

September 16, 2012 by Steve Brandon



Jesus, Our Servant

Mark 10:32-52

1. He Suffered for us (verses 32-34)
2. He Endures with us (verses 35-40)
3. He Teaches us (verses 41-45)
4. He Takes Time for us (verses 46-52)

This past year, the gospel of Mark has been the object of our attention at Rock Valley Bible Church. The main message of the book is two-fold. First of all, Jesus Christ has come as a servant. He came to teach us. He came to heal us. He came to help us. Second, Jesus Christ has come as a savior. As a servant, Jesus came to give us His life. He came to redeem us. He came to ransom our souls.

A good way to combine this message might be with the simple phrase, "Jesus is the servant who saves." And in no other portion of the book of Mark do we see Jesus as a servant more clearly than we do in the passage that is before us this morning. Appropriately, I have entitled my message this morning, "Jesus, Our Servant."

As we read the text, I want for you to look at ways in which Jesus demonstrates the heart of a servant.

Mark 10:32-52

They were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking on ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were fearful. And again He took the twelve aside and began to tell them what was going to happen to Him, saying, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles. They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill Him, and three days later He will rise again."

James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, came up to Jesus, saying, "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?" They said to Him, "Grant that we may sit, one on Your right and one on Your left, in Your glory." But 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?" They said to Him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized. But to sit on My right or on My left, this is not Mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."

Hearing this, the ten began to feel indignant with James and John. Calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Then they came to Jericho. And as He was leaving Jericho with His disciples and a large crowd, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the road. When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Many were sternly telling him to be quiet, but he kept crying out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him here." So they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take courage, stand up! He is calling for you." Throwing aside his cloak, he jumped up and came to Jesus. And answering him, Jesus said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" And the blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, I want to regain my sight!" And Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and began following Him on the road.

Do you see the repeated question that Jesus asks? When the disciples came up and asked Jesus to do something for them, Jesus said to them (in verse 36), "What do you want Me to do for you?" When the blind man came to Jesus, crying for mercy, Jesus said to him (in verse 52), "What do you want Me to do for you?" That is the heart of a servant. The servant asks, "What do you want Me to do for you?" And then, the servant acts upon the request.

This is what employees in retail ask. You wander through a store; an employee sees you; the employee approaches you and says, "Can I help you?" That's another way of saying, "What do you want me to do for you?"

This is what a waitress might say. You are seated at your table; you have ordered your food; your food has come and you are eating; your waitress approaches your table says, "How's the food? Do you need anything more?" That's another way of saying, "What do you want me to do for you?"

And Jesus asks this question on two occasions, "What do you want me to do for you?" (verses 36, 52). Jesus shows His heart as a servant.

Jesus came to serve. This is explicitly what Jesus says in verse 45: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

This is the whole purpose of why Jesus came. He came to die and redeem us from our sins. This is Mark's message from the very first verse: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (1:1). The gospel is the good news. And the good news is this: Jesus has come into the flesh and walked among us. That Jesus suffered on the cross for our sins. That Jesus was raised again for our justification (Romans 4:25).

And this is exactly what we see in my first point. Jesus is our servant.

1. He Suffered for us (verses 32-34)

Mark 10:32-34

They were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking on ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were fearful. And again He took the twelve aside and began to tell them what was going to happen to Him, saying, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles. They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill Him, and three days later He will rise again."

Here we see Jesus and His disciples going up to Jerusalem. Jesus spent the final days of his ministry serving the people in Perea, beyond the Jordan. But now, they head to Jerusalem, crossing the Jordan river, passing through Jericho (verse 46), and up the road to Jerusalem. This is a 20 mile walk, ascending almost 3500 feet in altitude.

The Passover was near, and Jesus was soon to die. The disciples knew that His end was near. Ever since they took a retreat up north into Caesarea Philippi, they knew that His days were numbered. They knew that Jesus was going to suffer many things and eventually be killed (Mark 8:31; 9:31). This is the first time in Mark's gospel that Jesus ties Jerusalem as the location of his death. It's only appropriate for Jesus to die there. For it was the city that, "kills the prophets and stones those that are sent to her" (Matt. 23:37).

