

## Mark 10:32-45 “The Servant Talks to His Servants about Competing Agendas”\*\*\*

Main Idea: In Mark 10:32-45 the Servant talks to His servants about competing agendas.

- I. Jesus has an agenda (32-34).
  - A. He leads the way to Jerusalem (32).
  - B. He reveals what is going to happen to Him (33-34).
- II. We have agendas (35-41).
  - A. James and John ask Jesus for a favor (35-37).
    1. We are prone to think that Jesus exists for us.
    2. We must learn that we exist for Him.
  - B. Jesus corrects the brothers (38-40).
    1. He helps them see their folly.
    2. He reminds them of the Father’s authority.
  - C. The other disciples have the same problem (41).
- III. Jesus calls us change agendas (42-45).
  - A. We must reject the world’s agenda (42).
    1. To be successful is to be *over* people.
    2. You exist for me.
  - B. We must adopt God’s agenda (43-44).
    1. To be successful is to serve.
    2. I exist for God and you.
  - C. We must delight in doing what Jesus did (45).
    1. He came to serve others by dying for them.
    2. He sets us free so we too can serve.

Application: Is The Servant’s agenda my agenda?

This morning, we have the privilege again to open our Bibles together and fuel the worship of the One about whom we’ve been singing. We’ll be in Mark’s gospel, which presents King Jesus as The Servant. Let the contrast of those words sink in.

*King. Servant.* Jesus is both. He is the King, and there’s none greater. But He’s a one of a kind King, for He has chosen to use His great position and power in the greatest act of service this world has ever seen. In today’s text, Mark 10:32-45, The Servant talks to His servants about competing agendas.

*Scripture Reading: Mark 10:32-45*

If we know Jesus Christ as Savior, we are not our own. Why not? For this simple reason. We have been bought with a price and are under new ownership. Our new owner, the Living God who purchased us at the price of His Son’s blood, has given us a new purpose in life, to live for the glory of God (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

Simply put, this is God’s agenda for us, that we live every moment of our lives for His honor which is accomplished by doing His will. This likewise should be *our agenda* as well, to live every moment of our lives for His honor which is accomplished when we delightfully do His will.

And here is where we get into trouble. In place of God’s agenda, we pursue our own agendas. It’s the problem of *competing agendas*. Every day, indeed, every moment of every day we are faced with the challenge of *competing agendas*.

The phone rings at work. A voice on the other end speaks rudely to me. I’m faced with a choice. Do I speak rudely in return (to defend my right to some respect), or do I respond with kind and selfless words (to glorify God whose Word clearly commands me,

---

\*\*\*Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse,” Rom. 12:14)? It’s a battle of *competing agendas*.

It’s the end of the month and things are tight. Do I give the Lord the firstfruits from this week’s paycheck, or do I rationalize that I can’t afford to give to Him this week (not if I’m going to be able to keep my cable television)? Once again, we’re faced with competing agendas.

I’m a high school senior. Do I choose a college major based on what will eventually produce the highest standard of living for me, or based on how I can most effectively invest my life for God’s kingdom? It’s a matter of competing agendas.

We’ve lived in our house for several years and are noticing that many of our peers are “upgrading.” What should we do? Should we buy a bigger home (which will involve more debt, overtime at work to pay off the debt, and less time for ministry), or should we seek to implement God’s command, “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house” (Exodus 20:17)? Once again, the decision we make will reflect the agenda for which we are living.

Unfortunately, in the rat race of life we find it difficult to slow down and ask the *why* questions. Why did I make that choice? In other words, whose agenda am I trying to promote right now, God’s or mine?

The passage before us this morning will help us (even *force* us) to slow down and take some inventory. In our text in Mark 10, we see a conflict involving *competing agendas*. We see one individual who lived for the right agenda and some other individuals who were operating by a deficient agenda.

Today’s passage is going to confront us with three undeniable realities.

1. Jesus has an agenda (32-34).
2. We have agendas (35-41).
3. Jesus calls us change agendas (42-45).

#### I. Jesus has an agenda (32-34).

One of the first things you notice from a study of Jesus’ life is that *He didn’t do His own thing*. He lived to accomplish the agenda His Father gave Him. Hear it from His own lips...

**John 4:34** “My food [i.e. agenda] is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.”

**John 5:36** “For the very work [i.e. agenda] that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me.”

**John 6:38** “For I have come down from heaven not to do my will [i.e. agenda] but to do the will [i.e. agenda] of him who sent me.”

