

The Gospel of Mark, Teacher's Guide

Week 15: The Servant King on the Road to Jerusalem

Mark 10:32–52

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

Mark 10:32–52 brings the Galilean ministry of Jesus to its close and turns the Gospel decisively toward the cross. The third passion prediction is the most precise and most sobering yet. The request of James and John shows how far the disciples still have to travel in understanding what kind of King they are following. The teaching about Gentile rulers and Christian servant leadership recasts every category of influence the disciples have inherited from the surrounding culture. The ransom saying in verse 45 is the heart of the gospel in one sentence: the Servant King who came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. And the healing of Bartimaeus is both a real miracle and a parable in action of the disciple who, when his eyes are opened, follows Christ on the way to the cross. Doctrinally, the teacher will need to handle the deliberate self-giving of Christ, the cross as substitutionary ransom for sinners, the nature of kingdom leadership as servant-shaped, the centrality of faith in receiving Christ's mercy, and the call of every disciple to follow Him on the way.

At the same time, this chapter is unusually personal. The questions Jesus asks (and is asked) on this stretch of road are exactly the questions every disciple eventually has to answer. "What do you want me to do for you?" "Are you able to drink the cup?" "What do you want me to do for you?" (asked twice, once of James and John, once of Bartimaeus, with two very different answers). The lesson should help students name their own honest answers to these questions and let the gospel reshape the answers as needed.

Finally, build the entire lesson around verse 45. The ransom saying is the doctrinal heart of the chapter and one of the great summary statements of the gospel in the New Testament. Help students see that the Christ who walked ahead of them on the road, the Christ who refused to grant thrones without the cup, the Christ who would not lord it over His disciples but served them, the Christ who stopped on a dusty road for a blind beggar, is the same Christ who would, a few days later, give His life as a ransom for many. Everything we believe and everything we are called to live flows from that one sentence.

Question 1

Student Question:

In verses 33–34 Jesus gives the most detailed of the three passion predictions in Mark, naming exactly who will hand Him over, who will condemn Him, what they will do to Him, and what will happen on the third day. What is Christ revealing about the deliberate, knowing way He is

walking to the cross, and why does Mark place this prediction immediately before the request of James and John?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The third passion prediction in Mark is the most explicit. Mark gives us six specific details. The Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes. They will condemn Him to death. They will hand Him over to the Gentiles. The Gentiles will mock Him, spit on Him, flog Him, and kill Him. After three days He will rise. The road to the cross is not a vague threat. Jesus knows exactly what is coming.

This precision matters. It rules out the modern reading that Jesus was overtaken by events beyond His control. He was not. He walked deliberately into Jerusalem with full knowledge of what awaited Him. “No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father” (John 10:18). Christ goes to the cross as a willing sacrifice, not as a tragic victim.

Mark places this prediction immediately before the request of James and John for a reason. He wants the reader to feel the chasm between what Christ is saying and what the disciples are hearing. Christ has just told them He is going to be tortured and killed. The disciples respond by asking for thrones. The chasm exposes how far they still have to travel in understanding what kind of kingdom He is bringing.

For students, this prediction also grounds the truth that the cross was always in view. Christ did not become aware of the cross only at the last moment. He has known. He has been preparing the Twelve for it. He has been walking toward it. Mark’s Gospel has been pointing here from the beginning (Mark 1:1; 2:20; 8:31; 9:31). The cross is not a tragic ending. It is the goal.

