

Following the Path of Jesus Wherever It May Lead

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Mark: The King and The Cross / Mark 10:32–45

A few years ago, Ally and I were invited to a wedding of one of our church members. He was a dear brother that I had grown close to. We met when he started attending our previous church, and we walked with him as he came to faith in Jesus, baptizing him and now, now he had met a godly woman and they were getting married and he had asked me to officiate the wedding.

They had their wedding up in the mountains of Quebec at a beautiful resort and they invited us to spend the weekend up at this resort where I officiated, and we celebrated their wedding with them. But Ally and I had never been to Quebec before, especially up in the mountains. And so, we did what any modern couple would do, we put the address of the resort in our GPS and allowed that to lead us on our way.

We were driving first on the usual highways and side streets and ramps, but after we crossed the border of Quebec, it became immediately clear, that we were no longer in Ontario. The GPS led us down a strange road, and all of a sudden it asked us to turn onto this dirt road. The farther up the mountain we went, the more this dirt road narrowed, and not only did it get narrow, but it got real bumpy, like craters in the middle of the road, so large that at one point we bottomed out and ended up damaging our car.

Of course, all of this led to the inevitable question that came from Ally... Are you sure we are going the right way? I didn't know. I had never been there before. I was kind of nervous and unsure and had no choice but to trust that the GPS would lead us to our destination safely.

I thought to myself, it reminds me a lot of what it looks like to follow Jesus, doesn't it? I mean here's what we would like it to look like. We would love for it to be a straightforward path with smooth roads, beautiful sights and scenery. But often it looks like narrow, winding roads, that sometimes get pretty rough and bumpy – maybe even at times frightening – to the point where we wonder if we are following the right path.

And yet, deep down we know, that if we trust Jesus, if we follow him, he will lead us to our final destination.

It's difficult, if we're honest, it's not always easy to follow Jesus. Sometimes following Jesus leads us to paths and places we never expected. I'm sure that's what the disciples thought in our passage this morning as they headed up to Jerusalem.

The question this morning for us to wrestle with is do we trust Jesus; do we trust him enough to follow him wherever that road may lead?

Are we willing to follow after Jesus wherever he may lead? Look with me this morning at our passage [Mark 10:32-45](#).

I really appreciate this opening description of verse 32, read that with me there, it says.

Mark 10:32 ESV

“And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them.”

That's such a great description of what it looks like to follow Jesus isn't it? I hope that is the description of my walk with Jesus.

“On the road going up,” Jesus says. That was just a practical explanation. If you wanted to travel to Jerusalem, it was an upward trek, it was 3500 feet higher in elevation, so if you wanted to get there, you had to travel up.

But I hope it's how my walk with Jesus is described, that I am heading upwards, in my growth, in my progress towards heaven, in my intimacy and proximity to Jesus, in my sanctification and holiness. My prayer is that I am ever headed upwards, amen?

But if that is going to happen, notice where Jesus is as they're walking. Jesus is walking ahead of them, he is the one leading the way. So important, isn't it?

The disciples aren't leading Jesus along the path, but the disciples are following as Jesus is leading and where Jesus walks, they walk, and where Jesus turns, they turn, and where he stops, they stop and when he goes, they go.

Jesus is walking ahead of them. He is leading the way and as long as Jesus is leading the way, they're walking in the right path.

I wish I could say that every step I've taken, Jesus has led the way. But I think if we're honest with ourselves, often times we want to be the one leading the way. We want to be the one in control of our steps, of our destiny, of our destination.

But when we allow ourselves to take the lead it often leads to disastrous consequences and results.

Jesus needs to lead and we need to follow.

This is sometimes difficult because it is an upward trek. And if you're constantly walking uphill, how many know it can be taxing, it can be tiring? Often times when I walk on a treadmill, I like to put it on an incline. Why? Because it makes it more challenging. The hope is that I'm going to burn a few more calories.

Following after Jesus is not on a decline, it's not even on an even surface, it has to be on an upward incline, because that's how growth happens. Growth can only happen as you and I are challenged and stretched. Growth only happens if Jesus is leading the way, not you, not me, not the culture.