**John 17:4** “I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work [i.e. agenda] you gave me to do.”

From the cradle to the cross, this was Jesus’ agenda, to obey His Father’s will. It ought not surprise us, then, to see this same ambition in Mark 10. Jesus demonstrates His resolve to fulfill His Father’s agenda in two ways in verses 32-34.

**A. He leads the way to Jerusalem (32).** “And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them.” Stop there. Where were they heading? To Jerusalem. Why Jerusalem? Jesus has an appointment to keep in that city, an appointment that His Father placed on His calendar in eternity past. In a very real

sense, Jesus has been on His way up to Jerusalem since the manger, indeed, since the pre-time divine council established this plan. It would be in Jerusalem that He would give His life as a sacrificial lamb.

Let's not miss Jesus' location in this procession. Where is He? He is *leading the way*. No one coerced Him to go to the cross. Hebrews 12:2 says, "Who for the joy set before him endured the cross."

See Him, beloved. His gaze is set, His gate filled with resolve. He is going to Jerusalem, and nothing will stop Him.

Note the perspective of those traveling with Him, at the end of verse 32, "And they were *amazed*, and those who followed were *afraid*." Why were the disciples astonished and the other travelers [probably Jewish pilgrims traveling to observe Passover in Jerusalem] afraid? Because they knew Jesus was walking right into a den of lions. They knew that the Jewish leaders were already plotting to kill Jesus (John 11:53) and Jerusalem was their headquarters.

You say, "Well, didn't Jesus know that too?" Indeed, He did. Notice the end of verse 32, "And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him." Oh yes, Jesus knew what was coming. And He wanted His followers to know that He knew. This is why, secondly...

**B. He reveals what is going to happen to Him (33-34).** "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.<sup>34</sup> And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise."

Keep in mind this is a private conversation between Jesus and the Twelve. "We are going to Jerusalem," He told them. He also told them what would happen. This is Jesus' third major prediction of His coming passion (the first in 8:31, the second in 9:31).

Jesus is prophet, priest, and king. Here, as a prophet, He makes eight predictions about what this trip to Jerusalem will mean for Him.

- 1) He will be betrayed (by the very people who should have known better, the teachers of God's Law).
- 2) He will be condemned to death.
- 3) He will be handed over to Gentiles.
- 4) He will be mocked.
- 5) He will be spit on.
- 6) He will be flogged.
- 7) He will be killed.
- 8) He will rise from the dead on the third day.

Some Bible scholars say these verses were added later, as part of "post-resurrection church tradition." This, by the way, is what was at the heart of the *Da Vinci Code* controversy a few years ago, and more recent attacks on the veracity of the gospel record.

The truth is, how you view Jesus will affect what you do with prediction-passages like this one. If Jesus was merely a man, then you will conclude there's no way he could predict His future like this, and would consequently say that his followers inserted these comments later. But if Jesus is truly the Son of God, then predictions like these pose no problem for Him. If He is God, He certainly knows and can foretell the future.

Allow me to restate the obvious. Jesus went to Jerusalem knowing full well the unthinkable agony He was going to experience. Why then did He go? It boils down to a

very simple reason. He was thinking of His Father's agenda. It was His Father's plan that He enter this world as a man, live a perfect life, and then die in the place of and for the benefit of undeserving sinners, gaining eternal life for all who would repent and believe in Him. This was His Father's agenda, and it was thus His agenda too, and it governed His every decision.

In the very next verse, however, we see a stark contrast. On the trip to Jerusalem Jesus is thinking about His Father's agenda, but others are not. This brings us to the second point in Mark's text. One, Jesus has an agenda. Two, we have agendas.

## II. We have agendas (35-41).

In the NIV, the first word of verse 35 is, "Then." Right after Jesus announced that He was going to be betrayed and killed, two of His followers approached Him.

**A. James and John ask Jesus for a favor (35-37).** Verse 35 says, "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.'"

How's that for timing? The Lord had just poured out His soul to the men He has chosen to be His apostles. He told them, "I am going to be condemned, mocked, spit upon, flogged, and killed." And then He announced, "It's going to happen when we arrive in Jerusalem." And their response?

"Yea, okay Jesus. We want You to do for us whatever we ask."

