

THE WAY OF THE KINGDOM

King Jesus, Pt. 10

Mark 10:35-45

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I. INTRODUCTION

a. Let me ask you a question...

- i. When someone says that they follow Jesus or are a follower of Jesus...what do they mean?
 - Is this a statement about their belief system?
 - Is this a statement about the way they order their life?
 - Is this a statement about what social circles they run in?
 - Is this a statement that actually has practical meaning or is it more abstract?

b. I'll never forget this one conversation I had years ago when I was the college pastor down the road at McLean Bible Church...

- i. It was the summer time and I just got done teaching a Bible Study with a bunch of college students who were back in town for the summer.
 - Coincidentally, we were also walking through the book of James just like we're doing here for our Summer Bible Study this year.
 1. So, if you've been coming to that study, you know that we've been saying that the point of the book of James is to help us to understand that following Jesus will change our entire life.
 2. That truly following Jesus means there is not one aspect of our life that will be impacted.



ii. So, I was teaching this same thing to these college students and afterwards this one young lady came up to me wanting to talk. And this is what she literally said to me...I'm not exaggerating...

- She says: "So, I grew up following Jesus and consider myself a follower of Jesus. But I just finished my freshman year of college and I partied a lot. And when I go back for my sophomore year, I'm going to keep partying."
 1. Now, I've been telling people at school that I follow Jesus.
 2. But I know that a true follower of Jesus would not party in the way that I have been partying.
 3. So, here is my question: Should I stop telling people that I am a follower of Jesus?
 4. Because I don't want to misrepresent Jesus and those who follow Him
 5. What should I do?

iii. I love college students. They are so honest. But I had to process the question for a second...and said...

- Okay, just to clarify.
 1. You are a follower of Jesus. Yes.
 2. But you don't want to actually follow Jesus.
 3. You feel you should stop identifying yourself as a follower of Jesus because you don't want to follow Jesus?
- And she said...well I am a follower of Jesus but I feel I should stop telling people that I follow Jesus because of my partying.



- iv. And I just looked at her and said...I think you're wrestling with this because your conscience and the Holy Spirit in you is telling you that your life is not congruent with your faith.
 - And I think you need to realize something right now...you have a choice to make...you have to say no to something.
 1. And you are either going to say no to your Savior.
 2. Or you are going to say no to your sinful desires.
 3. But you can't say yes to both.

c. And as I think about this conversation that I had with this young lady, it's easy to scoff at her because she was so brutally honest in her dilemma.

- i. But I think we all struggle with the same question; we just don't articulate it as plainly and honestly as she did.
 - We want to say yes to following Jesus but at the same time we also want to say yes to all the things in our life that would be incongruent with following Jesus.
 1. And we don't want to have to say no to one of them.

II. SERIES RECAP

a. And this morning, we are beginning to get to the heart of our current sermon series KING JESUS.

- i. Because this is a series all about what it means to submit our entire lives to Jesus as our King.



- And this morning, we are going to begin to explore what it truly looks like to follow Jesus in every single area of our life.

b. As you know, through this series we have summarized each of our sermons with a particular theological statement that helps us to remember what we believe about God and ourselves.

- We have listed out all of those statements for you thus far in your bulletin but if you've missed any of these sermons, I encourage you to get caught up on our podcast.

c. We began the series with this statement:

i. **In love, God created me not to be the center of my story.**

- God created us in his image...meaning that our purpose and our design is to live with God at the center, representing Him, bringing Him glory.
 1. And because this is our creative purpose...because this is our design...this is where we find joy.

ii. **But the second statement of our series was this: *In sin, I have abused God, creation, and others in order to be the center of my story.***

- The essence of sin is that we have rejected God and the purpose of Him creating us and made ourselves the center of our story...
 1. And therefore we have been banished from God's Kingdom.



iii. And we spent the rest of the first chapter of this series unpacking the implications that we have rejected our creator and King.

d. But in this second chapter of our series, we learned that (and this is the first statement of chapter 2):

i. *God is eager to restore me to His Kingdom.*

- God is eager to be gracious and merciful to us, to redeem us, to fundamentally change our hearts, and restore us to His Kingdom.

ii. And so, what God does is He sends His Son, Jesus, to do the work of restoring us to His Kingdom.