Not even our emotions.

We read these disciples that are following Jesus are going through some emotions as they're following him.

Verse 32 again says “**Jesus was walking ahead of them, and they were amazed,**” some versions say astonished, but then it says “**those who followed were afraid.**”

I think that's a great description, because following Jesus is filled with all those emotions. Sometimes we're amazed, amazed at his power, his teaching, his blessing, his grace. Sometimes we're astonished, taken off guard, surprised. Think about some of the teachings they have heard from Jesus. Some of us have felt that way as we've journeyed through these passages, think about Jesus' teaching on marriage and divorce, his teaching on who can enter the Kingdom of God. Not the rich, not those who follow all the rules, but those who embrace the Kingdom with childlike faith.

They were astonished, amazed.

Some, some of them were afraid. Afraid because even though they may not have understood everything Jesus said, they heard that nothing good was awaiting them in Jerusalem. Whatever he was talking about, dying, and rising from the dead couldn't mean they were in for a welcome reception.

Sometimes following Jesus leads us to places where maybe we're afraid. We're afraid because maybe we don't know what the outcome is going to be. We don't have all the answers we would like.

The temptation when Jesus leads us to uncomfortable places is to want to take the lead. No Jesus, this isn't where I want to go, let me lead, let me show you.

But notice, despite the wide range of emotions these disciples were feeling, they still continued to follow his path, they still continued to let him lead while they followed.

We cannot allow our emotions to dictate when and how we follow Jesus. We must follow Jesus, follow his footsteps, follow his path wherever he may lead.

And if we're going to follow Jesus, we need to know that following the path of Jesus is a journey revealed one step at a time.

Like Jesus reveals his plan to us one step at a time. I get that because of what he says there in verse 33.

He knows the mixed emotions of his followers and so he turns to them in verse 33 and speaks.

Mark 10:33–34 ESV

saying, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. And they will mock him and spit on him and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise.”

Notice this is the third time that Jesus has told them what is going to happen when they get to Jerusalem. He first told them in [Mark 8:31](#)

Mark 8:31 ESV

“And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.”

He tells them about the same things in chapter [Mark 9:31](#)

Mark 9:31 ESV

“The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise.”

And he tells them once again here in chapter 10. But do you notice something. Do you notice that each time Jesus tells them about what's going to happen, he reveals more and more detail, he reveals more of the plan with each step of the way.

I have often found that this is how God works in my life. He doesn't sit us down and tell us about his whole plan in one sitting, but he reveals to us what we need to know as the journey goes on.

Think about when you first started following Jesus. All you might have known is that Jesus has died for your sin, called you to faith and repentance, and that's all you needed to know.

But what if he revealed his whole plan for you, and said "hey here is where I want to take you, but this is everything you'll have to go through in order to get there?" Most of us, would probably be like "ummm, no thanks, I'm good right here."

Think about when God called Abraham, all he told him was that he was calling him to leave his home country and go to a land he would show him, and then he tells him that he promises him a son. He doesn't give him all the details, but he reveals more of the plan as Abraham goes. Imagine if God told Abraham everything at the start? If he told him about all the times he would fail, how long he would have to wait, about Lot and the war and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah? Imagine if he revealed at a certain time he would test Abraham to sacrifice his own son, or told him that Sarah would die before him, that he would mourn his wife, imagine if God told him the whole plan all at once.

What about Moses? God told him to go and tell Pharaoh to let my people go... and but what if he told him the whole plan, that he would lead his people out of Egypt after a tense struggle with Pharaoh, that he would escape by walking through a divided sea, that he would wander the wilderness for 40 years struggling with a disobedient people, that he would die before he entered the promise land, but that God would use him greatly, that he would become a historic prophet for Israel and for future generations. Do you think Moses would have said, "yeah that sounds like a journey I'd like to go on?"

No, God took Abraham, he took Moses, and he used them for his glory, he accomplished great things through these broken, flawed men, but he revealed the journey one step at a time.