The teaching also frames how disciples should approach their own following. We are not promised a comfortable road. The One who walks ahead of us walked into the most costly suffering anyone has ever endured, with His eyes open. He calls us to follow Him on the same kind of road, with our eyes open. Honest discipleship does not pretend the cost is light. It counts it and walks anyway.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Christ’s deliberate, knowing self-giving on the way to the cross (John 10:17–18; Hebrews 12:1–2)
- The cross as the central goal of Christ’s coming, not a tragic accident (Mark 10:45; Luke 9:51)
- The clear, repeated foretelling of His death and resurrection in the Gospel of Mark (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34)
- The cost of discipleship plainly named by Jesus to His followers (Luke 14:25–33)
- Christ as the willing sacrifice for sinners (Isaiah 53:7, 10; John 10:18)
- The reality that following Christ honestly requires counting the cost

Discussion Prompts

- What does the precision of the third passion prediction reveal about Christ's relation to the cross?
- Why does Mark place this prediction right before James and John's request?
- How does Christ's deliberate walk to the cross shape our own willingness to walk hard roads with Him?

Question 2

Student Question:

The disciples were following Jesus to Jerusalem with both amazement and fear. Where in your own walk with Christ are you trailing behind Him with that same combination, sensing He is leading you somewhere that will cost you something you are not sure you want to pay, and what does honest discipleship look like in that moment?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Mark 10:32 paints a picture every disciple has known. Jesus is out in front. The Twelve are trailing behind, both amazed and afraid. The sense that He is leading them somewhere costly is clear, and the unwillingness to ask too many questions is honest. Sometimes that is exactly where we are too.

Help students name their own version of this. The Lord is leading them toward something they sense will be costly. A relationship to repair. A confession to make. A ministry to step into. A decision they have been delaying because they suspect what He is going to ask. A grief He is walking them through. A surrender they have been postponing. They can feel His pace going on ahead, and they have been keeping a half-step back.

What does honest discipleship look like in that moment? It looks like deliberate movement forward, even when the heart is uncertain. It looks like prayer that admits the fear and asks for the strength to follow anyway. It looks like coming closer to Christ rather than further away, because closer is the only place where we receive the grace to do what He asks. It looks like the company of brothers and sisters who walk with us, the steady use of the Word, the Lord's Supper, the assembly of the saints, all keeping our feet moving on the road.

Help students see that being amazed and afraid is not the same as being faithless. The Twelve were both, and they kept walking. They did not always keep walking with full understanding. They did not always keep walking with full courage. But they kept walking, because Christ was the One ahead of them. The same is true for us.

Encourage one specific act of obedience this week, in the very place where the road feels hardest. The lesson is not finished until the next step forward is taken.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Faith as deliberate movement forward in obedience even when the heart is afraid (Hebrews 11:8)
- Christ's presence and pace as the steady anchor of the disciple's walk (Matthew 28:20)
- Honest prayer in the middle of fear (Mark 14:36; Hebrews 4:14–16)
- The role of the church family in helping each other keep walking (Hebrews 10:24–25; Galatians 6:2)
- The means of grace as the channels by which Christ supplies courage for hard roads

Discussion Prompts

- Where in your walk are you trailing behind, amazed and afraid?
- What is the next step Christ is asking you to take on that road?
- Who in this group can walk with you while you take it?

Question 3

Student Question:

James and John come to Jesus and ask, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory" (10:37). Jesus answers, "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?" (10:38). What is Jesus teaching about the difference between the kingdom His disciples were imagining and the kingdom He was actually establishing, and how does the "cup" and "baptism" language point toward the cross (compare Mark 14:36; Luke 12:50)?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

James and John's request is one of the most striking moments in Mark for what it reveals about the disciples and about the difference between their expectations and the kingdom Christ was actually establishing. "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory" (10:37). They want the thrones. They want the public seats of honor when the kingdom comes in its visible glory.

Jesus answers, "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?" (10:38). The 'cup' and the 'baptism' are deeply loaded. The cup, in the Old Testament, often pictures the cup of God's wrath against sin that Christ will drink in our place (Isaiah 51:17, 22; Jeremiah 25:15–29; Mark 14:36). The baptism here refers to the overwhelming flood of suffering Christ is about to undergo (Luke 12:50). James and John are asking for thrones; Christ is reminding them of the cross.

