

The Ambition of James and John Mark 10:32-45

by R.A. Torrey

R.A. Torrey's sermon explores the ambition of James and John, contrasting worldly desires for greatness with the true path of humility and service as taught by Jesus.

Scripture: Mark 10:32

Topics: "Servanthood", "True Greatness"

Description

R.A. Torrey discusses the ambition of James and John, who sought positions of honor in Jesus' kingdom, highlighting their misunderstanding of true greatness. Jesus uses this moment to teach His disciples that greatness in His kingdom comes through servanthood and sacrifice, contrasting it with worldly ambition. He foretells His own suffering and death, emphasizing that true followers must share in His sufferings to share in His glory. The sermon underscores the importance of humility and the dangers of selfish ambition within the church. Ultimately, Jesus exemplifies the ultimate act of service by giving His life as a ransom for many.

Transcript

(Compare Matt. 20:17-28; Luke 18:31-34)

DISCOVERY OF THE FACTS

1. Christ Foretells His Crucifixion and Resurrection, vv. 32-34 Whither was Jesus journeying at the beginning of this lesson? What was the state of mind of His disciples as they followed Him? At what were they amazed and fearful? What did Jesus do with the twelve at this time? What was His purpose in doing this? Did He reveal things to the twelve that He did not to others? (c. 4:34.) Why? (Matt. 13:11.) Had He ever told them before of His coming crucifixion and resurrection? (c. 8:31; 9:31; Matt. 16:21; 17:22, 23; 20:17-19; Luke 9:22.)

Did He go any more into detail this time than on former occasions? What seven specific facts did He foretell to them? Were each of these prophesied facts fulfilled? How did Jesus know beforehand the details concerning His death and resurrection? Did they condemn Him? (c. 14:64; Matt. 26:66; Acts 13:27.) Did they deliver Him to the Gentiles? (c. 15:1; Matt. 27:2; Luke 23:1, 2, 21; John 18:28.) Why was it necessary that He should be delivered to the Gentiles if the Old Testament prophesies regarding His

crucifixion were to be fulfilled?

Did they mock Him? (c. 14:65; 15:17-20, 29-31; Matt. 27:27-44; Luke 22:63-65; 23:11, 35-39; John 19:2, 3.) Had it been prophesied that they would mock Him? (Is. 53:3.) Did they actually spit upon Him? (c. 14:65; Matt. 26:67.) Had it been prophesied that they would spit upon Him? (Is. 50:6.) Did they actually kill Him? What did Jesus say would follow His death? Did He really rise again? Did He in any other place predict His resurrection on the third day? (John 2:19; Matt. 12:39, 40.)

Had His resurrection on the third day been predicted in the Old Testament? (Ps. 16:10; Hos. 6:2.) 2. Man's Desire for the Chief Place, vv. 35-41 With what request does the lesson open? What made it a very singular request just at this time? What suggested it? (Matt. 19:28; vv. 32, 33.) What did they mean by asking that they might sit, the one on His right hand and the other on His left in His glory? Were James and John at this time much better than Peter with all his mistakes and failures?

Did they speak their wish right out to start with? (Mark 10:35.) Is there any way we can get from Christ "Whatsoever we shall ask"? (John 15:7, R. V.) Were James and John fulfilling this condition at this time? Did John ever reach a position where he got whatever he asked? (1 John 3:22.) Why didn't they get what they asked here? (James 4:3.) What is the great secret of unanswered prayer? Is the spirit of James and John ever found in the church today? What is its result? What did Jesus say in answer to this request?

What did He mean by that? Is it ever true nowadays that men know not what they ask? How can we know how to pray? (Ro. 8:26.) What question does Jesus put to them? What is meant by "the cup that I drink of?" (Matt. 26:39, 42; John 18:11.) What is the connection between this question and their request? Where else in the New Testament is this lesson taught? (Acts 14:22; 2 Tim. 2:12; Ro. 8:17.) Suppose we do not suffer, what then? What was their answer? Did they really understand what that answer involved?