As He's walking with His disciples, Jesus isn't being dragged into the city, as if He really didn't want to get to the city. He wasn't the little child, screaming and kicking in protest of going to the dentist's office. He wasn't the manager of a business, reluctantly telling an employ that he was being laid off. On the contrary, Jesus was eager and willing to enter the city.

If you look carefully at the text, you find out that if anything Jesus was dragging His disciples into the city. "Jesus was walking on ahead of them" (verse 32). There was a skip in His step. He was eager to accomplish this work in Jerusalem. When you think about this for a bit of time, you will be astonished. Jesus was the One who was on His way to the execution chamber, while His disciples were merely going to watch. But, it was Jesus who led the way, while His disciples were hesitant, and lagged behind.

We read in verse 32 that His disciples were "amazed" and "fearful" (verse 32). I'm sure that Jesus detected their apprehension about their trip into Jerusalem, which is why he "took the twelve aside ... to tell them what was going to happen to Him" (verse 32). He said, ...

Mark 10:33-34

... "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles. They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill Him, and three days later He will rise again."

This is the fourth time that Jesus predicted His death and resurrection to His disciples. The first time came in Mark 8:31, shortly after Peter's confession that Jesus was the Christ.

Mark 8:31

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.

The second time came in Mark 9:9-13, shortly after Jesus was transfigured on the mountain.

Mark 9:9

As they were coming down from the mountain, He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man rose from the dead.

In verse 12, Jesus mentioned how "[it is] written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt" before His death. The third time came in Mark 9:31, shortly after casting the demon out of the boy, which the disciples were unable to do.

Mark 9:31

For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later."

The fourth time comes in our text: chapter 10, verses 32-34. And each time that Jesus gave such a prediction, the disciples were confused.

After Jesus first revealed what would happen to him, "Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him" (Mark 8:32). "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You" (Matt. 16:22). To which Jesus said, "Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interest, but man's" (Mark 8:34). After the transfiguration, the disciples "were discussing with one another what rising from the dead meant" (Mark 9:10). They didn't really understand what the resurrection meant. After casting the demon out of the boy, the disciples "did not understand [the] statement [that Jesus made], and they were afraid to ask Him" (Mark 9:32). Even after four times, the disciples still didn't understand.

But, Jesus knew what was taking place. The sufferings of Christ didn't come by accident. Jesus knew full well what was about to take place when He arrived in Jerusalem. It meant His death. He didn't die in Jerusalem as the result of a political ploy gone astray. He wasn't crucified in Jerusalem due to poor timing for His revolution. He wasn't caught in some unforeseen turn of circumstances. Rather, His death was according to the predestined will of God, as revealed in the Scriptures. In fact, when Luke records Jesus' words here, we hear Jesus say, ...

Luke 18:31-33

"Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and *all things which are written* through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished. For He will be handed over to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon, and after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and the third day He will rise again.

And in this way, Jesus was serving us by suffering for us. See, His death upon the cross was for us. It was for our sins.

Paul said, "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). Christ died for our sins. His suffering was for us. He died, in our place, so that we might live.

And this wasn't easy. He wasn't in it for Himself. But, it was His role as our servant, which Jesus willingly faced. He Suffered for us (verses 32-34).

Here's my second point, ...

2. He Endures with us (verses 35-40)

I get this point from the interaction that Jesus had with James and John. They come up to Jesus and ask Him a ridiculous question. Furthermore, they make an outlandish claim. Yet, through it all, Jesus patiently endures with His disciples. Because Jesus didn't come to dominate His disciples. He came to serve them. Thus, He will be patient with them, enduring through their foolish ways.

How different this is than a king. When a servant displeases a king, the servant will soon lose his position, and possibly his life.

Do you remember when "Pharaoh was furious with his two officials, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker?" (Gen. 40:2). He imprisoned them and "put them in confinement" (Gen. 40:3). The baker lost his head (Gen. 40:22). He was hanged!