They protest that they are able. Christ tells them they will, in fact, share in His cup and baptism in a real sense (10:39). James will be the first apostle martyred (Acts 12:2). John will live long but

suffer banishment and many sorrows (Revelation 1:9). The disciples do share in the sufferings of Christ in a real way (Romans 8:17; 2 Corinthians 1:5; Philippians 3:10).

What is Jesus teaching about the kingdom? Several things. First, the seats of honor He has the right to give will be given by the Father, not according to the requests of disciples. The kingdom is not run by political maneuvering. Second, the path to glory in His kingdom runs through the cup and the baptism. There is no glory without suffering. Third, the disciples have profoundly misunderstood what kind of kingdom He is establishing. They were imagining a political restoration with seats of power. He is bringing a kingdom whose King wears a crown of thorns first.

For students, this teaching reframes the way we think about reward and ambition in the Christian life. The question is not which seat of honor we will occupy. The question is whether we are willing to drink the cup. The answer to that question shapes everything else.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Christ's kingdom established through the cross rather than through political ascent (Mark 10:42–45; John 18:36)
- The “cup” of God's wrath against sin drunk by Christ on our behalf (Mark 14:36; Isaiah 51:17, 22; Jeremiah 25:15–29)
- The disciple's real participation in the sufferings of Christ (Romans 8:17; Philippians 3:10; 1 Peter 4:13)
- Honor and reward in the kingdom granted by the Father, not by disciples' maneuvering
- The danger of bringing worldly ambition into Christian discipleship
- The path to glory running through suffering as a New Testament pattern (Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:17)

Discussion Prompts

- What does Jesus' “cup” and “baptism” language teach us about the cross?
- How do James and John's expectations differ from the kingdom Christ was actually bringing?
- How should this scene reorder Christian ambition today?

Question 4

Student Question:

Most of us would not phrase our ambition as bluntly as James and John, but the same instinct lives in us. We want the rewards of following Christ without the suffering of following Him. Where in your own life are you most prone to ask Christ for the “thrones” of His kingdom (security, recognition, comfort, position) without being willing to drink the cup He drank?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

None of us would phrase our ambition as bluntly as James and John, but the instinct is alive in every heart. We want the kindness of Christ without the cup of Christ. We want the safety of His protection without the suffering of His mission. We want the dignity of being His disciple without the cost of being His disciple.

What does this look like in practice? It can look like wanting a comfortable Christianity in which Christ blesses our plans, our finances, our health, our families, and our reputations, while never asking anything from us that crosses our preferences. It can look like a vague hope for spiritual reward without the daily death to self that is part of following Him. It can look like a posture of consumer toward the church (what does it do for me?) rather than the posture of servant (how can I lay down my life here?).

Help students examine where the instinct of James and John lives in them. The career path they have been pursuing for the rewards while ignoring the cost. The recognition they have been chasing in church or family. The comfort they have been protecting at the price of obedience. The longing for the throne while quietly refusing the cup.

Then move toward the corrective. The corrective is not to manufacture false suffering. It is to face honestly the specific cost Christ is asking of us right now and to drink the cup He is putting in our hands. That cup may look like a hard conversation. A faithful step of obedience that will be misunderstood. A generosity that costs us something. A long endurance in a hard situation without bitterness. A willingness to be small where we wanted to be large.

Encourage one specific obedience this week that is more like drinking the cup than asking for the throne. The lesson is not finished until the next costly faithfulness is taken up.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The temptation to want the rewards of Christ without the cross of Christ (2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 4:12–13)
- Christian life as participation in Christ's sufferings as well as in His glory (Romans 8:17; Philippians 3:10)
- Self-examination as the disciple's ongoing discipline (2 Corinthians 13:5)
- The Holy Spirit's work in producing genuine cross-shaped obedience (Galatians 5:22–25)
- The local congregation as the community in which we encourage one another in costly faithfulness

Discussion Prompts

- Where in your life do you most want the "thrones" of Christ without the "cup" of Christ?
- What is the specific cup He is asking you to drink this season?
- What is the one act of cross-shaped obedience you could offer this week?