- And last week we learned that what Jesus does is (and this was last week's statement):

1. *Jesus gives of Himself to forgive me.*

- That Jesus pays the cost of our sin against God and through Jesus, God the Father forgives us of our sin.

1. We are justified in the sight of God.
Made right with God.

2. Our sin is no longer held against us if we trust and have faith in Jesus.

e. And this morning, I want us to see that Jesus doesn't give of Himself just to accomplish our forgiveness (our justification) but Jesus also gives of Himself to show us the way of the Kingdom.



- i. And that is this morning's theological statement: *Jesus gives of Himself to show me the way of the Kingdom.*
 - That through the life and death of Jesus, we are given an example of what it looks like to live with Jesus as our King.
 1. In other words, Jesus teaches us what it means to actually follow Him.
 2. To say yes to following Jesus and no to everything in our life that doesn't align with that.
 3. To live with God at the center of our story.
- ii. Therefore, I want us to study Mark 10:35-45 together.

III. MARK 10:35-45

a. Because this passage is a moment where Jesus is crystal clear with His disciples about why He came to be with us and how that should impact the way we live our lives if we follow Him.

- i. In v.32-34 just before the passage that we are about to read together, we learn that Jesus and His disciples were on their way to Jerusalem where Jesus would ultimately be arrested, tortured, killed, and then resurrected.
 - And in these verses, Jesus tells his disciples that this is what is going to happen.
- ii. And two of Jesus' disciples, James (not the brother of Jesus) and John, see this as an opportunity to exploit for their own gain.



- Jesus is about to do something big and they want to make sure they get to be a significant part of it.
 - But first, a little context on James and John.
 1. When Jesus first called them to be his disciples back in Mark 3:17, he gave them the nickname BOANERGES.
 2. Now, many Bibles translate this as “Sons of Thunder.”
 3. It could also be translated as “the loud ones” or “the hot-tempered pair.”
 - But this may give you some context is to the personalities of James and John.
- iii. **Read Mark 10:35-45**
- b. For all of Jesus’ ministry he has been telling his disciples that the reason He came was to bring the Kingdom of God.**
- i. And that is what we just said...God is eager to restore us to His Kingdom and He sends Jesus to do that work of restoring us to His Kingdom.
 - And when Jesus tells His disciples that they need to go to Jerusalem for Him to be arrested, executed, and resurrected, James and John probably don’t fully understand but they probably think that this whole bringing of the Kingdom of God thing is about to happen.
 1. And so, because they are the sons of thunder, they want to make sure they are first in line when it comes to whatever prominent positions Jesus might be handing out in his new Kingdom.



2. It's kind of like Presidential Primary races...you have all these candidates who just beat each other up to try and win the nomination...but once there is a nominee...they all cozy up to the winner because they want prominent positions in the cabinet and the administration.
3. This is what James and John want in the Kingdom of God.

ii. And Jesus says in v.38 – You have no idea what you're asking for.

- You have no idea what it means to be great in my Kingdom.
- Are you able to drink from the cup that I drink and be baptized with the baptism that I will be baptized?
 1. And they say: We are able!
 2. But again, they have no idea what they are saying, and they have no idea what they are asking.

iii. But, what was Jesus talking about? What does he mean by the cup that he is going to drink and this baptism that he speaks of?

- Well, if you survey the Bible, you'll notice that the Bible uses the word "cup" as something that the Lord bestows upon someone.
 1. It could be blessing. It could be a calling.
 2. The Psalms often refer to the "cup of our salvation."
 3. But we also see Jesus use this language to refer to the calling upon him to become a man and offer himself as a sacrifice for our sins.



4. We see this in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus asks God to take the cup from Him, if it's possible.
- So, when Jesus refers to the cup, what he is referring to is God's calling upon His life to go to the cross, suffer in the place of sinful man, take on the wrath of God, and pay the costs of our sin.
 1. This is the cup that God had for Jesus.
 - And when Jesus speaks of baptism, he is referring to his death.
 1. That when he dies on the cross he will be buried in the ground and then three days later raised to new life.
 2. This is why when we baptize, we immerse people under water.
 3. Because it symbolizes how our old self has died along with Jesus, is buried in the waters of baptism, and resurrected to new, redeemed life.
 - But when Jesus refers to the cup and the baptism, he is referring to his suffering and his death.
 1. Jesus is referring to the costs that he will pay to restore us to God's Kingdom.
 2. And I promise you, this is not what James and John had in mind when they said they were willing and able to drink from the same cup and endure the same baptism.

c. You want to know what James and John had in mind?

