

## Following Jesus in the Way

Mark 10

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The expression "the way" actually occurs three times in this chapter. In verse 17 it is in connection with the young ruler. The Lord put the test to this rich young man — If you are really desirous of obtaining eternal life, go *your* way and part with the things that will be a hindrance, and then come *My* way, and the end will be eternal life. In the last verse of the chapter we get the third occurrence of the expression. The Lord had opened the eyes of the blind man, saying to him exactly what He had said to the rich young ruler, "Go thy way (He left him entirely free) thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way." He says to one — "Go thy way . . . and follow Me"; and to the other simply — "Go thy way." Does it not seem that the blind man whose sight had been restored says — "Lord, Thou hast opened my eyes and now there is only one way I can go, *Thy* way is to be *my* way," and "he followed Jesus in the way." What a contrast!

Between these two incidents there is this section relating to the disciples (verses 32-45). The moment had come when the Lord had called them, leading them in "the way," and they began to fear as to what would be at the end of that way along which they were going. Let us notice first of all the Lord's words in relation to it. "And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them." "Jesus went before them"! The One in possession of all authority and power was before them in the pathway. Never will the Lord permit of our taking a step in this hostile world which He Himself has not taken. The dark clouds of His rejection and of His crucifixion (though probably they could not put their thoughts into words) were beginning to settle upon them, for as they followed they were amazed and astounded, and moreover it says "they were afraid." There have been times in our experience, as in our simplicity we have sought to serve our Lord, when we felt clouds were coming in; difficulties, stumbling blocks, something that would hinder us, and for a moment, our hearts have been filled with fear. All of us have surely known such moments. These disciples did, and they began to be afraid as to what the issues of this way would be. But the Lord "took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things would happen unto Him." If He had told them what things should happen unto *them* they might have fled away, but He tells them what things should happen to *Him*. Is not this one of the greatest possible encouragements needed to keep us steadfastly in "the way"? The fact that the Lord has gone every step of it, suffered so much in it, and loved us so much as to want us in it, should nerve, strengthen and encourage us to keep on following "Jesus in the way."

The Lord spoke first of what men were about to do; but in result there would be what He was about to do, and also what God was to do — the opening out of something outside this world, a heavenly, spiritual, and eternal sphere. That was the end of "the way." But for the Lord Himself it meant crucifixion at the hands of men, in order that there might be established this divine system into which we, by the grace of God, have been called as we seek in our day to follow "Jesus in the way."

James and John (in verse 35) had evidently pondered over these things and said to the Lord, "We would that Thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And He said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto Him, Grant unto us that we may sit one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left, in Thy glory." We might say at once — "presumption"! But do we not want a place in that glory? Would we not like to sit on that left hand and that right hand? The Lord tested these men, but He did not tell them they would not be in the place they sought. Equally, He did not tell them

that they *would*. We need not beguile ourselves about these things, beloved. We *do* want a place in the glory and in the kingdom; we should not be following the Lord today if we did not have that in view. If the motive is pride of heart it would be another matter. Their request was quite all right in itself, but the Lord applied the test. John was one of the few who stood by the cross. Did he think about this desire of his when he saw a malefactor on the right hand and another on the left of the Lord — this is what *I* asked for, a place on His right hand, a place on His left; is this what it means for me to obtain that place in glory?

"Jesus said unto them, ye know not what ye ask; can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They did not say, as we might have said — No, it is impossible. When the Lord asked them that they said "we can," and the Lord said "ye shall." Drink of His cup? — yes; baptized with His baptism? — yes, said the Lord, you shall go through that, Luke is the gospel that gives us this aspect of the cross. Luke does not refer to the Lord as bearing sin, nor to the abandonment of God. The record of the garden is — "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me," and we venture to suggest that this is the aspect of the cross which we can follow — the path of the will of God and the rejection by man in this world. It could not be anything else than that, beloved. These are the Lord's own words; "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" When they said to the Lord "we can," He certainly said to them "Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized; But to sit on My right hand and on My left hand is not Mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared."

We remember that the apostle Paul said to the Corinthians "So run, that ye might obtain." Men strive in this world for a corruptible crown; said Paul — we are striving for an incorruptible crown. If they strain every nerve for the corruptible crown, why do not we for the heavenly? We gather from these words that there will be *someone* on His right hand and *someone* on His left hand. These words are given to us that they might stimulate us. If that place can be won, and obviously it can be won — well, "So run, that ye may obtain."

"When the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John." Now the Lord calls them all to Himself and says unto them, "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them." Just of course what *our* proud hearts would want to do. That is what obtains *in* the world. To that little company the Lord says "But so shall it not be among you. But whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister." We gather from this that the great men in the kingdom are those who are simply, humbly, earnestly and devotedly doing all they can to help the saints of God in their pathway through this world. It may not *always* be in spiritual matters; it may be in material matters. The opening of Luke's gospel speaks of men and women who did not seem to have much of material things, they seem to have been the poor of the flock. But their hearts were devoted, and when the right moment came for ministry in relation to the Lord and in relation to His people, they were ready and willing to seize the opportunity of serving the saints of God.

Beloved, does such service attract our hearts? What opportunity there is of serving the Lord by serving His people. Has He told us that the greatest among us is the one that serves? Let us seek grace then from the Lord to perform these services, and to meet these needs as He gives to us the light and the grace to meet them. "Whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all." The service of a bondsman is what the Lord's own words convey to the disciples!

This is the road to the kingdom. "For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." The greatest sacrifice that could be given, He has

given. The great object of Jesus going before us in the way is to lead *us* in that way. The kingdom is there, the glory is about to dawn. Let us seek grace therefore to serve one another with that glory in view.