

# 'For Even the Son of Man Came Not to Be Ministered Unto, but to Minister, and to Give His Life a Ransom for many.' Mar 10:45

by G. Campbell Morgan

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*G. Campbell Morgan's sermon emphasizes Jesus' mission of service and sacrifice as the 'Son of Man' who came to redeem humanity.*

**Scripture:** Mark 10:32

**Topics:** "Sacrifice", "Service"

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## Description

G. Campbell Morgan emphasizes the profound truth of Mark 10:45, where Jesus declares that He came not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. He illustrates this by recounting Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, highlighting the contrast between the amazement of the disciples and the fear of the crowds. Morgan reflects on the significance of Jesus' self-emptying nature and His mission to serve humanity, culminating in His sacrificial death. He encourages believers to recognize that true authority in the Kingdom of God comes through service and sacrifice, as exemplified by Jesus' interactions with His disciples and the healing of Bartimaeus. The sermon calls for Christians to embrace their calling to serve others, starting with the immediate needs around them.

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## Transcript

Mar 10:32-52.

OF the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel according to Mark this verse constitutes the central statement. Like a perfect gem it flashes with radiant glory and beauty, but unlike a gem, it does not reflect light. Its wondrous lustre is that of the truth it declares; its light is within itself. One of our poets has reminded us that

"Full many a gem of rarest ray serene

The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear."

But the gems in these dark unfathomed caves bring no light there. This verse flashes from within, in the darkest abyss of human sin and need.

Nevertheless in our study of it we find that its internal light is interpreted by its setting. Its final setting is the whole of this Gospel. All the story of Jesus, the Servant of God,

After the solemn hour in which, dealing with the young ruler, Jesus definitely placed Himself in the place of God to the life of man, He resumed His journey to Jerusalem. Here Mark, with brevity and yet with remarkable clearness, gives a description of that journey as it was thus resumed. First Jesus went resolutely forward, alone; then following Him at some distance, were the twelve apostles, amazed; and then beyond them, came the crowds, afraid. The solemn atmosphere takes possession of the soul as the brief description is carefully read. We see the Lord, the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, none being able to understand Him, none of the twelve in close companionship with Him, as He resolutely trod the via dolorosa which was to find its consummation in His passion. We see the twelve men, loyal-hearted, but stupefied, amazed at the more recent tones of His teaching, at the things He had now been saying and doing. Finally we see the crowds with that mystic sense, so often found in a crowd if there is anything strange, weird, supernatural in the atmosphere, afraid, filled with awe, and filled with reverence.

After a while He gathered the twelve about Him in secrecy from the crowd, telling them in greater detail even than before, the story of all that to which He was going. While they were in that atmosphere, James and John preferred their request, and with infinite grace and tenderness He replied, though all the rest of the twelve were angry with the two, for the request they had preferred. The Lord then rebuked the ten with great patience, making that rebuke the occasion of uttering these central words: "The Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." Then they passed on to, and through, Jericho, and as they went, Bartimaeus was given his sight.

Let us consider the statement, first in itself; and secondly, in the light of these incidents.

First, the statement in itself. The music is so perfect, so final, that it carries its own message. Its notes are revolutionary and hope-begetting. It is revolutionary; the Son of man, Messiah, anointed to Kingship and to mastery, and to government, the One upon Whose shoulders the final government must rest; came not to be served, but to serve. Two millenniums have run their course, and the world has not yet understood that. Even the Church has hardly begun to apprehend the profound significance of the startling declaration. Yet again, the note is hope-begetting. "To give His life a ransom for many." Behind the great and gracious word, lurk the dark shadows of slaveries, oppressions, and tyrannies, all the things that blight and blast humanity. The Son of man came to give His life a ransom for the many. The finest possible exposition of the text is that of silent meditation. I propose emphasis only, rather than anything in the nature of detailed interpretation.

I lay emphasis first upon the Person speaking, and then upon the declaration made. "The Son of man." That was our Lord's favourite description of Himself. It is at least worthy of notice that in the Gospel records no one spoke of Him as the Son of man save upon one occasion; and that was when He had so often used it that His enemies said, "Who is this Son of Man?" Remember also its Messianic suggestiveness to the men who heard it. All its associations were Messianic to the religious men of His own age. When they heard Him speak of Himself, not as "a Son of man," but "the Son of man," they would immediately associate the title with their apocalyptic and prophetic writings, and know that by the assumption of the title He was at least suggesting His Messianic mission. The very fact that "Son of man" was the title of the Messiah, and that the Lord evidently loved it, and constantly used it, fastens attention upon the human note. Messiah! Yea, verily, but Son of man; Lord and Master of all the universe, but kin to all those who are to be ruled; and over whom He will reign; infinitely removed from man in His authority

which is final and perfect, and from which there can be no appeal; but in all points tempted like as we are; a Man of sorrows acquainted with grief, knowing our hungers, our wearinesses, and, our tears; the Son of man!

