

Mark 10:32-52 | Discipleship From Above

Tyler Velin | March 26th, 2015

I love road trips. I remember when my wife and I first started dating how fun it was to take road trips with her. Because I got to have time with her by myself in a car and we could just talk.

We could talk about life, our relationship, the gospel, hobbies, likes and dislikes. It was a wonderful time.

This past weekend we took a road trip to the men's retreat we all got stuck listening to Darrin's death metal mix for five hours. So often times road trips can force to you encounter things which you are uncomfortable with too.

But in our text today we are going to see two big stories which happen on a road trip, but this trip is unique. Here is where they are going: **Mark 10:32-34**.

So Jesus and his crew are going to Jerusalem where he is going to die. Easter is next weekend and we are beginning the Easter component in the book of Mark. And what I love about road trips is that it gives you time to think, ponder and talk out different ideas or problems.

These two stories we are going to see are really seen well only in the shadow of what we just read. Jesus is going to the cross, he is going to die, and his mission is going to be carried on by those who follow him. And in this text we see his followers trying to understand what that means.

What we are going to see tonight is that **Following Christ requires a right view of Christ's victory, a right view of glory, and a right view of calling**. But first, let's pray.

So what we are going to see tonight is kind of two perspectives on discipleship, but inside those perspectives we are going to see three false views of what it means to follow Jesus.

This first story highlights the view and perspective of the Disciples, and this first section helps us understand what I call **Discipleship From Above**, because the disciples, as ignorant or foolish as they may seem in certain portions of Mark, are all true believers and followers. So this portrait captures what it means to follow Christ from above the spiritual poverty line. These are people who have the resources to see life differently even if those resources aren't always acted upon.

While on the road to Jerusalem, our story picks up. **Mark 10:35-40**.

One of my favorite movies growing up was a Bill Murray movie called, "The Spy Who Knew Too Little." In the movie Bill Murray is this bumbling awkward guy whose family has signed him up for this live play thing in London. The idea is that he would go to a phone booth and they would call him and he would then enter into the plot of this live action play as a participant.

But the twist happens when the phone booth he is waiting at is called by a spy organization and instead of entering a fake live action play, he starts off on a real life international espionage mission but he thinks he is still doing this fake play. He has no idea what is actually going on, he is just enjoying the ride.

James and John are living a similar life right now. This passage highlights their inability to grasp the weight and reality of what it really means to follow Christ. Even the way they approach Jesus shows that they really are clueless as to what is going on: "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you."

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Here James and John approach Jesus Christ. The one through whom and for whom all things were created. The beginning and the end. The alpha and the omega. The firstborn of all creation. The lion from the Tribe of Judah. The son of God himself. The one to whom all authority will be given and heaven on earth...and they say: "Do what we tell you to do."

This story reminds me of the grace God had in not allowing me to be God. Because I would have destroyed these two guys. But Jesus in his grace says, "What do you want me to do for you?" What a piercing question. What is it that you want the savior of the world to do for you?

Look back at the dialogue: **vs 37-40.**

This is the first wrong view of following Jesus: **Overly Triumphant.**

You see what James and John want is a kingdom now. And even after Jesus just predicted his death they still think that they are waiting for this earthly kingdom to appear suddenly. And they want to rule and reign with Christ. Why? Because they fail to see that Christ is altogether different from them.

They think they can drink the cup of Christ and bear the baptism of Christ. But only Christ can do that. Instead they think they have already reached the pinnacle, they can take it from here. They can take care of this task, they can run the kingdom. Have no fear, James and John are here!

I have a friend who works for the Oakland Raiders. She is some sort of media relations employee. And while she works for the Raiders, there is a big difference between her and the team's Owner. It would be foolish for her to think because she works for the Raiders that she is equal to the owner of the Raiders.

And yet we often see ourselves as fully sufficient in and of ourselves. The flaw of James and John's view of following Christ is that they failed to see the manner of the Kingdom. They lacked the right view of Christ's work. You see Jesus said to them that they will drink his cup and they will experience his baptism but it will not be because they accomplished it or earned it or worked hard to secure. They will receive these things because Christ will give them.

To have a view of following Jesus which is overly triumphant will ultimately lead to your burnout. It is a wrong expectation of life. You are not Christ. You will not experience your best life now. You will not meet unrivaled victories at every turn. You will not be seen as glorious in this existence. You will be disappointed at the cost of discipleship and you will eventually burn out. A victory is coming. Glory will be seen. But at that day it will not be you bathed in glory and honor, but the one who drank the cup of God's wrath in your stay.

This leads us into our second wrong view when looking at discipleship from above: **Position of Worldly Glory.**

Mark 10:41-45.

So after James and John speak to Jesus, the other 10 disciples become indignant, very angry towards James and John. Why? Probably a little bit because of the nerve of the two, but most likely because they want to be in that position of honor. What makes those two think they deserve it? Peter is probably weighing in his head, "You guys didn't walk on the water."

There is something hardwired inside of us that we want to be seen as better than others. Why? Well ultimately it is because we want to be made much of. We want to be in a position of authority because we want to be served by those under us. We want to be seen as something special so that we become a sought

after commodity. We want to rise above the rest of our peers so that our peers have to yield themselves to us.

Remember, Jesus is talking to people who are his followers here. This is the nature of life even inside of our conversion. We jockey for position. We want to be seen as holier, stronger, more devout, more spirit-filled, more missional, more knowledgeable.