Question 5

Student Question:

When the other ten become indignant at James and John, Jesus calls them all together and says, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you” (10:42–43). What is Jesus teaching about the difference between worldly and kingdom leadership, and how should this shape the way elders, deacons, teachers, parents, and every Christian who has influence over others lead in His church (compare 1 Peter 5:1–4; Philippians 2:1–11)?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

When the ten became indignant at James and John, Jesus did not let the moment pass. He called the whole group together and delivered some of the clearest teaching on leadership in the New Testament. “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all” (10:42–44).

The contrast is sharp. Gentile leadership is upward. Power is exercised over people. The great ones flex authority. They derive their position from their ability to compel. Christian leadership is downward. The great ones serve. The first among them is the slave of all. Position is measured by self-giving, not by the exercise of advantage.

This teaching reshapes every form of Christian influence. Elders are charged in 1 Peter 5:1–4, “Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.” Deacons serve by definition. Teachers lead by example as well as by word. Parents lead children by laying down their lives in love (Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21). Husbands lead wives by giving themselves up for them, as Christ for the church (Ephesians 5:25). At every level of Christian community, leadership is service.

Why does this matter? Because the church reflects Christ. A church led by domineering authority misrepresents the Lord who washed feet. A church led by hidden servants reflects His character. The form of leadership in the church is part of the gospel’s witness.

For students, the question is not whether they are leaders. Every adult Christian has spheres of influence. The question is whether their leadership in those spheres is more like the Gentile pattern or the Christ pattern. Domineering or serving. Demanding or laying down. Above or alongside. The diagnostic is simple. Do people flourish under your influence? Do they grow toward Christ? Do they feel served? Or do they feel pushed, used, or diminished?

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The clear contrast between Gentile and kingdom leadership (Mark 10:42–45; Matthew 20:25–28)
- Servant leadership as the universal Christian pattern, not only for ordained roles
- Elders as shepherds who lead by example (1 Peter 5:1–4; Acts 20:28)
- Deacons as those who serve the body in tangible ways (Acts 6:1–7; 1 Timothy 3:8–13)
- Husbands and parents called to give themselves up for their families (Ephesians 5:22–6:4; Colossians 3:18–21)
- Christian leadership as a witness to the Christ who washed feet (John 13:1–17)
- The danger of importing worldly patterns of leadership into the church

Discussion Prompts

- What is the deepest difference between Gentile-style and Christ-style leadership?
- Where in your sphere of influence is the temptation to “lord it over” most active?
- What does it look like to lead by example, by service, by laying down rather than throwing weight?

Question 6

Student Question:

Every Christian has some sphere of influence: a household, a workplace, a class, a friendship, a ministry. Where do you currently exercise influence in a way that drifts toward “lording it over” others, and what would Christ-shaped servant leadership actually look like in that specific setting?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Every adult Christian has spheres of influence. A household. A workplace. A class at church. A friendship circle. A team. A neighborhood. A family of origin. A grown-up role to play. The question is not whether we lead. The question is what kind of leader we have been.

Help students examine their actual conduct in the spheres where they have influence. The temptation toward “lording it over” usually shows up in specific ways. The tone of voice that lets others know who is in charge. The unwillingness to be questioned. The use of position to silence dissent. The expectation of being served while resenting being asked to serve. The instinct to push faster than people can grow. The use of guilt, shame, or fear as motivators. The withholding of attention or warmth as a form of control.

What does servant leadership actually look like in the specific setting? In a household, it looks like a husband or wife who serves their spouse without keeping score, who builds up rather than diminishing, who carries their share and more without complaint. It looks like a parent who disciplines a child by laying down their own life rather than by simply enforcing rules. In a workplace, it looks like a Christian who serves rather than uses, who takes responsibility rather

than blaming, who treats those of lesser position with dignity. In a class, it looks like a teacher who builds up students rather than building a platform on them. In a church ministry, it looks like a leader who pours into others, who shares credit, who does the hidden work, who lays down ego.