Where did *that* come from? Didn't they hear what He had just told them? He just revealed that He is going to suffer horribly, and they want to know if He will do something for them.

It makes me think of what happens in the typical home when mom says she's feeling like she's getting sick. How do dad and the kids respond? Is it, "Oh, mother dear. If you aren't feeling well, why don't you go lay down? You deserve to think of your needs. We'll take care of the chores."?

Hardly. A more likely response would be, "Not feeling well? Oh no! I hope you're not contagious. And by the way, before you do get really sick, would you mind fixing our supper, ironing our clothes, washing the dog, and handing me the remote?"

I can relate to James and John, can't you? The way they treated Jesus isn't so different from the way we often treat Him, is it? So we're having our morning quiet time, and we read a passage where Jesus says to us, "I gave My life for you. If you want to be my disciple, you must take up your cross daily and follow Me (Mark 8:34)." And what do we say to Him? Essentially, "Excuse me, Jesus. I don't want to think about that right now. I want you to do for me whatever I ask. I want a better job, and a better family too. People just don't appreciate me like they ought."

Once again, it boils down to competing agendas. Simply put...

1. *We are prone to think that Jesus exists for us.* That He is there to do our bidding, to enable us to accomplish our agenda. That's what we sinfully assume. But of course, here's what we need.

2. *We must learn that we exist for Him.* We need a Romans 11:36 resolve that says, "All things are from Him, through Him, and to Him. To Him be the glory forever."

Matthew's account indicates James and John weren't alone. Someone else also approached Jesus and made this request. Remember who it was? Their mother (20:20).

Calvin had this to say: “This narrative contains a bright mirror of human vanity; for it shows that proper and holy zeal is often accompanied by ambition....They who are not satisfied with himself alone, but seek this or the other thing apart from him and his promises, wander egregiously from the right path.”<sup>1</sup>

Keep in mind that these aren't Jesus' enemies talking. These are His closest earthly friends. These sons of Zebedee have forsaken their fishing business to follow the Master. They love Him. Yet they still struggle with competing agendas. And they're not alone, are they?

Now, if I had just shared with my friends that I was going to die a horrible death, and they responded with the kind of self-absorbed request that James and John gave, I think I would have lit into them, saying something like, “Didn't you hear me?! Can't you stop thinking about yourself for just a moment, and give me some support?”

Not Jesus. Oh, what an amazing Savior He is! Jesus gently used this revealing moment to teach His men an important lesson.

He begins with a question in verse 36. “And he said to them, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’” That's interesting. He goes along with their request, essentially saying, “Okay, let's talk about what you want. Let's put your selfish agenda on the table so we can see it more clearly.”

Jesus is actually putting Proverbs 20:5 in action. “The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.” To change agendas, we must be forced to see how ugly the agenda that's currently ruling our heart truly is.

So the brothers speak, in verse 37, “And they said to him, ‘Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.’” We'll talk about their agenda problem in a moment, but we do see some commendable traits here in James and John. We see their *faith*. The very boldness of their request indicates that they believe Jesus is going to reign in glory, that death will not hold Him. We see their *dedication*. Even though a hostile crowd awaits them in Jerusalem they are going with their Master no matter what. We see their *devotion* for Jesus. They want to be near Jesus, as close as possible, even right next to Him as He sits on His throne.

All admirable, and all evidences of grace. Yet, no amount of faith, dedication, and devotion can justify self-promotion. God opposes the proud. What right do James and John have to ask for this honor? Do they think they deserve to be at Jesus' right and left hand in glory, and the other disciples *don't*? That's a question they're about to hear from their fellow disciples.

But let's be honest. We can relate. We, too, tend to think more highly of ourselves than we ought. That's because we too are by nature *proud* people. And like these brothers, we too need Jesus to forgive us, and then set us free from our self-promoting agendas, so that we might seek first His kingdom agenda.

Let's watch how He did this for James and John. Having exposed the problem, He began to correct it.

**B. Jesus corrects the brothers (38-40).** He says in verse 38, “You do not know what you are asking.” How's that for setting the record straight! “Men, you don't know what you're saying. Your perspective is off, way off.”

---

<sup>1</sup> Quote taken from W. Wessel, p. 720.

To help them Jesus asks a two-part question in verse 38. “Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?” He asks about a cup and baptism. Why? By asking this question...