Of what were they most likely thinking? Were they really able? (Matt. 26:56.) Did they ever become able? What is Christ's answer to their profession of ability to drink of the cup He drank of? (Acts 12:2; Rev. 1:9.) Did they drink as deeply of the cup as Jesus did? Who decides who shall sit upon Christ's right hand and left in His glory? To whom shall it be given?? How will it be decided? (Rev. 22:12.) Are we to learn from this that there are gradations of glory in Heaven? What will the least who gets in receive? (1 Cor. 3:11-15; Heb. 11:16; John 14:3; 1 Cor. 2:9; Matt. 25:34.)

What was the effect of the request of James and John upon the remaining ten? What is the usual result in a church where some try to put themselves forward unduly? Why were the ten indignant? What is usually the cause when we wax indignant and eloquent over the attempt of others to put themselves forward? Was this a very favorable time to have a quarrel in the apostolic company? When is the best time to have a quarrel among Christ's followers? If we wish to prevent such things, what is the first thing to see to? 3.

God's Road to the Chief Place, vv. 42-45 How did Jesus still the rising tempest? What is the best way to still a storm among Christ's followers today? What did Jesus tell them was the radical difference between methods of worldly kingdoms and His own? Are worldly methods ever adopted by professing Christian leaders? What is the road to real greatness? What if one aims at personal greatness? (Luke 14:7-11.) What is the Christian's method of using greatness? What is the difference in meaning between v. 43 and v. 44? (R.

V., margin.) Whom does Jesus point to as the pre-eminent example of real greatness? How did Jesus serve? (John 13:4-14.) What was His crowning act of service? What is meant by a ransom? From what

has Christ ransomed us? (Hos. 13:14; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 9:15; 1 Peter 1:18; Tit. 2:14.) By what has Christ redeemed us? (Matt. 26:28; Eph. 1:7; Rev. 5:9; 1 Peter 1:18, 19.) For whom did He give His life a ransom? (1 Tim. 2:1; 1 John 2:2.) Why does it say in one place for "many" and in another place for "all"?

How did He give His life a ransom? (Gal. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:21; Is. 53:6; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18.) Was this coming and giving His life voluntary? (John 10:17, 18.) Is there any indication here of His pre-existence? Did the disciples remember the lessons of this solemn occasion very long? (Luke 22:24.) Can we glory over them very much? CLASSIFICATION OF TEACHINGS

1. Jesus

His pre-existence, 34, 45; humanity, 34, 45; foreknowledge of future events, 32-34; sufferings and death, 33, 34; the fulfiller of prophecy, 33, 34; compare Is. 50:6; 53:3, 6; Ps. 16:10; Hos. 6:2; vicarious atonement, 45; coming glory, 37 (entered His glory through suffering, 38); self-sacrificing love--gave His life a ransom, 45; humility--came not to be served but to serve, 45; inexhaustible patience, 37-45; gentleness, 37-45; incarnation of the truth that He taught, 43-45; true great one, 45; wishes His disciples to tell their desires to Him, even though they are not what they should be, 36; called His quarreling disciples unto Himself, 42; stilled the rising tempest, 42; points out to His disciples the folly of their wrong ambitions and shows a better way, 42-45; teaches His disciples that fellowship with Him in glory must be won by fellowship with Him in suffering and service, 38, 43-45.

2. The Disciples

(1). Their failures:

Misled by selfish ambition, 37, 41; quarreled among themselves for the first place immediately after Jesus announced His suffering and death for them, 37-41; compare 32-34; prayed unintelligently, without understanding what they asked for or the cost of getting it, 38; prayed selfishly, 37; overestimated their strength, 39; their request denied because they asked amiss, 40.

(2). Their duty:

To take the lowliest place, 44; serve, 43; imitate their Master's example, 45.

(3). Their privileges:

To be called near to Jesus and be taught of Him, 42; have their mistakes pointed out and put away by Jesus' patient admonitions, 42-45; have fellowship in His sufferings, 39; imitate His service, 45.

3. Greatness

(1). How to attain it:

By service; all service leads to greatness; the lowlier the service the more exalted the greatness, 43, 44, R. V.

(2). How to manifest it:

Worldly greatness manifests itself in lording it, true greatness manifests itself in service, 42-45.

(3). Where to see it:

In Jesus Christ, 45.

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