But, things are different with Jesus. When His disciples are foolish. He endures with our weaknesses. He is patient with our weaknesses. And thereby, He demonstrates that He is here to serve us and help us through our weaknesses. Catch the dialogue, beginning in verse 35, ...

Mark 10:35

James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, came up to Jesus, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask of You."

That's a childish statement. Isn't this the sort of thing that children ask of you? They want for you to agree before you know what it is that you are agreeing to. Perhaps they were wanting to hear from Jesus what Herod said to the dancer who pleased him, "Whatever you ask of me, I will give it to you; up to half of my kingdom" (Mark 6:23). But, Jesus was wiser than Herod. Jesus could sense their manipulation. He sensed it in the religious leaders, who often questioned Him (Mark 2:8). Jesus sensed it also in these disciples. Jesus ignores their foolish tactic and gets down to their request, ...

Mark 10:36

And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

Jesus isn't into playing games. He's simply trying to get down to business with this question. Without promising anything, Jesus simply asked,

Mark 10:36

"What do you want Me to do for you?"

In this question, Jesus gives hope. He is willing to help them. He does have the heart of a servant. "What do you want me to do for you?"

Mark 10:37

They said to Him, "Grant that we may sit, one on Your right and one on Your left, in Your glory."

The magnitude of their question was enormous. It's like they were asking to be vice-president of a Fortune 500 company, because they were friends with the president and CEO. It's like they were asking the president of the United States for a place on His cabinet of advisors, but far

greater. Seated at the right and left of Jesus, would allow James and John to advise Jesus on how He should reign over His eternal kingdom!

Now, it's no accident that James and John were the ones asking this question. They (along with Peter) were privileged to see Jesus in His glory on the mount of transfiguration (Mark 9). They witnessed the glory of Christ. And they wanted the best seats!

These two men didn't know that their request was quite ridiculous. God's kingdom doesn't work on the basis of political favors and appointments. In God's kingdom, it's not, "I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine."

But, God's kingdom does have its way to the top. In God's kingdom, the way up is down. This is the way that it has always been for God's servants. Before Moses was able to lead the people out of slavery from Egypt, he first had to wait 40 years in Midian, pondering his choice "to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin" (Hebrews 11:25). Before David was able to rise to the throne, he had to endure the constant attacks of the jealous king (1 Sam. 17-31). When the apostle Paul was used so mightily, God struck him with a thorn in the flesh that tormented him, "to keep [him] from exalting [himself]" (2 Cor. 12:7).

The reason why Jesus is so high and exalted in the kingdom is precisely because of how low and shameful was His death. This is the teaching of Philippians 2:6-11:

Philippians 2:6-11

who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The reason why Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God, with a name that is above every name (Phil. 2:9), to whom every knee will bow someday (Phil. 2:10), with which every tongue will confess (Phil. 2:11), is precisely because He humbled Himself so greatly. Philippians 2:9 says that it was Christ's great condescension from such lofty heights that enabled Him to be exalted so highly. He's the greatest creature in the Universe! He went to the depths of humanity - to death, even death on a cross. "For this reason," God highly exalted Him (Phil. 2:9).

Do you want to sit at the right and the left of Jesus? Then, you need to experience the depths of suffering that Jesus experienced. One commentator said it well, "A request for glory is a request for suffering." [\[1\]](#)

This is what Jesus was getting at in verse 38, when He asked James and John, ...

Mark 10:38

But 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?"

I want for you to notice how gently Jesus bears with these disciples. The mere fact that Jesus didn't instantly laugh at them is a sign of His grace to them. Instead, He asked them a question, trying for them to see the error of their ways. "Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" (verse 38).

With these words, Jesus is alluding to His upcoming death. This is the terminology that Jesus would use in the garden in His despair, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will" (Mark 14:35). The baptism that He referred to was His immersion in sorrow and difficulty that would soon come upon Him. Drinking the cup was the active obedience of Jesus, that actively took the suffering upon Himself. Being baptized was the passive obedience of Jesus that willingly received the immersion into His sufferings upon the cross.

He brought both of these things to the attention of His disciples. Can you drink the cup? Can you be baptized into suffering? If you want glory, these things are necessary. Remember, "A request for glory is a request for suffering." With a clueless confidence, James and John said, ...

