

SEEKING GOD'S GLORY

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Mark 10:35-45

"Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him [Jesus], saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask." And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?" They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able." So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared."

And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first 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."

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What is generally regarded as the main point in this dialogue, between Jesus and His disciples, is that if a person desires to be great in the kingdom of God one must ultimately be the greatest servant. While that is definitely true, for some of you, no doubt, your main concern may just be in overcoming in this life so as to inherit eternal life as promised, to all those who believe on and receive Christ Jesus by being, as Jesus described it, "born-again". Just as the Apostle John tells us, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (**John 1:12-13**)

"I don't care about being great", you may say, "I just want to make it!" To heaven right, eternal life, where God promises those who do "make it", that is, those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life? As God promises us in His Word, "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me [the Apostle John], "Write, for these words are true and faithful." (**Revelation 21:4-5**) Yet for those who say that they just want to get there, but also for those who may aspire to more than just making it, maybe by having the mindset that you just

want to be right with God (ah, now we're on the right track!), we are all called to the same commandments put forth by Christ Jesus, as children of God. The Apostle John says it like this, "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son." (2 John 1:9) That word "doctrine" is the Greek word "didache" (did-ahk-ay), which basically means "instruction, or what has been taught". Where we are going with this message is from our title today, "Seeking the Glory of God", which as you may recognize, is contrary to the selfish ambitions of man. We'll be delving into the doctrine or teachings of Christ Jesus where we find that is where God is leading us, as He alone is the Creator of all things and HE IS the King of kings. He promises us a great reward and blessing as His child but yeah, praise God from whom all blessings flow! "And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!" (Revelation 5:13)

The process begins though, of being a child of God, as we believe on and then receive Christ. In responding to Judas (not Iscariot), who had asked, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" (John 14:22) "Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him." (John 14:23) That sounds like believing on and receiving Christ, being born-again and becoming a child of God, doesn't it? It also speaks to the call of repentance, just as Jesus Himself preached, that word metaneo, to recognize a need for change and to then heed to that need for change, looking unto Jesus for His Righteousness, to make us "right with God".

God is not trying to just populate heaven with a bunch of people that would just run amok and just do whatever they wanted to do. He is also not JUST trying to fill up the Book of Life with a bunch of names. He is finding those who will love Him as He has demonstrated first His love for us. (1 John 4:19) "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (John 3:16-17) He really is determining then who wants to be a child of God and then also to live in His Righteousness, and really His perfection as that is who HE IS. He is perfect in all His Ways (2 Samuel 22:31) and His Works (Deuteronomy 32:4). Then, through those who have believed on and received Christ, HE IS manifested to the world, that is, through those who keep His Word, as we are HIS WORKMANSHIP. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not

of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (**Ephesians 2:8-10**) Paul could have concluded, as he did elsewhere in his writings, "all to the glory of God". (**Ephesians 2:7, 1 Corinthians 1:31**)

The Apostle Paul then, or any of the writings of the Apostles, or teachings of Jesus, are not saying that we are saved by our works, but that we give evidence to our being saved by following the doctrine, or teachings of Christ. What is that doctrine? It can be summed up in what Jesus said was the great commandment and the second that is like unto it. We are expected by God, as His children, to love Him with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and then also to love our neighbor as ourselves. (**Mark 12:30-31**) In Matthew's account of Jesus saying that, Jesus concluded by saying, "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (**Matthew 22:40**) Not only that, but if we are loving God with all that is in us and loving others as God loves them, we will be getting to know God (spending time in His Word and in prayer, that is, for ourselves as well as for others), trusting Him (as after all, He is perfect in all of His ways and works, of which we are His workmanship), and then also honor Him as our the one and only True God, as our Lord (He's in charge), and as our beloved Savior, and then also as our Heavenly Father. We will also then be bearing the fruit of the Spirit, that works in us as children of God, of "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." (**Galatians 5:22-23**) AND, if that weren't enough blessings for one person, through Christ we are living according to four essential things that come from God that Paul mentioned in **1 Corinthians 1:30**. In Christ we have Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption from God. In Christ we have a right standing with God in His Righteousness, to have a personal relationship with our Heavenly Father, we obtain the wisdom from God through His Word that is contrary to the wisdom of this world, we live in His Sanctification to where we are set apart in Christ's holiness, to where there will be a distinct difference to how we live our lives compared to the people of the world, and we are redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb, Christ Jesus.