1. *He helps them see their folly.* To Jewish ears, the drinking of a cup symbolizes a participation, in this case, a participation in the coming trouble and suffering that Jesus just announced. The image comes from the Old Testament. We read in Psalm 75:8, “In the hand of the LORD is a cup full of foaming wine mixed with spices; he pours it out, and all the wicked of the earth drink it down to its very dregs.”

In the Hebrew Scriptures, baptism in water also symbolizes participation, particularly a participation in suffering and trouble (e.g. Psalm 18:16; 69:1-2). When baptized, a person goes into water, and then comes out of water. Psalm 18:16 says, “He sent from on high, he took me; he drew me out of many waters.” We read in Psalm 69:1-2, “Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me.”

Are you able to be baptized with Me, asks Jesus, to participate in the suffering that I’m about to experience? Can you share in my fate? This is what Jesus is asking.

How did the brothers respond? Notice verse 39, “And they said to him, ‘We are able.’” These words indicate that James and John are ready to take on whatever comes their way. Such is their love for Jesus. But love can be blind, of course, and misguided.

Jesus knows that. So in verse 39 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.” Indeed, they would participate with Him in suffering. Little did they know the price they would pay for following Jesus. James would have his head cut off by Herod, the first apostle to experience martyrdom. John would be boiled in oil by the Romans, and banished to the isle of Patmos, the last apostle to die.

But it’s not just their folly that Jesus is helping them see. He says in verse 40, “...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.”

2. *He reminds them of the Father’s authority.* Note those words, “Not mine to grant.” These words are quite revealing. They make it clear that the authority of King Jesus is delegated. Though He is God Almighty, He lives in submission to His Father. He always obeys His Father. He always yields to His Father’s purposes.

To paraphrase Jesus’ words, “What you’ve asked of Me is not mine to give. I didn’t write the plan, but I have come to carry it out. You want to know about who will sit on thrones. That’s an agenda question. I don’t make the agenda. You certainly don’t make the agenda. That’s my Father’s prerogative. He wrote the script. It’s His agenda that matters to Me, and it’s His agenda that should matter to you.”

There’s a tragic characteristic of sin that we see clearly illustrated in the next scene. Sin doesn’t stay alone. It breeds. It spreads. It infects those with whom it makes contact. My sin creates a ripple effect, and apart from divine intervention, it can turn into a tidal wave.

Notice what happened in verse 41. “And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John.” So, James and John aren’t alone.

**C. The other disciples have the same problem (41).** Again, so do we. We have an *agenda* problem. When the ten heard what James and John asked Jesus, the text says that they were “indignant.” The word means “incensed, offended, irate, ticked off.”

Why? Was it righteous indignation? Were they upset because the brothers had brought Jesus a foolish, even sinful request? I don't think so. Why then? The other ten men were upset because the two brothers asked for something they wanted too. *For themselves*. They too wanted the highest place.

It's worth noting that in the previous chapter we find these twelve men arguing about a topic. Remember what it was? According to Mark 9:34, "On the way they had argued with one another about *who was the greatest*." And Jesus proceeded to teach them about servanthood. Apparently, they didn't get the message.

Yes, the reason the ten could so easily spot pride in their partners is because pride lurked in their own hearts. J. D. Jones offers an important insight:

"It takes a conceited man to spot conceit in another; it takes a passionate man to detect bad temper in another; it takes a jealous man to discover jealousy in another. And so these ambitious disciples were quick to discover the ambitiousness of James and John, and were correspondingly irritated by it."<sup>2</sup>

Far too often we have a stain-glass view of the apostles. We think they were made of different "stuff" than we are, that somehow living for Christ came easier to them than it does for us, that they didn't have the kinds of sinful hearts that plague us. That's not true, not at all. The truth is, they were *just like us* and the Scriptures go out of their way to make that plain.

The story is told that a painter did a portrait of Oliver Cromwell. Cromwell had warts on his face, but thinking it would please him, the painter didn't include the warts in his painting. When Cromwell saw it, he said, "Take it away! And paint me warts and all!"<sup>3</sup>

We're seeing some warts this morning, the warts of selfish ambition and pride on the faces of our forefathers. We're seeing that the men to whom we owe our existence, the first preachers of the glorious gospel, thinking of their own agendas. It's not a pretty sight, but we must see it. And this too we must see.