Mark 10:39

"We are able."

And still, Jesus was patient with them. He didn't laugh at them. Instead, Jesus said, "OK, You'll get the suffering. But, I cannot promise your seat of influence in the kingdom." His precise words are found in verses 39 and 40.

Mark 10:39-40

... "The cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized. But to sit on My right or on My left, this is not Mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."

With these words, Jesus puts James and John back to where they need to be. They were seeking for status, and Jesus gave them suffering. But, in giving them suffering, He gave them the path to status they so eagerly desired.

James and John suffered mightily. James was the second martyr in the church. Stephen, the first martyr, was killed by the Jewish mob in

Jerusalem as recorded in Acts 7. In Acts 12:2, we read of how James "was put to death with a sword" (Acts 12:2). This took place less than 10 years after this conversation took place. John spent his final years in exile on the island of Patmos, as a prisoner, due to his faithfulness to "the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. 1:9). When you think, "island," don't think Hawaii or Tahiti. Rather, think Alcatraz. Patmos wasn't a pleasant place to be. It was hot and rocky and uncomfortable. James and John drank from the cup of suffering.

In the end, they obtained a measure of status. In the New Jerusalem, the names of these two men will be inscribed upon two of the twelve foundation stones of the city (Rev. 21:14). Other than that, we don't know if they have any other position of prominence will be granted to them in the kingdom. We don't know if they ever obtained the status they were looking for. Oh, I suppose that someday we will know, when we see the throne of God. We simply need to take our eyes off of Jesus momentarily (if that is even possible), and look to His right and to His left, to see if James and John are seated there. My guess is that nobody will be seated there, as God has declared, "I will not give My glory to another" (Isaiah 42:8).

Let's look at my third point, ...

3. He Teaches us (verses 41-45)

In verses 42 through 45 we see Jesus teaching us about what it means to be a servant. It is all set up by the comment we read in verse 41, ...

Mark 10:41

Hearing this, the ten began to feel indignant with James and John.

James and John weren't the only ones wanting the glory. They were simply crafty enough to think up the idea of asking Jesus for the glory. They were also bold enough to actually ask him. And the other ten disciples were angry with them.

There may have been feelings of betrayal. There may have been feelings of jealousy. There may have been feelings of broken trust. They had discussed before about who was the greatest (9:34); but, now, James and John were taking opportunity to secure their point, to insure that they would be the greatest.

At this point of the conversation, Jesus sensed the need to go over these things one more time. He "[Called] them to Himself" (verse 42). Almost as if He said, "OK guys. You don't quite have it. Let me talk to you about the way to be great." And then, Jesus teaches about servanthood, ...

Mark 10:42-45

... "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Jesus had already had a similar conversation with His disciples. Back in Mark 9:35, He sat the twelve disciples down for a little chat after He discovered that they had been arguing over who had been the greatest. He told them here, "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all" (Mark 9:35). This is almost the exact same thing that Jesus said in here in Mark 10:44, "whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all." It's like they can't get it through their thick skulls. They need to be told several times!

I can understand that. This is a difficult lesson to learn. It's counterintuitive. Everything within us thinks the opposite. We think that the way to prominence is the front of the line. We think that the way to be first is to assert ourselves to be first. But, this is simply the way of the world.

There is a way that the world seeks to lead. And there is a way that God wants for us to lead. The world leads by "looking out for number 1." If somebody doesn't do exactly as you say, you can simply raise your voice and show your anger in an effort to intimidate the person to do as you want. In the workplace, bosses use their authority to squeeze their employees to do what is required of them. People in the world are boastful and arrogant and use whatever is in their power to get their own way, and thereby move up the ranks in power. And it often works.

But, there are times when it back-fires. Perhaps you remember the time in which Solomon died. The kingdom passed to his son, Rehoboam. Though he received the counsel from the elders of the land to "lighten the yoke which Solomon put on [the people]" (1 Kings 12:9), Rehoboam sought to "lord it over them." He told the people, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions" (1 Kings 12:14). The result was that he actually lost his ability to lead the people. Ten of the twelve tribes revolted under his leadership and began to follow the leadership of Jeroboam. The nation was split in two.