Remember in the next place, when our Lord used that title here, that it was a declaration in close connection with that He had but recently said to the young ruler. To that man, He had suggested essential things concerning Himself, had put Himself in front of him as in the very place of God, commanding him to a following which included unequivocal and unrestrained surrender. Now, He referred to Himself by a title which suggested the method of manifestation of the essential truth. There is no contradiction. He had not ceased to speak as within the realm of His absolute authority as Son of God, but mark the statement: "The Son of man came"; and the employment of the verb in that connection suggested existence ere He came, and dignities and glories and mysteries which men could not understand, as all being centered in His person. He came; and He came for a purpose; and the purpose existed before the coming.

"Through the veil

Of His flesh divine,

Shines forth the light,

That were else too bright,

For the feebleness of a sinner's sight."

So we listen to a voice that came out of the eternities, deep calling unto deep; the voice of "the Son of Man."

Now with equal brevity and for emphasis only, let us hear the declaration, He "came not to be ministered unto." I prefer a much simpler rendering, "not to be served." He came as the Self-emptied One, as to ambition, and as to His own well-being. According to this declaration in the heart of Jesus,

So we have this wonderful unveiling of a Person in human history, self-less as to ambitions, with no care for His own personal well-being; and God-centered, having one supreme, burning, overmastering passion, conditioning all thought and speech and action, that God's name should be glorified, that His Kingdom should come; not to be ministered unto, but to minister; not to be served, but to serve.

Had the great statement ended at that point, we should have stood in awe in the presence of this Self-emptying of Jesus, but we should have heard no Gospel. In the final words of the declaration we hear the Gospel, and the music of the evangel breaks upon the soul. This is not something additional; but the unveiling of the inner heart of that self-same Servant of God: "To give His life a ransom for many" is to seek the glory of God, in the well-being of man. God is revealed through Jesus, as One Whose glory is realized in man's ransom, redemption, healing, restoration.

Let us attempt to look at this great statement again in the light of its setting. Here general impressions will help us better than detailed examination, especially in view of our familiarity with the stories contained in this whole paragraph. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." In the first part of the paragraph we see the pathway of His service, as He told His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer, and be killed, but rise again. Then as James and John came to Him with special request, and the ten were about Him, we see the comrades of His service, and

mark His method with them. Finally, in that which at first blush seems to be separated from the great line of thought, but which is really closely connected with it, we have an incident of His service immediately following, as the cry of the blind beggar broke upon His ears.

With regard to the first paragraph revealing the pathway of service, note its definiteness, the particular care with which Jesus at this point attempted to arrest the thought of His disciples, and fasten that thought upon the actuality of the sufferings to which He was going, and the triumph which should result therefrom. Taking the paragraph as a whole, let us attempt to see what Christ said as to the pathway of His service. First, He declared that the pathway of His service was advance on His part to the place where all that was opposed to God, and so destructive of man, was for the moment centralized

Notice in the second place, and here is the mystery

Yet once more; the pathway of service was not merely that He advanced to the place where opposition was centralized, was not merely in order that He might gather its onslaught upon Himself; the pathway of His service was one which He trod in powers which were invulnerable, and which all opposition could not overcome. Consequently, He went not merely to the Cross, but to the crowning; not merely to death, but to resurrection; not merely to the clouds and darkness which were about the Throne, but to cooperation with the righteousness and judgment which are the foundation thereof. He could say to this little group of men that on the third day He would rise again. His pathway to the passion was one trodden in the strength of invulnerable powers; the power of perfect acceptance of the will of God, the power of complete cooperation with the activities of God; the power that was the more powerful, in that it depended upon none other power than itself.

So we see this Son of man moving toward the scene of the things that blight and spoil humanity, because they are against God. We see Him moving thereto, in order that He may gather all the onslaught into the experiences of His own soul; but we look into His eyes and there is a light that tells of victory. All moral forces were against Him. There was no escape; He must be beaten, He must be crushed, He must be killed! No! There are moral values sustaining His soul, and spiritual forces renewing Him. When they have killed the body they have nothing more that they can do ; and He will be the Leader of those moral values and spiritual forces out into new power and life. This was the pathway of the service of the Son of man.