- i. Jesus gives us a hint in **v.42-43a**.
 - Jesus says...look at all the Kingdoms of the world...all the nations. To be great in these Kingdoms means dominance, authority, power, and position.



1. The ability to be greater than other people. The ability to tell other people what to do.
- ii. **When James and John imagined the Kingdom of God, they imagined a nationalistic Kingdom.**
- A Kingdom like the other nations but this time Jesus and his high officials were now in charge.
 1. And they would liberate Israel from the Roman Empire and rule over it.
 2. And James and John would be decorated and have great power.
 - See, although Jesus had told his disciples at least three times that he was headed to Jerusalem to die, I don't think they ever quite understood that Jesus meant that literally.
 1. Jesus wasn't headed to Jerusalem to establish the nationalistic Kingdom of Israel...
 2. Jesus was headed to Jerusalem to establish the Spiritual Kingdom of God...
 3. And the way of God's Kingdom is nothing like the ways of the Kingdoms of the world.
- iii. **And so Jesus looks at James and John in v.39 and says...**
- And Jesus is not saying that James and John will have to die on the cross too in order to be restored to God's Kingdom.
 1. That is a cup that only Jesus can drink from on our behalf.
 2. Only Jesus can atone for our sins and welcome us into God's Kingdom.



- But what Jesus is saying is that laying down one's life for God and others is the way of the Kingdom of God.
 1. To follow Jesus means to follow him to the cross, down into the grave, and into his resurrection.
- There is nothing wrong with wanting to achieve greatness.
 1. But, greatness is not measured by climbing the ladder of power and precision, greatness is measured by lowering yourself so that God and others might be elevated.

d. And Jesus puts it in plain terms in v.43b-45.

- i. Notice how Jesus uses Himself as our example.
 - It's one thing for James, John, and all of us, as fallen humanity, to think that we deserve greatness in God's Kingdom.
 - But Jesus is entirely different. Jesus is the Son of God and He is completely without sin.
 1. Yet Jesus, even in his actual position and actual righteousness, doesn't use it for Himself.
 2. Philippians 2:6-7a - *"...though [Jesus] was in the form of God, [He] did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant..."*



- Jesus lays his life down for us. So that we, people who have abused God and others in order to be the center of our story may be forgiven, redeemed, and restored to God's Kingdom.
- Jesus came to serve. Not claim his rights.
- And in doing so, he has shown us the way of the Kingdom.

IV. APPLICATION

a. So, here is what it means to follow Jesus.

- i. To follow Jesus means to lay down our desires and our rights to love God and others. (repeat)
 - In love, God created me not to be the center of my story.
 - In sin, I have abused God, others, and creation in order to be the center of my story.
 - And Jesus has come to redeem me from that...which means he not only forgives me but he leads me into a new way of living...namely no longer being the center of my story.
- ii. We live in a culture today that says that what it means to be truly and authentically you is to demand your rights and your desires, to celebrate your rights and your desires, and to cut out anything or anyone who gets in the way of your rights and your desires.
 - It's a culture that is constantly preaching to us that whatever your heart desires, you are entitled to.



1. Because your desires are what it most authentically you.
 2. And it would be wrong for you to deprive yourself of what your heart desires.
 3. Our culture preaches this sermon to us every minute of every single day.
- You're entitled to what your heart desires sexually.
 1. In fact, our culture would say that is now your identity. That is who you are. That is your orientation.
 2. And anyone or anything who would challenge that is an enemy that needs to be cut out.
 - You're entitled to a wife or a husband who will fulfill your desires and completes you.
 1. And when they fail to do that, divorce is acceptable.
 - You're entitled to the American dream of building a life of wealth and significance.
 1. And when God calls you to lay that down for His sake, for His mission, and for His church, that's too radical.
 - You're entitled to curate the practices of your faith to take just as much time and energy as you're willing to give.
 1. And when the Bible or the church calls you to a faith that impacts every area of your life, you should pull back claiming the need for self-care.
 - You're entitled to formulate your own thoughts and theology about God.
 1. And when God disagrees with you, of course there is something wrong with God or the Bible and not with you.



b. And so, here is how this sermon that our culture is preaching to us begins to seep into the Christian faith.