But Jesus illumines this desire for the disciples, **Mark 10:41-45**. Jesus shows the fallacy of worldly power and says that those who boast in their authority are ultimately under someone else's authority.

It is a chain of command which is never ending. Even those who seem to be powerful and mighty here on earth, they have someone who lords authority over them. And so often that is what we desire with our honor and glory, we want to lord it over people.

We want people to know that we are better than them and that there is an insurmountable gap between where they are and where we are. We become a heart bent in on ourselves thinking only of what this means in relation to ourselves.

But Jesus says, you disciples must become a slave to all. That piercing word which is so polar to how we desire to be viewed. But the scandal of discipleship is only beginning.

Jesus doesn't merely say you need to be a slave. But he speaks of himself in ways which should humble and stir us: **Mark 10:45**.

You see this is one significant way where Christianity departs from other religions. In other religions it is the god who is to be served hand and foot and it is those who are under him who must serve and appease him. But the scandal of Christianity is that the wholly other and wonderfully powerful God sent his fully divine son to the earth to be both ruling God but also faithful servant.

Look at Paul's words in **Phil 2:4-11**.

Christianity is not for those who want to elevate their standings in the eyes of earthly men, it is not for those who wish to rise above the ever constant status quo, for those concerned with worldly accolades and temporary prestige. Christianity is for those who see the weight of the service of Christ. The God-man who took on human flesh and humbled himself to come into our world. To take on our flesh in all of its messiness.

Not standing in on the sidelines surveying the damage from the throne of his divinity, but rolling up his sleeves and going shoulder deep in the pain and in the hurt of this broken humanity. Bearing the scandal of our sin and the weight of our depravity on his royal head. Becoming the ransom payment for the lowest of the low. Facing humility, and shame, dripping with the spit of the soldiers and the crime of the sinners. And then, only having served in this capacity being raised from the dead once more to the fullness of glory. Where one day every tongue confess and knee shall bow not to the throne of fame and fortune, but to the once humbled now exalted Jesus Christ.

Jesus is not only the model of humble servanthood, but he is the means of salvation through which we are conformed into his very likeness.

For those who sit above the spiritual poverty line, is this portrait of discipleship the identifier of your life?

If it is not yet, let us allow this second story and final view bring us clarity and motivation.

This last story is a portrait of **Discipleship from Below**, a perspective from below the spiritual poverty line. **Mark 10:46-52.**

I love this story specifically in contrast to the one we just saw. Because in the previous story we have James and John, two of the three disciples who visibly saw the transfiguration of Jesus. This glorious moment where Jesus was seen in all of his divinity.

We have the twelve disciples who have seen with their own eyes the calming of the storm, the raising of the dead girl, the healing of the lame man, the casting out of the demons.

And yet it is blind Bartimaeus who truly sees.

You see we are all at one point Blind Bartimaeus. Not because we are blind physically, not even because we are blind spiritually. But because like Bartimaeus we have not seen with our eyes the miracles of Christ, but we have only heard of who he is, what he has done, and what he claims to be.

What this story goes to show is that for those who are seeking Christ from below the line of spiritual poverty, this word, this gospel, this good news is sufficient.

And with amazing clarity Blind Bartimaeus cries out from beside the road, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.” By calling him the son of David, he is going as far to say, “Jesus, true King of Israel, prophesied Messiah, have mercy on me.”

What a beautiful plea and yet what do the disciples and the crowds do? Those who are on the road with Jesus see this man, this blind, insignificant man and they tell him to be quiet. But he cried out all the more and when he was brought to Jesus, Jesus asked the exact same question he just asked James and John, **Mark 10:50-51.**

But unlike the disciples who desired glory and honor among men, Bartimaeus just wanted to be a normal man. He wanted Christ to make him wonderfully ordinary. The disciples wanted to be seen as great in the eyes of man, Bartimaeus wanted to see Christ greatly.

Pay close attention to what happened as a response to this man’s request: **Mark 10:52.**

Jesus is faithful to heal all who come to him in broken humility. But we also see something else, Bartimaeus, who started this journey on the side of the road, ended this journey on the road.

Because of what Christ had done in his heart he joined the followers of Christ on the uphill road to the cross.

This is the final incorrect view of following Jesus: **A Static, Passive Existence.**

How do we know Bartimaeus had a right view of Christ? Because his view of Christ led him to follow Christ. He moved past his previous state and became someone who follows actively.

To follow Christ fully is to become active in his plan and purpose.

In this text not only did we see a change in Bartimaeus’ life, but we actually saw a great change in the life of the disciples. You see in verses 35-45 the disciples are concerned only of their own standing. In verse 48 the followers of Jesus rebuked the blind man telling him to be quite. But then something happened: **Mark 10:49**

The call of Jesus not only changes our actions, but it changes our message.

To be a disciple of Christ is to join with the rest of the redeemed and cry out to a wounded humanity to, “Take heart, get up, he is calling you.”

Those who have been redeemed by Christ must realize the call of the redeemed. We must go forth as his followers and proclaim his truth. Entering into the mire of humanity to share the message of salvation.

We cannot afford to be unconcerned with our world but we must serve it through our actions and our message.

Following Christ requires a right view of our victory, found only in him, our glory, found only in him, and our call, purposed wonderfully for him.

My concluding question to you is this: "What do you want Jesus to do for you?"

It is the very question which was asked to James and John, and the very question asked to Blind Bartimaeus.

What is it you want the savior of the world to do for you? My prayer is that your answer would be, "Make me into this kind of follower. Save me, redeem me, heal me and purpose me."