For elders, this is especially weighty. The shepherding of the local congregation is a sacred trust. “Not lording it over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock” (1 Peter 5:3). Elders are called to lead by what they actually are, not by the weight of their office. A faithful eldership models for the whole congregation what Christian leadership looks like.

Encourage one specific change this week. The conversation that needs a different tone. The decision that should be made with more consultation. The hidden act of service that no one will see. The recognition of a contribution that has been overlooked. The honest acknowledgment to a child, a coworker, or a brother or sister that you have been leading in a way that does not reflect Christ. Small steps in this direction over time reshape the texture of a Christian leader’s life.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Christian leadership at every level as servant-shaped (Mark 10:43–44; Galatians 5:13)
- The character qualifications of elders, deacons, and faithful members (1 Timothy 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9)
- Marriage and parenting as primary settings for the practice of servant leadership (Ephesians 5:22–6:4)
- Daily work as the setting for Christian witness through service (Colossians 3:22–4:1; Titus 2:9–10)
- Mutual submission and humility as the air the church breathes (Ephesians 5:21; Philippians 2:3–4)

Discussion Prompts

- Where in your sphere of influence does the temptation to dominate show up most?
- What would Christ-shaped servant leadership look like in that specific setting?
- What one change could you make this week to lead more like Him?

Question 7

Student Question:

Verse 45 contains the single clearest statement of the purpose of Christ’s coming in the Gospel of Mark: “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Connecting this with Isaiah 53:10–12, 1 Timothy 2:5–6, Hebrews 9:11–15, and 1 Peter 1:18–19, what is Mark teaching about the substitutionary, redeeming purpose of

Christ's death, the kind of "ransom" He paid, and the central place of this saying in the gospel and in the believer's ongoing assurance?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Mark 10:45 is one of the most concentrated sentences in the New Testament. "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." In one sentence Jesus gives us the purpose of His coming, the meaning of His death, and the kind of King He has come to be.

The word 'ransom' ('lytron' in Greek) was a specific term in the ancient world. It referred to the price paid to release a slave or a captive. It was the cost that secured liberation. Jesus uses this word deliberately to describe His own death. His life was given as the price that bought our freedom from the bondage of sin and death.

The Old Testament background runs through Isaiah 53. "Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt... by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities... he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:10–12). The Servant of the LORD would give Himself as a sin offering for the many. He would bear the iniquities of others. Mark 10:45 names Christ as the fulfillment.

1 Timothy 2:5–6 carries the same theology forward. "There is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time." Hebrews 9:11–15 declares that Christ entered the holy places "once for all by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption." 1 Peter 1:18–19 grounds the believer's freedom in the "precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot."

What kind of ransom did Christ pay? Not, of course, a ransom paid to Satan, as some have wrongly taught. The ransom was paid to satisfy the righteous demands of God against the sin of those whom Christ came to save. He stood in our place under the wrath of God against sin, drank the cup that was rightly ours, and poured out His life as the substitute. "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The 'many' of Mark 10:45 is not a restriction. The New Testament repeatedly affirms the universal sufficiency of Christ's atoning death. He "is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). He "gave himself as a ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:6). God "desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). The ransom is sufficient for all; it is effectual for those who respond to the gospel in faith and obedience.

How does a person come to share in this ransom? Through the gospel response the New Testament repeatedly describes. Hearing the gospel (Romans 10:17). Believing in Jesus as Lord and Christ (Romans 10:9; John 8:24). Repenting of sin (Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30). Confessing Christ (Romans 10:9–10; Matthew 10:32). Being baptized into Him for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3–4; Galatians 3:27). At baptism into Christ, the believer is united with His death, burial, and resurrection, and the benefits of the ransom are personally applied. From that point on, the believer walks in newness of life, sustained by faith, repentance, prayer, the Lord's Supper, the assembly of the saints, and the continuing work of the Spirit through the Word.