I have come to find that God does the same things with us, he calls us, he reveals what we need to know, but then he says trust me for the rest. Trust me that when the time comes, I will show you what to do and where to go.

Jesus is revealing to his disciples more and more how things are going to go, but this is right before they get into Jerusalem, so he says “you need to know what’s about to go down here. You need to be ready. I don’t want you to be surprised.”

Jesus tells them, when we get to Jerusalem, I am going to be arrested, I am going to be handed over to the chief priests and the Scribes and they are going to find me guilty, they will condemn me to death, and then they will deliver me over to the Romans, and there I will be mocked and spit on, and beaten and they will kill me. But don’t be afraid I will rise after three days.

Jesus knows how this is going to go. That’s important because it tells us there is a plan. This is the plan. This isn’t an insurrection gone wrong, this isn’t a plan gone sideways, Jesus wasn’t killed by accident.

He willingly went, no one dragged him, forced him. He went to Jerusalem, because it was planned before the foundation of the world that he would come to die. He would come and be beaten and mocked and hung on a cross bearing the sin of the world on his shoulders. It was planned that he would die, it was planned that he would rise again.

Passages like [Isaiah 53](#) told us 700 years before it happen that he would come to bear our griefs and carry our sorrows, that he would be esteemed as stricken, and afflicted, that he would come and be pierced for our transgression, crushed for our iniquities, that upon him was the chastisement that brings us peace and that by his wounds we would be healed.

This is the plan, and Jesus is leading the way, he is leading the way all the way to the cross.

This is why we can follow him and trust him, even if we don't have all the details or even understand. Because even if he leads us to the path of suffering, that he himself walked, it will ultimately be for our good and his glory.

Isn't that what's happening at the cross? His suffering wasn't in vain, his pain was not in vain, his death, his mocking, his beating was not in vain. God used the evil of those men to bring about his greatest glory for our good.

There is a purpose to the pain, to the pressing, but God does not reveal the whole plan all at once, he reveals it to us one step at a time.

Following the path of Jesus will lead us to paths we never expected,

Following the path of Jesus, is a path walked in humility.

It's a lesson that two brothers need to learn quickly.

Enter James and John in verse 35.

Mark 10:35-37 ESV

“And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, ‘Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.’ And he said to them, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ And they said to him, ‘Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.’”

Maybe these guys didn't get the memo about what Jesus just said. Maybe they misunderstood the suffering and dying part. They skip right over to the glory. They want the glory, but they don't want the suffering.

See, they are still under the delusion of their generation's misunderstandings of the Messiah. They think that what Jesus is going to do in Jerusalem is to establish himself as the King of Israel and drive out the Romans and set Israel free from their occupation and oppression.

They think that Jesus is going to Jerusalem to claim his throne. And so, they say, “hey, listen, we want you to do something for us, and you have to say yes.”

You ever have a little kid try and pull that on you?

Mom, Dad, I’m going to ask you something, but you have to promise that you are going to say yes...

What immaturity, right? You would kind of expect Jesus to be annoyed at such immaturity. To say, “who do you think you are? How foolish could you be, how childish?

But he doesn’t. He’s so patient, he’s so gracious with them as he so often is with you and I when we show such immaturity in our faith.

He asks as though he doesn’t know... “What do you want me to do for you?”

They say, “Grant us to sit, one at your right and one at your left in your glory.”

You see what they’re asking him right? They want to be second and third in power in his Kingdom. When we get there, when you establish your throne, and are in glory, listen we get it, you’re the king, but can we be second and third in charge?

Amazing the audacity, the arrogance, the pride of these two men.

And we want to say, like haven’t you heard anything he has taught? Have you been listening at all? Because if you were, this is a no brainer, this is an easy answer for you, but you still don’t get it, you still don’t understand.

We want to be harsh with these brothers, but then we examine our own hearts, and we realize this is so often you and me.

We want to be the greatest, we want to have the power, we want to be in control, we want to be the masters of our destiny. This is what drives our culture, our society this never-ending battle to be the greatest, to have the best, to be the most successful, to seize the moment.