This is how the world often leads -- with power and intimidation. But, Jesus says the opposite. In verse 43, Jesus says, "But it is not this way among you." The manner of God's people needs to be different.

Rather than leveraging authority, God's leaders are to be servants (verse 43). God's people are to be slaves of all (verse 44). The greatest spiritual leaders will be the greatest of servants.

That's the teaching of verses 43-44, "Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all." Notice, there is no hint here of any discouragement on the part of Jesus to keep us away from seeking spiritual greatness. It's a totally appropriate desire. The exhortation, however, has to do with the manner in which greatness is sought. Greatness is sought through sacrificial, selfless service.

Yvonne and I celebrated our 10th wedding anniversary by going on a cruise to Alaska. Our trip was given to us as an anniversary present by her parents. For those of you who have been on a cruise, you know that the entire deal is set up so that you feel pampered. They want your stay upon the ship to be a time of utter relaxation. Crew members are aboard the ship to help you with anything that you need. When you arrive, you leave your luggage at the door, with a tag. As you wander around the ship, you will find that your luggage has been delivered by a porter to your room. You can eat as much food as you want to eat. Chefs are waiting for you to make a special request, so that they can serve your food to you just as you want it served. Every night, we enjoyed a six-course meal. The waiters would fix the food any way that we wanted it. They were eager to get it right. Your cabin is meticulously cleaned every day. In fact, I remember coming into our room at night, after our evening activities, and our bed was always made perfectly. The sheets were drawn without a wrinkle. Each night, there was often a little piece of chocolate, set upon the pillow.

If Jesus had come along on our cruise, He may well have asked us the question, "Do you know who the greatest person on this ship is? It's not any of the guests who have the means to enjoy the cruise. No, it's the laborer down in the hull, who works 18 hours a day, cleaning dishes and washing clothes for \$20/day. That's true greatness."

This is God's way. The way up is down. It's the poor in spirit, who are rich in the kingdom. It's those who mourn who will be happy. It's those who hunger and thirst who will be satisfied. It's the persecuted who will be blessed. "The broken heart is the healed heart, ... the contrite spirit is the rejoicing spirit, ... the repenting soul is the victorious soul, ... to have nothing is to possess all, ... to bear the cross is to wear the crown, ... to give is to receive." [\[2\]](#)

Peter learned this lesson. When he was counseling the spiritual leaders in the scattered, persecuted churches, he told them to, "shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock" (1 Peter. 5:2-3). Effective spiritual leaders are those who demonstrate their heart for people by loving them and serving them. That's how you influence people for the kingdom of God.

And Jesus showed us the way. He said, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). It's not merely that Jesus told His disciples what to do. Rather, He demonstrated His teaching by example.

The Lord of the universe didn't come among us to enjoy the pleasures of this life, tanning on the beaches of Hawaii, living a life of luxury, being served by crew members of a cruise ship. When Jesus came to earth, He came as a servant. He was a servant in His life. He was a servant in His death. He didn't tell us, "Do as I say and not as I do." Rather, He said, "Do as I do. Follow My example."

I have told you before and I will tell you again of the constant ring of the words of my father. "Steve, I will never ask you to do something that I haven't done first, or that I'm not willing to do." Jesus is similar. He does not ask you to do anything that He hasn't done first, or that He was not willing to do.

All that He did upon the earth was focused upon helping others. He healed the sick. He cast out demons. He made the blind to see. He made the lame to walk. He made the deaf to hear. Nobody ever left the presence of Jesus with a disease that wasn't cured. He healed "all diseases and all sicknesses among the people" (Matt. 4:23).

On the night in which Jesus was betrayed, He gave a great example to His disciples of His life as a servant. In the upper room, with His disciples all around Him, Jesus, "got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. Then, He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded" (John 13:4-5).

This was the lowest task that Jesus could have done in that day. Washing one another's feet was reserved only for slaves of the house. But, Jesus wanted to serve His disciples in this way. He explained what He did, saying, ...