So let's take a look in the mirror. Do we see any warts? Let's be honest with ourselves. Whose agenda mattered most to us this past week? Perhaps the best way to answer that question is by answering a follow-up question.

What made me angry this past week? Anger is a powerful revealer. Anger itself is not sinful. It is a God-given emotion that generates energy for dealing with problems. But anger kicks in when I perceive that there is a problem.

So did I become angry any time this past week? Did you? Sure, we all did. We all became irritated, or tense, or blew up, or clammed up. At what?

What made me angry? It's not what was happening to me, or around me, but *within* me. It's what I was wanting.

So nothing *makes* me angry. My anger comes from within.

My anger is a revealer. It may reveal that I'm disturbed because God is not receiving what He desires and deserves. That's Jesus in the temple courts, angry, turning over tables. But that's not me most of the time. I'm angry because I'm not receiving what I desire and think I deserve.

I get upset when other people get what I want. The recognition I want. The appreciation. The approval. Here's the bottom line. I have a heart in which an agenda competition is taking place and my anger is showing which agenda I am giving priority.

---

<sup>2</sup> J. D. Jones, p. 380.

<sup>3</sup> As told by William Barclay, p. 253.

Can you relate? You say, “Yes, that’s me too. What needs to happen?” Jesus tells us in verses 42-45. Point one, Jesus has an agenda. Point two, we have agendas.

### III. Jesus calls us change agendas (42-45).

How do we do that? The change involves three responsibilities, each made possible, not by our strength, but by the grace of the One who is speaking these words to us. This is vital to see. We’re about to hear from Jesus what we must do, and it will be convicting. But what He commands, He makes possible, by His grace.

**A. We must reject the world’s agenda (42).** “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 ones exercise authority over them.’”

You *know*, He says. Indeed, they knew, and so do we. We know how agendas work in the world. We know that the people with the most power get what they want, that they use their authority to force their agendas upon others. It’s the top-down approach.

According to the world’s agenda...

1. *To be successful is to be **over** people.* Note Jesus’ emphasis on the word **OVER** here. In the world successful leaders are those who lord it *over* their subjects, who exercise authority *over* them. As far as the world’s thinking goes...

2. *You exist for me.* If you invade my space when I’m driving, I get angry at you. If you get the job that I want, I resent you, and undermine your success, if possible.. If I’m a leader and you are under my authority, I expect you to advance my cause because *you exist for me.*

So it is in the world. We all know that. We also all tend to *do* that.

Now listen carefully to Jesus’ first words in verse 43. “But it shall *not be so* among you.” What happens out there, must not happen in here, in our church, in our families, in all the places where we do life. We must flat out reject the world’s agenda. The world’s agenda of success must go. It must have no place in the minds of the followers of Jesus Christ.

Let’s be honest. Every conflict that has ever occurred in Wheelersburg Baptist Church’s 145 year history took place because there were competing agendas. Every conflict that’s every happened behind the four walls of my house and yours happened for the same reason. People don’t fight when they’re living for the same agenda. Church members don’t fight. Husbands and wives don’t fight. People at work don’t fight. Fights occur when a united agenda is lost, when people are not pursuing the same thing.

And what is this *same thing* that we are called to pursue? It’s the second responsibility that our Savior both commands, and makes possible.

**B. We must adopt God’s agenda (43-44).** “But it shall *not be so* among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant,<sup>44</sup> and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.”

It’s interesting that Jesus doesn’t say, “You want to be great, and first? Stop it! You shouldn’t want that.” But no. He doesn’t chasten His followers for desiring greatness. Instead He corrects the path they’re choosing to achieve it, and the recipient of it.

Whoever wants to be *great*, and *first*, must take the posture of a *servant*, and of a *slave*. Jesus uses two words. *Diakonos*. And *doulos*. A *diakonos* is someone who is obligated to perform duties for another. A *doulos* is someone who is the property of another. This is the path to greatness, says Jesus. Become a servant, a slave in fact. Of



whom? Of each other. This is the greatness I want you to seek, not your own, but that of each other.

This is so contrary to human nature. And so vital too, if we want our lives to count. According to Jesus...

1. *To be successful is to serve.* In the world, you measure success by how many people are *under* you in the chain of command, right? Not according to Jesus. In His kingdom, He measures success by how many people we are serving, to advance His purposes. He says we are to use our positions (and possessions and everything else we have) for the good of others.

