

Mark 10:35-45

October 21, 2018 – Mission Festival: New Life Lutheran, Shoreview, MN

Going Like Christ

✦ **Not to be served (vv.35-41)**

✦ **But to serve (vv.42-45)**

In the Name of Jesus, the Servant of all, dearly redeemed disciples of our Lord Christ:

What is it about our human condition that often makes things get worse the harder we try? An email you thought would solve problems grieves those you love. Or the GPS is distracting, so you try to turn it off. You look up and all the traffic just slammed on their brakes. The distraction of removing a distraction diverted you from safe driving. Oh, you hate the sound of that crunch, don't you?

Such times make me so grateful that Jesus is my Savior. He never gets distracted, much less diverted from His mission. You want a Mission Festival that really counts? God grant us the power of God's grace to be **Going...Going...Going Like Christ**. God's Son Jesus, "*the Son of Man*" came....

✦ **Not to be served (vv.35-41)**

Think about it. If you and I were writing the Bible, human authors just making it up as critics contend, we'd never write like this. Two of Jesus' closest disciples, James and John – of inner circle "Peter, James and John" fame – just heard Jesus say for the second time how He would suffer and die. He began telling them back in Mark 8 where our Growth Group series began. Remember? Peter rebuked Jesus and got one back? "*Get behind me, Satan! You do not have your mind set on the things of God, but the things of men.*" (8:33) Now Jesus gives more of the gory details: "*Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the experts in the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles. ³⁴They will mock him, spit on him, flog him, and kill him. On the third day he will rise again.*" (10:33f EHV¹) Who would make that up?

Wouldn't you write in some sympathy by the disciples for Jesus? How can Jesus be so patient? He never complains, "Don't you care about me?" Here two brothers, instigated by their mother (Matthew 20:20), come to Jesus seeking a personal favor which they want Him to endorse before He hears it. Jesus has already proven that He can read people's minds. (2:8) He knows what's coming. Marvel at His patience to ask, "*What do you want me to do for you?*" *Just the best seats of power in your kingdom. Sure we can suffer right along with you.* How can He answer so kindly when the other ten disciples are upset? They seem to want the same for themselves, but didn't think to ask first.

If only we weren't so much like those foolish disciples. But ask yourself honestly: Which gets you and your fellow members more upset, color-of-carpet questions? Or lack of invitations to church? Do you criticize fellow members for not doing more, but don't stop to think they might be taking care of loved ones at home or away? Do you work hard to free up pastor's time for making evangelism calls? Or do you free up your own time to invite everyone you can again...and again...and again? What stops you from inviting others? Are you afraid they won't believe God's Word – as if you somehow convinced yourself? You are a miracle of God's grace. Give God the glory for loving you and loving others too!

On my first trip to the far side of the world I was telling a seminary professor how great it was to be there in his country. He listened as we leaned over the railing and watched the students enjoying their break in the courtyard below. Sadly he replied, "Yes, I know. In your culture you say, 'Between a rock and a hard place.' We say, 'Between two jagged rocks.'" "What do you mean?" I asked. He proceeded

¹ EHV ~ *Evangelical Heritage Version* (<http://wartburgproject.org>) © 2017. NPH: 800-662-6022; also Amazon-Kindle.

to tell me about government intrusion that requires them to accept church officials who lead openly immoral lives, but they can't discipline them. They are required to accept traveling evangelists like one who came to teach their students "how to speak in tongues." Strangely, the man required an interpreter. So this doctrine professor politely told him that he did not have time to interpret for him. Then he told the rest of the faculty that they did not have time either. So they practiced the fellowship principle between two jagged rocks, separating from false teachers even though by law they can't.

Are we as concerned about separating ourselves from false teaching over here? Or do we prefer to serve our own desires and opinions – as if theological questions are just pastor-quarrels? And that's just the church side of our problem. What about when you come home tired from work? How's your patience level at the end of the day? Tired and hungry? How kindly do you react when no one seems to care, and you're really up against major pain and heartache? We have volunteers traveling far across the sea or teaching in early morning hours by Internet to reach souls in distant time zones. Would you be willing? When was the last time you invited a neighbor to hear the one thing needful? How easily do we swerve into politics and sports compared to sharing Christ and His love? Are we distracted from our mission, forsaking our first love? Crucifying God's Son by careless indifference? He came **Not to be served**....

✠ **But to serve (vv.42-45)**

This is why I'm so glad that Jesus died for me. His unexpected kindness and unequalled wisdom serve in ways no human author could imagine. This is God's own Son, yet Jesus identifies himself as "*the Son of Man.*" Kindly *Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ⁴³But that is not the way it is to be among you. Instead, whoever wants to be great among you will be your servant, ⁴⁴and whoever wants to be first among you will be a slave of all. ⁴⁵For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

It's so natural to argue about who's in charge. Wars break out. Quarrels break in. Angry sitcoms play out in people's lives and tear families and congregations apart. Who's laughing when tears keep flowing over broken hearts and homes? God's roles for men and women would make sense if every heart was renewed in love like Jesus. He calls us to **serve** others, not self. Expect the world's ridicule.

Have you ever seen Bible students so eager to learn that you can barely keep up? You think you'll be teaching one hour, but they ask for two. One young man runs over to the dorm to grab a sheet to put up for a screen. He won't let you carry your computer and heavy projector anymore. For him to serve seems like the greatest honor. They eagerly read repeat-after-me Hebrew, even though they've never studied Hebrew before: בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ: (Genesis 1:1) Before you know it, the students are asking the faculty if you can keep teaching all afternoon, then the evening too for "coworkers" to come and learn with the younger students. The seminary president or his assistant is right there translating everything from English so you can teach them God's Word in the original languages. One young woman is so concerned about your voice that she keeps going to the tea machine to make sure two hot cups are right in front of you. In two weeks they've studied fourteen chapters of Genesis in Hebrew and a few chapters of New Testament Greek as well. One young woman makes sure to recite the first verse of the Bible before you leave. Most of them can pick out יְהוָה (LORD) and explain the NAME.

Dear friends, imagine members so dedicated that they stand in front of government bulldozers to protect your church from demolition and keep the cross lifted high. Some would rather go to prison than to stop going to church. Would you cry if no pastor showed up to preach God's Word three Sundays in a row? Would you agree to preach if fellow Christians asked? Why travel now when strict laws are threatening to get you deported and your dear friends in trouble? God is writing His story on our hearts. His cross is ours to pick up and carry as we follow *the Son of Man*. Love for love. Keep **Going Like Christ – Not to be served, But to serve** wherever He leads in holy gratitude and joy. Amen.