Messiah would free them from the oppression of Rome.

Both James and John said they were willing to face anything for Jesus Christ, and they both did suffer.

James died a martyr [**Acts 12:2**] and John was forced to live in exile, [**Revelation 1:9**].

Jesus did **not** ridicule James and John for asking but He denied their request.

We can feel free to ask God for anything but our request may be denied as it is outside God’s will for our life.

God wants to give us what is best for us, **not** what we merely want.

This request does show one amazing thing, that these two men could still connect glory to a Galilean carpenter who had incurred the enmity and bitter opposition of the orthodox religious leaders of their day, who was apparently heading inevitably for the shame of a painful crucifixion.

Mark 10:41-45 [New King James] *“And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, ‘You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.’”*

To be forced to solve a dispute among His chosen disciples was not what Jesus Christ needed to be added to the pressure that facing the cross was upon Him.

Yet the very teaching that this incident prompted is the very heart of the Christian life.

Every true Christian has the heart and mind of a servant, the Greek word used for “*slave*” is “*dōulōs*” meaning a bond slave with **no** personal rights only responsibilities to their master who had purchased them, [Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20].

The other descriptive word for a true Christian is “*minister*” which is the Greek word “*diakō*” meaning attendant, a waiter at table or any other menial tasks and duties.

“*Ransom for many*” this verse reveals **not** only the motive for Jesus Christ’s ministry, [Philippians 2:1-8] but also the basis of our salvation from death.

Because of our sins every human being finds themselves on “*death row*” [Romans 6:23], Jesus Christ has to pay this ransom for we cannot pay it ourselves and live.

Jesus Christ’s death releases us from the slavery to sin, [Romans 6:1-14] and prompts us to serve a new Master, Jesus Christ.

We become dead to sin but alive to Jesus Christ, as His bond slave and attendant.

Mark 10:46-52 [New King James] *“Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’ Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’ So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, ‘Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you.’ And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus. So Jesus answered and said to him, ‘What do you want Me to do for you?’ The blind man said to Him, ‘Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Go your way; your faith has made you well.’ And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.”*

Blindness was considered a curse from God for sin [John 9:2] but Jesus Christ refuted this idea when He reached out to heal the blind.

“*Son of David*” was a popular way of addressing Jesus Christ as the Messiah, because it was known that the Messiah would be a descendent of King David, [Isaiah 9:7].

The fact that Bartimaeus called Jesus Christ the Son of David shows that he recognised Jesus Christ as the Messiah. It was his faith in Jesus Christ as the Messiah that brought about his healing.

Notice that Bartimaeus' response to the call of Jesus Christ was immediate and eager that he cast off his hindering outer cloak to run to Jesus Christ more quickly, focussing on the sound of Jesus Christ's words.

Too often when a person hears God's call physically or mentally through a situation that is beyond them to solve, they delay their response until after they have exhausted all they can do personally, or family needs must be met first.

Luke 9:57-62 [New King James] *"Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, 'Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.' Then He said to another, 'Follow Me.' But he said, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.' Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.' And another also said, 'Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.' But Jesus said to him, 'No one, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.'"*

Bartimaeus was a man of gratitude, having received his sight and a new life he offered it of Jesus Christ.

Bartimaeus did not selfishly go his own way when his need was met.

We all, like Bartimaeus, begin being blinded to the good news that Jesus Christ brought from God the Father [2 Corinthians 4:3-6], we should then respond as Paul told the Church in Rome to show our gratitude for what Jesus Christ has done for us.

Romans 12:1 [NIV] *"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship."*

The Greek word translated "bodies" is "soma" meaning the whole life, physical body, mind and human spirit, [**Job 32:8; 1 Corinthians 2:11; Proverbs 20:27**].

True Christianity is a total life change, not something we do once a week in a certain building.

Romans 12:2 [NIV] *"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will."*

The Holy Spirit will then re-educate our minds from the way this society thinks and acts to the way the Creator God wants us to think and act.

This is the new life that Bartimaeus began to follow after he received physical and spiritual sight.

Mark 11:1-6 [New King James] *"Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples; and He said to them, 'Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring it. And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it,' and immediately he will send it here.' So they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it. But some of those who stood there said to them, 'What are you doing, loosing the colt?' And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go."*

This was the first day of the week in which Jesus Christ would be crucified.

Jews came to Jerusalem from all over the Roman world to celebrate the Passover that depicted the great exodus of their forefathers out of slavery in Egypt.

Many in the crowds had heard of Jesus Christ or seen Him perform many miracles and were hoping to see Him in the temple at Jerusalem, [**John 11:55-57**].

Jesus Christ did come to Jerusalem but **not** as a waring king on a horse as they expected the Messiah to come but as a gentle, peaceable king on a donkey's colt, just as **Zechariah 9:9** had predicted.

Jesus Christ knew that those who heard Him teach at the temple would return to their homes throughout the Roman world and announce the coming of the Messiah.

Mark 11:7-10 [New King James] *“Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it. And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: ‘Hosanna! “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!” Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”*”

The picture we see is oddly reminiscent of how Simon Maccabaeus entered Jerusalem a hundred and fifty years before, after he had defeated Israel's enemies in battle.

It was a conqueror's welcome they sought to give to Jesus Christ, but they rejected the kind of conqueror that Jesus Christ had come to be.