For students, this verse is the heart of the gospel and the heart of every believer's assurance. The Servant King came to give His life as a ransom for many. He has paid the price. He has freed those who respond to Him from the slavery of sin, the condemnation of the law, and the power of death. Christian assurance is not grounded in our performance; it is grounded in His ransom. Daily Christian life is the grateful, surrendered response to a gift already given.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The substitutionary atonement of Christ: His life given as a ransom for sinners (Mark 10:45; Isaiah 53:10–12; 1 Peter 2:24)
- Christ as the one mediator between God and humanity (1 Timothy 2:5–6; Hebrews 9:15)
- The blood of Christ as the price of our redemption (1 Peter 1:18–19; Ephesians 1:7; Revelation 5:9)
- The universal sufficiency of Christ's atoning work (1 John 2:2; 1 Timothy 2:4–6; 2 Peter 3:9)
- The personal application of the ransom through the gospel response of faith, repentance, confession, and baptism into Christ (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3–4)
- Christian assurance grounded in Christ's finished work, not in our performance (Romans 5:1; Hebrews 10:19–22)
- The continuing call to walk in faithful obedience as the response of the ransomed (1 Corinthians 6:19–20; Titus 2:11–14)

Discussion Prompts

- How does Mark 10:45 summarize the heart of the gospel in one sentence?
- What is the 'ransom' Christ paid, and to whom is it paid?
- How does this verse shape Christian assurance and Christian living?

Question 8

Student Question:

Every Christian was bought with a price. Christ paid the ransom for 'many,' including each one of us who has responded to Him in faith, repentance, confession, and baptism into Him. How does

living daily in the conscious memory that you have been ransomed by His blood shape the way you spend your time, your money, your speech, and your loyalties?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Every Christian was bought with a price. “You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot” (1 Peter 1:18–19). “You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body” (1 Corinthians 6:19–20). The ransom Christ paid changes the deepest framework of the believer’s life.

What does daily living in the conscious memory of being ransomed look like? Several things, woven together. First, gratitude. The disciple does not approach the Lord wondering whether the price is enough; the disciple approaches Him with thanksgiving because the price has already been paid. Second, surrender of ownership. The believer no longer treats their own life as their property. “You are not your own.” The body, the time, the money, the speech, the loyalties, the future all belong to Christ. Third, holy living. Because we are ransomed, we are called to live in a way that honors the price paid. “You shall be holy, for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:15–16). Fourth, glad service. The ransomed life is not a burden but a privilege. We serve from love, not from compulsion. Fifth, sharing the message. The ransom is for ‘many.’ The believer carries this good news to those who have not yet heard.

This shapes the use of time. The hours of the day are not ours to dispose of as we please. They belong to the One who bought us. This shapes the use of money. The income that flows through our hands is His. Generosity, faithful giving to the local congregation, support of the mission, care for the poor, and contentment in our own use are all expressions of belonging to Him. This shapes our speech. The tongue that was once an instrument of self has become an instrument of His. “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up” (Ephesians 4:29). This shapes our loyalties. We belong to Him, not to a political party, a cultural movement, a tribe, or a private ambition.

For students, this question is meant to land specifically. Where has the conscious memory of being ransomed faded in their daily life? Where have they begun acting as if their time, their money, their bodies, or their loyalties were their own? What practice would help them recover the steady awareness that they belong to the Christ who gave Himself for them?