Seen through the eyes of culture this is a brilliant move – brilliant. They have considerable access to the most powerful person, the one brother, John, is part of the inner circle, and scholars think their mom is related to his mom. So take advantage of what you’ve got to get ahead. Why not ask? Maybe, just maybe he’ll grant it to you.

Yet Jesus, isn’t so impressed, do you see what he says to them in verse 38?

Mark 10:38 ESV

“Jesus said to them, ‘You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?’”

You don’t understand, you don’t get it. He asks them are you able to drink my cup and be baptized with my baptism? Do you know what he’s saying? You want to share in my glory, but you don’t know the road that leads to the glory.

Jesus says, the road that leads to my glory is a road that is filled with humility and suffering.

“To drink the cup” is often a phrase used to describe judgment, pain or baptism. This isn’t water baptism but it is in the word’s original meaning, of being immersed, covered in.

He says the road that I have to walk to get to glory is filled with suffering and pain, are you willing to walk that path that leads to glory?

And I think that’s a question that we all have to wrestle with. When we often think about following Jesus and God’s will for our lives, our minds often turn to the blessings and the miracles and the privileges; like these brothers, we want all the glory.

However, to really identify with Jesus is not just to identify with him in embracing his glory, but it is to embrace even the paths that leads to suffering and humility.

To follow in the path of Jesus is to follow him right to the cross, the road that leads to glory is paved with suffering. This is what Jesus is saying.

It's what Paul says in [Philippians 3](#) when he says he wants to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and that I may share in his sufferings... We want that first part, we want to share in the power of his resurrection, but how many of us are willing to share in his suffering?

In [Romans 8](#) Paul talks about this wondrous miracle that you and I are children of God by faith in Christ and if we are children of God that means that we are heirs with Christ, we are heirs to the inheritance of heaven, we are fellow heirs with Christ, hallelujah. Provided he says that we suffer with him..

This is the tension of the Christian life. We are destined for glory following in the footsteps of Jesus, but if we truly follow in his footsteps, they lead to seasons of pain, sorrow and suffering. But, just like God does in the death of Jesus, he uses those seasons for our good and his glory.

These brothers want the glory, but let's pass on the suffering.

But Jesus reveals something to them that I don't think they understood at the time. They arrogantly say yes, yes, we can drink your cup and be baptized in your suffering, but Jesus says to them look in verse 39

Mark 10:39-41 ESV

“And they said to him, ‘We are able.’ And Jesus said to them, ‘The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.’ And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John.”

Jesus tells them “you know what? You WILL share in the same suffering as me,” and history tells us that both these brothers did. James was the first apostle beheaded for the faith, the first martyr. John, we know suffered a far worse fate,

he was exiled to an abandoned island, left there to suffer until his death years later.

But the right and left hand are not for Jesus to decide. God has determined who those seats belong to.

We need to know, that if we are going to follow in the path of Jesus, it is not a path marked by pride and arrogance, but a path marked by humility. For those who are willing to humble themselves.

But here's what else Jesus wants these disciples to know about following his path. Following the path of Jesus is a path marked by serving. Look with me starting in verse 41.

Mark 10:41-45 ESV

“And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. And Jesus called them to him and said to them, ‘You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great one’s exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.’”

I read verse 41 and I wonder why the other disciples were angry with James and John?

Like maybe they are siding with Jesus on this one and saying guys, seriously, how could you?

I don't think that's really it; I think they're angry with them because they didn't think of asking for it first.

I think that's the issue, because Jesus feels the need to address all of them with how power and authority work in God's Kingdom and how it differs from the power and authority in the world.

In the world today, in society, when someone is in a position of power or authority, they use that power to their advantage, they use it to dictate orders and have things their way. They use their power to serve their own purposes.

Even though it was like that in the first century, we see the abuse of power even today, that when people get in a position of power and authority, it goes to their head. They often abuse power and take advantage of it.

But Jesus wants them, he wants us to know that those who are a part of his Kingdom, view power and authority much differently.

He says it shall not be so among you.

