



A Tale of Four Sons

Mark 10:32-52 | Nic Gilmour | Jan 29, AD2023

JESUS (FOR THIRD AND LAST TIME) PREDICTS HIS DEATH

1. V32 “up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way”. Even aware of His impending death (Mk 8:31-32, 9:31-2), Jesus resolutely leads.
2. V32 “disciples...astonished, while those who followed were afraid”
 - a. Disciples ‘astonished’ at His teaching? The point of it all!? His resolute purpose? See 9:32 “they did not understand what He meant, and were afraid to ask Him about it”
 - b. Crowd (likely pilgrims on way to Passover in Jerusalem) ‘fearful’ of being caught in an insurrection? Or scared about His impending suffering?
 - c. This Gospel is counter-intuitive, for “...the economy of God’s kingdom is not based on power & control but on service & giving, for the latter are not only the ethics of the kingdom but the means of redemption” (*The Gospel According to Mark*, James Edwards, p.321)
3. V33 “the Son of Man will be delivered...condemned to death”
 - a. Ambiguous name for Jesus from Dan 7:13-14.
 - b. Humble Servant who comes to enter our pain and to heal (Vv46-52); Suffering Lord atoning death & triumphant victory saves the world (V45); Righteous Ruler w divine authority & glory (Mk 8:38, 14:62, Mt 16:27)
 - c. Delivered by God the Father to the Jewish authorities and delivered by them to the Gentiles. (and see “ransom” in V.45)
4. V33b-34 “will mock...spit...flog...and kill Him. And after three days He will rise.” (Suffering servant of Is 52:13-53:12). Each of Jesus predictions about his death and resurrection are followed with the disciples cying for glory, and teaching on discipleship – “As Jesus walks the path of surrender, so should His disciples” (‘Mark’, *ESVSB*, Hans Bayer, p1915)

THE SONS OF AMBITION

5. V35 “do for us whatever we ask” Presumptuous to the max!
6. V37 “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory”. (Matt 20:20-28, Salome)
7. V38 “can you drink the cup...be baptized...?”
 - a. ‘Cup’ of God’s wrath (Ps 75:8), also an idiom for ‘share the fate of’. Similar image ‘baptism’ (lit. ‘flood’), or suffering along with (Rom 6:3-4). Fighting beside Jesus?
 - b. Our suffering – awful as it is – can be redemptive. Hope sandwich (Rom 5:2b-5)
8. V39-40 “you will...but...not for Me to grant”
 - a. Trinity. Phil 2:5-11. Equality *and* submission.
 - b. Suffering, sovereignty, and servanthood.
9. V41 “the ten...became indignant with James and John”
 - a. Annoyed at the nepotism? The presumption? That they asked first!?
 - b. John prone to elitism – young, Ch 9 wants to tell the exorcist to stop because he wasn’t “following US” (ie not Jesus!); wanting to call down fire on the inhospitable Samaritans (Lk 9:54). “John regards his call as a disciple not as a call to service but as an entitlement of privilege and exclusion” (*The Gospel According to Mark*, James Edwards, p.289)
10. V43 “whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant”
 - a. Who serves who? And for what? Jesus overturns the structure of leadership.
 - b. ‘Power-over’ v ‘power-under’ (*The Myth of a Christian Religion: Losing Your Religion for the Beauty of a Revolution*, Greg Boyd); 1 Pet 5:1-4.
 - c. You can be a servant without being a leader but not vice-versa. In Vv42-45 Jesus says the way up is the way down; but He doesn’t say seeking greatness is wrong but that ‘greatness’ is reflected glory which only belongs to God (2Cor 3:17-18)

THE SON OF OBEDIENCE

11. V45 “Son of Man” and His purposes – humble Servant, suffering Lord, righteous Ruler, (rare for Mk) explains not just the what but also the how of the cross.

12. V45 “did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many”
 - a. Hinge point of Mark’s Gospel – before it emphasis is servanthood, hereafter emphasizes the cross. “Having three times predicted His coming death, Jesus now explains its purpose” (‘The Gospel According the Mark’, NKJSB, p1665). GOSPEL “ransom” – freeing slaves unable to free themselves – atonement.
 - b. Jesus’ baptism. Father’s words and Spirit’s anointing “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased” (Mk 1:11) – Sonship assured, not achieved! Precisely no miracles/teachings/atoning deaths at this point!

THE SON OF HOPE (AND DESPERATION)

13. V46 “Bartimaeus (son of Timaeus)” – the only named person healed in the synoptics.
 - a. *Imago Dei*. Even tho the OT law mandated care for the needy (Lev 25:35-38), people suffering blindness were considered accursed by God (Jn 9:2).
 - b. As He “approached” / “came to” (Lk 18:35/Mk10:46) &/or “were leaving” (Matt20:29) Jericho. Matt also records two men crying out – apparent inconsistencies. Was it old (semi-abandoned) or new (resort) Jericho? Was it both (slums near wealth?) – likely the men yelled out both times but Jesus didn’t heal till He was leaving (ie same way in & out on pilgrim’s road). Was Bartimaeus more prominent later so that’s who was named in Mk? Gospel accounts’ veracity is strengthened by selection of different details & color.
14. Vv46-47 “sitting by the roadside begging...began to shout”
 - a. Desperation beyond despair. Constrained by physical infirmity and shame.
 - b. Just as we are constrained by old lies: “God doesn’t love me”, “God can’t heal me”, “I’m not worth His time”.
15. V48 “Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet” we consider others needs lower than ours.
16. Vv47/48 “Son of David, have mercy on me”. Messianic name for Jesus (Is 9:7, 11:1-3, Jer 23:5-6). But He is not just ‘son’ or descendant, but also the ‘Lord’ of David Mk 12:35-37!
17. V49 “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you” – fickle crowd. Eyewitness details.
 - a. He cast aside likely his only possession, and is eager and utterly focused on Jesus.
 - b. “What does your cloak look like and feel like? Where in your life do you find yourself hiding or isolating, pulling away from relationships, or preferring the predictable comfort and safety of self-soothing or self-protection? How do you feel about casting aside your cloak and running vulnerably to Jesus to be healed?” (‘The Cloak of Bartimaeus’, *Abiding in Love and Truth*, Fr. Derek Sakowski, Blog May 21, 2021)
18. V51 “What do you want Me to do for you?”
 - a. Jesus ‘sees’ him. Irony, people are blind to the blind man’s suffering.
 - b. This last healing recorded in Mk, a week out from His death, comes at a time when Jesus clearly had in mind His own suffering. Such other-centered service. ‘
19. V51 “Rabbi, I want to see.” Tender Aramaic term for ‘teacher’ or ‘master’. Implication: His Lord.
20. V52 “Your faith has healed you.”
 - a. Beware the trap of thinking *our* faith makes us well. The language here is in the positive, *not the negative*. God is not a vindictive or capricious. He is a loving Father.
 - b. Greek root *sōzō* can mean ‘heal’ or ‘save’ or ‘deliver into safety’, thus could encompass spiritual as well as physical healing (see eg Mk 5:34, Lk 7:50).

FOR THE BRAVE OF HEART

- Are amazement and/or awe actually the most sensible responses to Jesus? Why?
- Does Jesus ask us to do anything different than He has done for us? What?
- When Jesus asks “what do you want Me to do for you?” do you have a pure motivation in answering?
- Do you know *whose* you are? *Who* you are? What your *chief purpose* is? Share with your small group and pray thru your answers together.
- Write a note about how this week you will you remind at least one other person that they are made in God’s image, and/or that they don’t have to strive to please God.