The world says that you exist for me. To the contrary, says King Jesus. This is true greatness, this mindset.

2. *I exist for God and you.* This is not my world, and because God has graciously opened my eyes to this reality, I freely admit it. And I live in light of it too. This is My Father's world. And He calls me to love Him with all of my heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. This is God's agenda. And this, says the Savior, must be our agenda.

Which is another of a thousand reasons why we need to put our total trust in Jesus. Not just to save us from sin's penalty, which He will do if we humbly ask Him. But also to save us from sin's stubborn power too.

Here's reality. Jesus calls us to change agendas, but we lack the power. Case in point? How many times have you said, "I'm not going to let it get to me this time"? And then in the next moment comes the outburst.

So does Jesus just zap us? Is that how we change agendas? No. There is no zap. How then? According to Jesus, it starts in our prayer closet. What are we to say when we pray? He said to pray like this.

"Our Father, cause Your name to be hallowed. Cause Your kingdom to come, cause Your will to be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Those three requests have to do with our agenda. Whose agenda should matter in the life of a child of God?

Oh yes, you can tell what's on a person's heart by what they pray. Allow me to illustrate with two prayers.

Prayer #1: "Father, please give me a better job. And heal my body too, the pain is killing me. And can you do something about my neighbors? They're driving me crazy."

Now contrast that prayer with this one: "Father, my job is hard but please help me to honor You there. My body aches, but help others to see You in the way I respond to my pain. And my neighbors do offensive things, but enable me to model Your unfailing love to them."

Which of the above prayers comes from a heart that's gripped by God's agenda? The second, for sure. When we have our agenda in mind, we tend to view God as a cosmic bell-hop. But when we're thinking rightly about Him and His agenda, the continual cry from our prayer closet will be, "Oh Father, cause *Your name* to be hallowed, and *Your kingdom* to come, and *Your will* to be done, on earth (and especially in my life) as it is in heaven."

Every day we make dozens of decisions, and every decision reflects the agenda that is controlling our hearts. So, every day we must choose to reject the world's agenda and adopt God's agenda, enabled by the sufficient stream of grace He sends our way in Christ.

And this brings us to what many believe is the most important verse, the theme verse, in Mark's gospel. This is the basis of our calling, of our agenda.

**C. We must delight in doing what Jesus did (45).** Verse 45 says, "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

What did Jesus do? We learn two beautiful things about our Savior here.

1. *He came to serve others by dying for them.* He didn't come to get, but to give. What He gave was His very life, and He gave His life as a ransom payment.

Why a ransom payment? Because, due to Adam's sin and our own, we all enter this world in captivity. But Jesus came to set captives free. God's agenda was that His Son become a ransom payment. And He did. The Beautiful One paid the ransom payment for the sinful ones. What should have happened to the sinful ones happened to Him. What they deserved, what *we* deserve, He took upon Himself. He took the place of sinners. He died as their substitute.

Who benefits from His ransom payment? Those who admit their need, repent of their sins, and put their trust in Him.

My friend, if you will call on Jesus the Christ today, He will set you free! As He has done for so many of us in this room. But please know this.

2. *He sets us free so we too can serve.* The first two words of verse 45 make this clear, "For even..." If Jesus' agenda was to serve, can ours be less? No. He liberates us so we can follow in His steps.

So let's all ask ourselves a very personal question.

Application: Is The Servant's agenda my agenda?

We are not our own. If we know Christ, we have been bought with a price and therefore have a new agenda, a call to serve God and others.

**Closing Song:** #453 "*I Gave My Life for Thee*" (all four verses)

**Benediction of the month:** Revelation 22:21 (ESV) – children singing

Community Group Discussion:

1. In Mark 10:32-45, The Servant talks to His servants about competing agendas. What is an agenda? Are agendas a good thing? When are they not so good? What causes competing agendas?

2. After reading today's passage again, discuss this question together. What do we learn about Jesus' agenda, particularly in verses 32-34?

3. What do you think about James and John in verses 35-41? What was their agenda? How did Jesus respond to their agenda? How did the other disciples respond in verse 41?

4. What does Jesus say to us about our agendas, in verses 42-45? Look carefully at that passage, and list as many insights as you can find.

5. We all struggle with competing agendas. Why? How will our lives be different this week if we implement what we have just learned from Jesus? Give some concrete examples. Then pray for His grace to put it into practice.