Whoever would be great among you, must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all, do you see what Jesus is saying?

Not that we all need to be in the occupation of serving, but that if you and I find ourselves in a position of power or authority, we don't use it for our own benefit, but we use the power and authority that we have been given in service of others.

True, godly leadership is servant leadership.

This is something that needs to be understood most of all in church leadership. That people who are in positions of pastors, or elders, or in our case directors, are in those positions not to serve their own benefit, but to serve the needs of God's people and Kingdom.

But it trickles down into the home, doesn't it? That husbands, as you lead your families, you don't lead them heavy-handed, wielding authority and commands, but you lead your family well, with Christlike, self sacrificial, servant leadership.

Parents, as you lead your children by serving them. Not lording authority over them.

If you find yourself in a position of authority on your job, or in society, God has put you there to show forth Christ like servant leadership.

Imagine the impact, imagine the difference it would make if we led like Jesus.

Isn't this the example Jesus left us? When he and his disciples got to the upper room where they would celebrate the last supper. Everyone was waiting to see who was going to wash their feet, because there didn't seem to be a servant.

And what did Jesus do? He took off his outer garments and put on the clothing and position of a servant and he, the Son of Man, God in human form, got on his knees and washed his disciples feet... and then he says to them as I have served you, serve one another.

Isn't this the example that he leads as he goes to the cross? Read it again. [Mark 10:45](#)

Mark 10:45 ESV

“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

He says it's the whole reason he came. He gave up heaven, came to this world as the heavenly king, but he didn't come so that he would have subjects to serve him, no, he came to serve others. he came and he served you and I by giving his life as a ransom for ours.

That word ransom, we only hear when it's talking about money exchanged for those who have been kidnapped, but historically a ransom is what you paid to free someone from slavery and bondage.

That's how Jesus came to serve you and I. We were slaves to our sin, in bondage. We were slaves to our sinful desires, slaves to the consequences of our sin, we were slaves to the guilt, the shame, the weight that comes with it.

And when Jesus went to that cross, he took all of that on his shoulders and he paid that ransom in full. We are no longer slaves to sin, but children of God.

Some of us here are still living as slaves to your sin because you are yet to embrace the gift of Christ. You know it because you feel the weight of it on your shoulders. You feel the weight of guilt and shame, the frustration that you are simply going in circles.

You can lay that burden at the foot of the cross this morning because Jesus has paid your ransom. Freedom is available by faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ this morning.

But here's what that means for you and me as followers of Jesus.

If Jesus came to serve, and you and I, as his disciples or followers, are following in his footsteps, well that means that you I are called to serve.

It changes drastically how we view our relationships doesn't it? Especially with each other. I am called to serve you, and you are called to serve me.

Your neighbour is called to serve you, and you are called to serve your neighbour. that changes drastically how we view and understand what's going on here at church, it changes how we understand what church is.

Church isn't just a place I come to be served. Church is a place that I am called to serve.

Part of discipleship is serving. Part of following Jesus is serving others.

Folks that's why we have made serving part of our path of discipleship here at BBC. Gather, Grow, Give – that is give of yourself by finding a place to serve.

You hear us asking constantly, find a ministry to serve in. We have Serve Drives so that you can find out where God is calling you to serve. We call you to serve not because we need a favour, but because that's what it looks like to follow Jesus. Following Jesus is a path marked by serving.

Why? Because the Son of Man came not be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Where is it that you are serving? How are you growing in giving today?

Did you know we need people to help in our Connections Ministry, with our greeters? Did you know we are looking for musicians to serve in Worship Ministry? Or to serve in Care Ministry? We could always use help serving in Children's Ministry.

I pray that you don't just come here to be served, but that you find a place you can serve and fulfill your calling as a disciple of Jesus.

This is what it looks like to follow in the path of Jesus wherever it may go; to let him take the lead, while we follow.

He may not reveal everything all at once, but he reveals the journey one step at a time. Following in the path of Jesus is a path walked in humility, it's a path marked by serving.

Are you following in the path of Jesus today?