Then look quite briefly at this old and familiar, and yet beautiful picture of the comrades of His service. It is significant that they are divided into two groups, the two, James and John; and the ten. Look .at the two, and listen to what they said that day. I separate myself immediately and resolutely from all expositors who discredit them. I do not believe that this was the cry of men hungry for personal ambition. "Teacher, we would that Thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall ask." And Jesus said, "What would ye that I should do for you?" They said this, "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on Thy right hand, and one on Thy left hand, in Thy glory." Before we criticize them, let us remember the atmosphere. "In Thy glory!" But He was going to be spit upon. He was going to be scourged, He was going to be mocked, He was going to be killed! Yes, they knew it all; but they knew Him, and that He was coming into His glory, and they wanted to be associated with Him in the power of that glory. Oh! great men were these; not wholly intelligent, ignorant of the very things to which He was going, the processes through which He must pass; not knowing the bitterness of the cup, or the abysmal agony of the baptism; but believing that somehow He must come into His glory.

Then notice His grace. He admitted them to the fellowship of His sufferings. He told them, in effect, that positions of honour did not at all matter. He said He could not give these spiritual positions to any except to those for whom they were prepared; but because these men had seen His glory, even though they were ignorant, and could not understand; because faith had risen in that dark hour of foretelling to ask for association with Him, He said: Yes, you shall drink of My cup, you shall be baptized of My baptism!

We had better leave that story where the Gospel leaves it. If we cannot, then we join the ten, and the ten were angry with the two! The rebukes of Jesus were reserved for the ten; and even there, they were very gracious and beautiful. He called the ten and said to them, You do not understand this matter, you do not understand these men. "Ye know that they who are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them." The request of these men is not for the kind of authority of service which expresses itself in sacrifice! Then He left the ten and the two; and the last word was this: The Son of man did not come to gain a kingly crown in the way men usually seek to do so. The Son of man did not come to raise His voice and clamour amid men, as to who is to be the principal power in the world. The Son of man came to divest Himself of dignities, and strip Himself of royalties and bind upon Himself the yoke of slavery and service, that He might lift others, and so win the ultimate throne of empire by the love and loyalty of those whom He thus lifts. He said in effect, to the ten and the two, to the twelve, and to all their successors through the ages; if you would know anything of authority and power with Me, you must come this way with Me.

Then came the incident of the healing of Bartimaeus, the incident taking place in that very atmosphere and connection. First we hear the beggar crying out for help, and see him rebuked by the disciples. We will not be angry with them, but will try and understand them. Unless I misinterpret this story altogether, the disciples were saying within their own souls, We do not quite understand what Jesus is trying to teach us, but these are big things. His mind is occupied with supreme things. We cannot attend to that man. A blind beggar must not be allowed to interrupt Him now! But Jesus stood still, and said, Call him! Then He healed him!

The great is always operative in the little, and all the vastness of Christ in His outlook and intention as revealed supremely in His declaration of the text, is illustrated in the fact that on the way to Jerusalem He could stay to answer the cry of one blind beggar. I go further, and say this. To have refused would have been to deny His teaching about service. Nay! to have refused the cry of a man in his agony would have been to deny His Cross, for not lightly did He heal. "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases"; and behind the strength that went Out as a healing power, there was ever the unfathomable mystery of His atonement.

The King is coming into His Kingdom! Oh, yes! the heathen are saying to us to-day, Where is your God? There never was a darker hour, judged by human standards, in the history of the world, than that hour when they nailed the Prince of life and glory to the Roman gibbet on Calvary. Have we the vision of James and John? Do we still rest in the confidence that the King is coming into His glory; that

"... After last, returns the First,

Though a wide compass round be fetched;

That what began best, can't end worst";

that though, in the march of the movements of the ages, humanity must suffer long, and the innocent with the guilty; though we seem to see

Truth for ever on the scaffold, Wrong for ever on the throne,

Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown,

Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own?"

It behooves men who are of the Christian faith to rise to the heights and to take large outlooks. The King is coming into His Kingdom!

"The darkness is deepest before the dawn;

When the pain is sorest the child is born."

That is the Christian attitude.

Fellowship in the greatness of His Kingdom is conditional upon fellowship in His cup, in His baptism, in sacrifice. How little do we know of this experimentally, how little have we ever known! Where can we begin to have real fellowship with our King? The first blind beggar we meet is our opportunity. The first local, and apparently unimportant case of necessity that cries out, is our chance. If Jesus should have passed that blind beggar and refused to help him, because His thoughts were so great, He would have cut the nerve of His coming passion. He could not pass that man by, because He was mastered by the passion that took Him to the Cross. So God help us to go forth, seeing the coming of His glory, sharing the travail of His soul, and doing it with the next who asks our help.

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