Encourage one specific reorientation this week. A morning practice of thanking God for the ransom. A reordering of the budget to reflect that the money is His. A change in speech patterns. A new investment of time in service. The lesson should produce a practical, observable shift in how the believer carries themselves in the week ahead.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The believer as ransomed by Christ's blood, no longer their own (1 Corinthians 6:19–20; 1 Peter 1:18–19)
- Holiness of life as a fitting response to the ransom paid (1 Peter 1:14–16; Titus 2:11–14)
- Stewardship of time, money, body, and speech under Christ's ownership (Colossians 3:1–17)
- Loyalty to Christ above every other competing loyalty (Matthew 6:24; Romans 12:1–2)
- Sharing the gospel as the natural overflow of being ransomed (Acts 4:20; 2 Corinthians 5:14–15)
- The Lord's Supper as a regular reminder of the price paid for our freedom (1 Corinthians 11:23–26)

Discussion Prompts

- How does daily memory of being ransomed reshape your use of time, money, and speech?
- Where has that memory faded, and how could it be restored?
- What practice would help you live this week as one consciously belonging to Christ?

Question 9

Student Question:

On the way out of Jericho, blind Bartimaeus hears that Jesus is passing by and cries out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (10:47). When the crowd tries to silence him, he cries out all the more. Jesus stops, calls him, asks, "What do you want me to do for you?", and heals him in response to his faith. Connecting this with Isaiah 35:5, 42:6–7, and Romans 1:16, what is Mark teaching about Christ as the promised Son of David, the central role of faith in receiving His mercy, and the proper response of those whose eyes He has opened?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

On the way out of Jericho, Mark introduces blind Bartimaeus by name, an unusual detail in the Gospels and probably an indication that he was known to the early church. He is sitting by the roadside, begging. When he hears that Jesus of Nazareth is passing by, he begins to cry out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (10:47). The crowd tries to silence him. He cries louder. Jesus stops, calls him, and the man throws off his cloak, springs up, and comes to Him.

The title Bartimaeus uses is significant. "Son of David" is a messianic title. It identifies Jesus as the long-promised King in the line of David (2 Samuel 7:12–16; Psalm 89; Isaiah 9:6–7). A blind beggar sitting by a Jericho road has seen what Pharisees and scribes have missed. He recognizes Jesus as the promised Messiah.

Jesus stops everything for him. The text says, "Jesus stopped and said, 'Call him.'" (10:49). The Servant King who has been walking toward Jerusalem to die for the many stops in the middle of the road for one beggar. The kingdom moves at the pace of mercy.

Jesus asks Bartimaeus, “What do you want me to do for you?” (10:51). This is the same question He just asked James and John. They wanted thrones. Bartimaeus wants sight. The contrast is striking. “Rabbi, let me recover my sight,” he says. Jesus responds, “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” The next sentence is the one Mark wants every reader to feel. “And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way” (10:52).

This is more than a healing miracle. Mark has been building a picture of the kingdom going out to the most surprising people: a demoniac in Decapolis, a Syrophenician woman, a deaf and mute man, now a blind beggar at Jericho. The kingdom is for the marginalized. The kingdom is for those who cry out for mercy. The kingdom is for those who recognize the Son of David. Isaiah had promised that “the eyes of the blind shall be opened” when the LORD came (Isaiah 35:5). Bartimaeus is a living sign that Christ is the fulfillment.

For Christians today, this scene teaches several truths. First, Christ is approached in faith and through a cry for mercy. No one comes to Him on the basis of credit. Bartimaeus came on the basis of need and faith. Second, Christ is not slowed by the crowd’s attempts to silence the desperate. He stops for them. Third, the right response to Christ’s mercy is to follow Him on the way. Bartimaeus did not just receive his sight and go home. He followed Jesus on the road, which was the road to the cross.