The very shouts of the crowd showed what the crowd was thinking, and when they spread their garments on the ground before Jesus Christ, this was exactly what the crowd did when that man of blood Jehu was anointed king, [**2 Kings 9:13**].

“Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord” is a direct quotation from **Psalms 118:26**.

“Hōsanna” which means *“oh save”* is an exclamation of adoration.

They spoke of King David's kingdom because of God's words to King David in **2 Samuel 7:12-14**.

The crowd correctly saw Jesus Christ as the fulfilment of these prophecies, but they did **not** understand where Jesus Christ's kingship would lead.

This same crowd then disappointed as to what was happening to Jesus Christ cried out “crucify Him!” a few days later.

Mark 11:11 [New King James] *“And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.”*

This simple statement shows us that Jesus Christ was doing everything with His eyes wide open, like a commander who was summing up the strength of the opposition and his own resources preparatory to the decisive battle.

It shows us where Jesus Christ received His strength, before He joined battle with hostile human beings, He sought the peace and presence of God the Father.

It was only because each day He sought the presence of God the Father that Jesus Christ could face hostile human beings with such courage and gallantry.

This verse also tells us something about the twelve disciples; they were still with Him. By this time it must have been quite plain to them that, as they saw it, Jesus Christ their beloved Master was committing suicide.

Mark 11:12-21 [New King James] *“Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. In response Jesus said to it, ‘Let no one eat fruit from you ever again.’ And His disciples heard it. So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who*

sold doves. And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. Then He taught, saying to them, 'Is it not written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations"? But you have made it a "den of thieves."' And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching. When evening had come, He went out of the city. Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter, remembering, said to Him, 'Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away.'"

The two incidents in this passage are related and should be taken as an enacted parable.

Both are about promise without fulfilment.

The leaves of the fig tree were promise of fruit, but there was none.

All the history of Israel was a preparation for the coming of God's Chosen One, the Messiah. The whole promise of their national record was that when the Chosen One came they would be eager to receive Him, but when He did come the whole promise of their history was unfulfilled.

The very centre where "*fruit*" should be available for the people had become a "*den of thieves.*"

Jesus Christ was filled with righteous indignation at what was happening in the temple.

Money-changers did big business during the Passover period exchanging foreign currency into temple currency that was the only money accepted for temple tax and purchase of sacrificial animals.

Often inflated exchange rates benefited the money-changers and exorbitant prices of animals made merchants rich.

These stalls and trading took place in the court of the Gentiles.

Frustrating the intentions of the non-Jews who had come to worship God, [Isaiah 56:6-7] **Jesus Christ was angry because God's house had become a place of extortion and a barrier to Gentiles who wanted to worship the true God.**

Mark 11:22-24 [New King James] "*So Jesus answered and said to them, 'Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, "Be removed and be cast into the sea," and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.'*"

Jesus is using what would seem humanly impossible to show that with God nothing is impossible.

Two passages of prophetic scripture may have been in the mind of Jesus Christ at this time, also in the minds of the disciples.

Zerubbabel had been given an impossible task of rebuilding the temple with great opposition within and without the people who were working with him.

God sent an angel to encourage Zerubbabel to continue with the task that seemed beyond human possibility.

Zechariah 4:6-7 [New King James] "*So he answered and said to me: 'This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the LORD of hosts. "Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of 'Grace, grace to it!'"*"

It was by the power of the Holy Spirit that the impossible task was completed, [verses 8-10].

Zechariah 14:1-4 [New King James] *“Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.”*

This is referring directly to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, this time to rule as *“King of kings and Lord of lords,”* [Revelation 17:14; Revelation 19:11-16].

Both prophecies were mountain-moving by the supernatural power of God.

Mark 11:25-26 [New King James] *“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”*

All prayer to be answered by God must be made by a heart and mind that is in harmony with the Creator God, a merciful and loving attitude.

Isaiah 59:1-3 [New King James] *“Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perversity.”*

Until we have repented of our sins, confessing them to an all-knowing Creator God and received His forgiveness, our prayers are **not** going to be acknowledged by God.

We then need to extend the same mercy to those who have said things or done things that have hurt us.

Mark 11:27-33 [New King James] *“Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him. And they said to Him, ‘By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority to do these things?’ But Jesus answered and said to them, ‘I also will ask you one question; then answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me.’ And they reasoned among themselves, saying, ‘If we say, “From heaven,” He will say, “Why then did you not believe him?” 32 But if we say, “From men,” they feared the people, for all counted John to have been a prophet indeed. So they answered and said to Jesus, ‘We do not know.’ And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.’”*

The religious authorities asked Jesus by what authority He had to chase away the money-changers and merchants.

Jesus Christ responded by asking a question, this is a very effective way of making the person asking the question to consider deeply what they are asking, and exposes their motive.

If Jesus Christ had said His authority was from God, the religious authorities would have accused Him of blasphemy.

If Jesus Christ had said His authority was His own, they would have dismissed Him as a fanatic.

The religious leaders' silence was proof that they were **not** interested in the truth, they only wanted to undermine the authority of Jesus Christ which was challenging their authority over the people.

When the religious leaders pleaded ignorance on a matter that was of such magnitude in the minds of the people who looked on John the Baptist as a prophet of God, they virtually

abdicated from their office as teachers of the nation, and had no further right to question the authority of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ therefore did not reply to their question directly, but He provided the complete answer in the Parable that followed.