The issue that Jesus faced with His disciples was that they were arguing amongst themselves about who would be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, right after Jesus told them that He would have to suffer and die but would rise again. While the underlying point that Jesus intended to make to His disciples seems to be about servanthood, yet there is much more to this bit of dialogue that we see from the second of the two paragraphs in this passage of Scripture which we will get to shortly. In knowing the doctrine of Christ Jesus, it leads us to first recognize that we are most specifically being led by Jesus, just as were the disciples, yet we are being led through

the working of the Holy Spirit, also referred to as the Spirit of Christ (**Romans 8**), by giving us guidance through His Word. Jesus stated, "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor." (**John 12:26**) Jesus is saying then that God will honor those who are serving Christ, and those who are serving Christ are being led by Him which of course includes following the doctrine of Christ.

The second paragraph then in our passage of Scripture in **Mark 10**, starts, "And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John." James and John, in seeking their own glory led to what? Division, dissention, their focus wasn't on the glory of God. If it was they probably would have responded to Jesus saying that He would suffer and die and then rise again. Jesus had JUST told them that He would have to suffer and die and then rise again and they were concerned about their own glory. For those who give Peter a rough time for denying Christ three times, consider that James and John (the one Jesus loved, according to John) hadn't quite gotten a complete understanding of what it all meant.

Knowing the doctrine, or teachings of Christ, leads us to not be seeking our glory but God's glory as we also are made aware of the fact that Jesus did only what His, and our, Heavenly Father told Him. As Jesus declared, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority. He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him." (**John 7:16-18**) That may bring to mind to you what Jesus prayed to God Almighty before He was to be crucified on a cross for our sins. "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." (**Matthew 26:39**) You ever pray that prayer? You of course aren't being led to die on a cross for all of mankind's sins, yet we all have circumstances we have to go through, and would rather take the long way around that, to get where we want to go.

Where are we intending to go? What is our ultimate goal? Is it only self-serving or to glorify God? Those questions fall in line with what Jesus said to Satan when that devil tried to tempt Him to worship him and that Satan would then give Jesus all of the kingdoms on earth (even though Jesus already possessed all the kingdoms on the earth). "And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him." (**Matthew 4:9-11**) Satan knew who he was talking to as he knew what the Apostle John says, at the

beginning of his gospel account of Christ Jesus. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." (**John 1:1-5**) By the Word of God, that is Christ Jesus, all things were made. How deluded to think one can deceive the Word of God, the Creator of all things, to worship the created. It wasn't Jesus' focus on His direction that guided Him, it was in adherence to the will of God that moved Him. That is our high calling in Christ Jesus-seeking the glory of God!

While I don't personally know of anyone of which that is their primary objective, praise the Lord, that is, to be great in the kingdom of God, or to attain greatness in the name of Christ, there are undoubtedly many that we are associated with in ministry that will be greatly rewarded for their unwavering devotion to Christ Jesus. Jesus is quoted 19 times, that I counted, in saying "follow me", as recorded in the four gospel accounts of the life of Jesus, in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. That should make perfect sense to us, in knowing the doctrine or teachings of Jesus. Jesus clearly stated, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (**John 14:6**) Not only is Jesus the one and only true Way, to everlasting life in God's eternal kingdom, He is also the Truth, and the Life. When Jesus was praying His final prayer before He was to be taken away to be eventually crucified, Jesus prayed "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth." (**John 17:16-19**) His Word is Truth!

That leads us once again to what the Apostle Paul told his spiritual son Timothy concerning the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures, of what we now refer to as our Holy Bible, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." While Jesus was specifically praying for His disciples, of which was comprised of more than just the faithful 11 that were closest to Him, Jesus continued His prayer saying, "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me." (**John 17:20-21**)

As the saying goes, there's us (sinner's saved by the grace of God) and then there is God Almighty, Creator of all things. But just as Satan tried to tempt Christ Jesus by promising Him all of the

kingdoms on earth if He would bow down and worship him, we also are promised the same in Christ Jesus. The Apostle Paul tells us, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God." (**Romans 8:16-19**) We don't have to be seeking our own glory. We will all be glorified together in Christ Jesus and as Jesus will inherit all things and we are joint-heirs with Jesus we don't have to set our mind on such things. We are told "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses [in the Word and in our lives], let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (**Hebrews 12:1-2**) As the Apostle Paul stated, "Let him (or her) who glories, glory in the Lord!" (**1 Corinthians 1:31**)