John 13:12-17

So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

The admonition comes straight to us, "you are blessed if you do them." Whether it's a leader in the church or whether it is faithful father or little girl who loves Christ, we are all called to be servants of one another. But, this especially applies to leaders in the church. Spiritual leaders need to be "servant leaders."

Not only was Jesus a servant in His life, but also in His death. In dying for our sins, Jesus demonstrated how He was the ultimate servant. He died to redeem His people from their sins. "He gave His life a ransom for many."

When you hear the word, "ransom," you often think of a kidnapper, who has taken a person hostage, demanding a price for the release of this individual. In a very real way, our sins have held us hostage. To be freed from our sins, we needed someone to pay the ransom price. This is what Jesus did upon the cross. His blood freed us from our sins! His blood redeemed us from the penalty of death! It is through His death that we are now free to serve! Such is the teaching of Jesus.

I have one final point this morning, ...
4. He Takes Time for us (verses 46-52)

One of the most difficult things for a busy person to do is to take time for other people. You have so many things going on. You have so many things to do. To take a moment of time with someone distracts from the very things you are trying to accomplish. And yet, doing so puts forth a heart of a servant. And this is exactly what Jesus does for this blind man.

Mark 10:46

Then they came to Jericho. And as He was leaving Jericho with His disciples and a large crowd, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the road.

Picture the scene -- crowds all around, pressing in upon Him. Jesus is on a quest. He's leading His disciples on the road up to Jerusalem (verse 32). Timing is of the essence. He wants to enter the city on Palm Sunday. And yet, there is a distraction -- a blind beggar named Bartimaeus. Good ole' "blind Bart."

Mark 10:47-48

When [Bart] heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Many were sternly telling him to be quiet, but he kept crying out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Surely, Bartimaeus had heard of Jesus before. Surely, he had heard of what Jesus had done all around the land of Palestine. This was his one opportunity. He wasn't going to let it pass. He cried out for mercy, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (verse 47). Even when the crowds were trying to quiet him down, he cried out, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" (verse 48). This was his repeated cry. Verse 48 says that "he kept crying out." This is an imperfect tense, which shows continual action.

How many times do you think he cried for mercy? Three times? Ten times? Twenty times? We don't know. But, we do know that he cried for mercy enough times to get the attention of Jesus. And Jesus shows the heart of a servant and takes the time to help him.

Mark 10:49-50

And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him here." So they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take courage, stand up! He is calling for you." Throwing aside his cloak, he jumped up and came to Jesus.

There it is. Jesus, Our Servant, taking time with this blind man. This man was certainly not the most beautiful of men. He was a beggar. He was probably clothed in rags. He probably was unkempt. That's the way a beggar gets mercy -- the more pitiful you look, the more money you can expect to receive. Jesus asks him the question of a servant, ...

Mark 10:51

And answering him, Jesus said, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

Jesus is willing to come and help this man. Jesus wants to know what this man wants.

Mark 10:51-52

... And the blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, I want to regain my sight!" And Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and began following Him on the road.

Jesus takes the time to help this man. Notice what was true about this man. He believed that Jesus had the power to heal him. His request demonstrated this. He asked Jesus for sight. And he was willing to follow Jesus (verse 52).

What a great picture of salvation. This man knew his need (he was blind). This man knew who could help him with his need (Jesus). This man was pleading the mercy of Jesus (verses 47, 48). This man was willing to do whatever it took to gain his sight (verse 48). This man professed his belief that Jesus could heal him (verse 51). This man was healed by his faith (verse 52). This man followed Jesus immediately (verse 52).

This is how we come to Jesus. We see our need (i.e. forgiveness of our sin). We see that Jesus is the only one who can forgive our sin. We plead His mercy. We are unashamed of trusting in Jesus to forgive. We profess our faith in Jesus. Through faith we are healed. We willingly follow Jesus, Our Servant. Are you following Him?

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on September 16, 2012 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] William Hendriksen, New Testament Commentary, Exposition of the Gospel According to Mark, p. 411.

[2] Taken from a prayer in "The Valley of Vision" - from the introduction to the book.