

Week 6: The Upside Down Kingdom

Overview: Mark 10 is the most practically dense chapter in the Gospel. Divorce, children, wealth, greatness, and a blind man who cries out — Jesus addresses every dimension of human relationship and status. The thread running through it all is the upside-down economics of the kingdom: the first shall be last, the servant is the greatest, and the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve.

Passages covered this week: Mark 10

Key Scripture: Mark 10:32-45

CONTENT

Key Takeaway: Jesus doesn't just teach servant leadership — he enacts it by giving his life as a ransom. Greatness in the kingdom is measured by how low you're willing to go.

Key Points

- Divorce, children, wealth (Mark 10:1–31)
 - Divorce: Jesus raises the standard by going back to creation: what God joined together
 - Children: let the little children come. The kingdom belongs to those who receive it like a child: without earning it.
 - Rich young ruler: goes away sad because he has many possessions. ***The things we won't surrender reveal what we actually worship.***
 - With man it is impossible, but not with God: the gospel answer to the impossible standard
- Third passion prediction (Mark 10:32–34)
 - He is walking toward Jerusalem to die and they are arguing about seating arrangements. The gap between what Jesus is focused on and what the disciples are focused on is the gap in all of us.
- James and John ask for seats of honor (Mark 10:35–40)
 - They want power and proximity. They're thinking about thrones, not crosses.
 - Can you drink the cup I drink? They say yes without knowing what they're agreeing to. The cup is suffering.
- Greatness redefined (Mark 10:42–45)
 - The world's model: authority flows down to control others
 - The kingdom model: authority is expressed through service
 - The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many: this is the gospel in one sentence
 - Ransom: a price paid to free a captive. We were captive to sin. He paid the price we couldn't.

- **Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46–52) — close the week here**

- A blind beggar cries out: ‘Son of David, have mercy on me.’ The crowd tells him to be quiet. He cries louder.
- What do you want me to do for you? The same question Jesus just asked James and John – completely different answer.
- Bartimaeus asked for his sight. James and John asked for glory. One of them knew what they actually needed.
- He followed Jesus along the road, into Jerusalem, toward the cross

Gospel Application: Jesus didn’t just model service. He enacted the greatest act of service in history by giving his life as a ransom for many. The cross is not a symbol — it’s a payment. He went low so we could be lifted. He served so we could be saved. The greatness of the kingdom flows directly from the cross.

Key Question: Where in your life are you seeking greatness the world’s way? What would it look like to live like Jesus and live sacrificially?

APPLICATION

Activity Suggestions

- Serve together in some way – make cards for a nursing home, plan a service activity together as a community group, etc.

Community Group Questions

- The rich young ruler went away sad. What is the thing you’re most reluctant to surrender to Jesus? What does that tell you?
- James and John wanted seats of honor right after Jesus predicted his death. Why do we keep seeking status even when we’ve heard the gospel?
- What does the word ‘ransom’ tell you about what the cross actually did? Who paid it? Who was freed?
- Bartimaeus wouldn’t stop crying out even when the crowd told him to be quiet. What does that kind of persistence in faith look like for you?
- Who in your life could you serve this week in a way that costs you something real?