For students, this question may also raise the issue of how we treat the ‘Bartimaeuses’ in our own life and church family. The crowd in Mark 10 is not flattering. They tried to silence him. The faithful church is the opposite. We make room for the desperate. We help them get to Jesus. We rejoice when their eyes are opened. We walk with them on the way.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Jesus as the promised Son of David and Messiah (2 Samuel 7:12–16; Psalm 89; Isaiah 9:6–7; Matthew 1:1)
- Faith as the central means of receiving Christ’s mercy (Mark 10:52; Hebrews 11:6)
- The proper Christian cry: “Lord, have mercy” (Luke 18:13; Mark 10:47)
- Christ’s pause for the marginalized as a sign of His kingdom (Isaiah 35:5; Luke 4:18)
- The natural response of grace: following Christ on the way (Mark 10:52; Romans 12:1–2)
- The church’s call to help the desperate get to Christ, not to silence them

Discussion Prompts

- What is the significance of Bartimaeus calling Jesus “Son of David”?
- How does the contrast between James and John’s answer and Bartimaeus’s answer to Jesus’ question instruct us?
- How can our church family resemble Jesus (who stopped) more than the crowd (who tried to silence)?

Question 10

Student Question:

Mark records that the moment Bartimaeus could see, he “followed him on the way” (10:52). The Greek ‘on the way’ is the very road to Jerusalem and the cross. As you close this chapter, where is Christ asking you to follow Him on the way to a cross of your own (a costly obedience, a long surrender, a deliberate next step of discipleship), and what is one specific way you could begin walking that road this week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Mark 10:52 closes the chapter with a sentence designed to set up everything that follows. “And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.” The Greek phrase ‘on the way’ (‘en t’ hod’”) is exactly the same phrase Mark uses in 10:32 for the road up to Jerusalem. Bartimaeus is not just going home. He is following Jesus on the very road to the cross.

This is the picture of the disciple. Once Christ has opened our eyes, the right response is not to go back to ordinary life. It is to follow Him on the way. And in the Gospel of Mark, the way leads through Jerusalem, through Gethsemane, through the trial, through the cross, through the tomb, and out to the resurrection. There is no other way.

For students, the capstone question is direct. Where is Christ asking you to follow Him on the way to a cross of your own? It will be different for each person. For some it is a costly obedience that has been delayed too long. The conversation. The confession. The change of patterns. The long surrender. For some it is a hard, ongoing season that He is asking them to walk through with Him, not around. The grief. The illness. The marriage that needs slow, patient love. The wandering child who needs persistent prayer. For some it is the next step into deeper service in the local church. The new ministry. The hospitality. The teaching. The willingness to be used in ways that will cost something. For some it is the gospel’s own demand, the response that they have been delaying. Faith. Repentance. Confession. Baptism into Christ.

Help students name the road they are being called to walk and the first specific step on it this week. A phone call. A confession. A baptism. A new commitment to the assembly. A renewed surrender. A first act of faithful endurance in a hard season. The lesson is not finished until the road begins.

Tie the chapter together. The Servant King has walked ahead of us all the way. He has paid the ransom. He has stopped on the road for the desperate. He has opened the eyes of those who cried for mercy. He is still on the way, and He is calling His disciples to follow Him on the same road. The disciple who follows Him does not lose anything in the end. The disciple who refuses misses everything.

Encourage students to leave the lesson with their cloak thrown off and their feet on the road, like Bartimaeus, following Christ on the way.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The disciple's call to follow Christ on the way to the cross and on into resurrection life (Mark 10:52; Luke 9:23)
- Conversion to Christ as the beginning of a road, not the end of one (Philippians 1:6; 2 Peter 3:18)
- The means by which we walk that road: the Word, prayer, the Lord's Supper, the assembly, the company of saints, faithful obedience
- The ongoing call to faithful endurance to the end (Matthew 24:13; Revelation 2:10)
- Christ's presence and Spirit as the disciple's strength for every stretch of the road (John 14:16-18; Hebrews 13:5-6)
- The certain reward of those who follow faithfully (1 Peter 5:4; 2 Timothy 4:7-8)

Discussion Prompts

- Where is Christ calling you to follow Him on the way to a cross of your own?
- What is the first specific step on that road this week?
- Who could walk with you while you take it?