- i. You have Christians who believe in God's Word and they want to order their life by this Word.
 - But they also have been exposed every single day to this sermon by our culture telling us that we are entitled to our heart's desires.
- ii. **And what happens is we read this Word from God.**
 - And it will challenge your heart's desires and it will challenge the sermon that our culture is preaching to us.
- iii. **God will tell us in here...here is how I created sexuality. And here is how it is beautiful, and right, and amazing.**
 - But also, here is how the Fall has twisted sexuality and why that is destructive.
 - Here is how you should think about your money. Here is what the purpose of marriage is. Here is how you should treat your neighbors. And on and on...
 - And that might challenge my heart's desire and the sermon from our culture.
 - And so, I have a choice.
 1. Do I believe the Word of God or do I believe the word of our culture?
- iv. **But what happens in Christianity is we don't want to have to choose between the two...we want to say yes to both.**
 - I want to be able to believe the message of our culture that says I'm entitled to what I desire but I also don't want to reject God.



- So, we start to compromise...
 1. We'll say that actually not everything in here is true and the things in here that actually contradict my desires and my rights we can disregard.
 2. Or interpret and do exegetical gymnastics in a way that soothes my conscience and lets me do what I want to do.
 3. Or we'll just ignore certain parts of Scripture and try and not to expose our conscience to it.
 4. Or, like the young lady I spoke of in the beginning, we'll try and convince ourselves that we can actually have both...we want to say yes to following Jesus and we want to say yes to all of our desires.

c. And here is what I want all of us to see this morning.

- i. That our culture is also preaching to us a theology. And here is how you could summarize its theology in a statement...
 - My fallen self is my most authentic self. I am most free when I bear my own image. I have the right to have all of my desires fulfilled. And sin is when any person or thing gets in the way.
 - I am the center of my story.
- ii. **This is the way of the world, but this is not the way of God's Kingdom.**
 - In God's Kingdom, we follow Jesus, by laying down our desires and our rights in love of God and others.



1. In marriage, we lay down our demands, our rights, our desires and we become a servant of our spouse.
 2. In the home, we lay down all of our expectations on our kids, and we become servants of our children.
 3. We lay down the idea that money will buy us security and happiness and we put all of it before God and submit to His will for His money that he has entrusted to us.
 4. We lay down our rights and desires to love our church family.
 5. We lay down our rights and desires to love our neighbors.
 6. We lay down our rights and desires and submit to the Word of God, even when I struggle to agree with it.
- And, here is the thing, if it weren't for Jesus laying down his rights and literally giving of His life, where would we be?
 1. It is through Jesus laying down his privilege, not flaunting his privilege, that we are forgiven of our sin.
 2. It is through Jesus laying down his privilege, not flaunting his privilege, that we are adopted into God's family, made a child of God, and given a place in God's Kingdom for all of eternity.
- iii. **The gospel is good news to us at great cost to our Savior and now we are called to follow Jesus by laying down our privilege, our rights, and our desires, not demanding them, in order to love God and others.**



- Following Jesus comes at a cost.
 1. And just like James and John, we can sometimes come to Jesus and only have our sights set on the benefits.
 2. We are only concerned about what we get out of the faith.
- But Jesus tells James, John, and all of us – if you want the benefits, if you want to be great in the Kingdom of God – then you must become a servant.
 1. If you want to find your life, you must be willing to lose it.

d. And you might be thinking to yourself...why would I sign up for this? Why would I submit myself to a life of laying down everything I want and following Jesus?

- i. It's that question that caused the fall in the garden.
- ii. But the truth is, there is no joy when I am the center of my story.
 - This was one of our theological statements in chapter one of this series.
 - But living a life demanding your rights and desires has brought brokenness, pain, anxiety, and stress to this world.
- iii. **And the great paradox of the Christian faith is that there is everlasting joy, peace, and soul fulfillment when we submit our entire lives to King Jesus.**
 - Because you are your most authentic self as an image bearer of God and as a child of His Kingdom.
 - And this is what we'll be focusing on in our sermon next Sunday.



- iv. But for this morning, the question I want us to wrestle with is what theology is my life more organized around?
 - Is it the theology of the world?
 1. That tells us that we are the center of our story and we are entitled to our desires?
 - Or is it the theology of Jesus?
 1. That tells us to lay down our rights and our desires in love of God and others.

e. Let's take a moment to pray and reflect on that.

V. PRAY

