

**TEXARKANA REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH****SERIES TITLE: MARK 10.32-45 | TITLE: ADVICE FOR YOUR GLORY SEEKING****DAVE WAGNER**

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**Seek God Alone**

God made us glory eaters. We hunger and thirst for glory insatiably. We can't get enough. From the moment we're born we long both to behold glory and to be glorious.

This is why people take long trips to see the Grand Canyon or Niagara Falls. It's why they watch the Olympics or professional baseball or follow their favorite musician. We long to watch those who excel in what they do and are; we want to see their glory.

And we want to be glorious ourselves. We desire to be distinguished. We want to be remembered for some impressive skill, or accomplishment, or character. We hunger for others to look at us and behold our glory; we long to be glorious.

I don't say any of this is wrong. On the contrary, we were made for this. You were made to be a marvelous image of God, reflecting his glory in a specific and peerless way, that everyone could see you and rejoice in you, and in rejoicing in you, rejoice in Him.

You were made for this and you are headed for this. Every Christian is destined to obtain the glory we lost at the fall, and more. In the end we will behold Christ's glory, the glory which he had with the Father before creation, and we will receive glory as a covering, so that we ourselves will become glorious. When we see him, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.

So far so good. Now here's the problem: When Adam fell, all our appetites went haywire. And that includes our appetite for glory.

Now when we find glory in other people we end up idolizing them. When we see glory in nature we bow down and worship it. Worst of all, when we notice some shimmer of glory in ourselves, we are filled with pride and our heart is drawn away from God. Man no longer seeks glory the right way. In fact, the glory in creation is no longer an asset; it is now a liability. Fallen people are far more likely to be led into idolatry by the glory in creation than they are to praise God for it.

What should have been a holy quest for more and more glory, to the praise of God, has become a greedy grasping for glory, to the blasphemy of God.

So what is the solution? Should we stop seeking glory? As if we could! Can you stop seeking food? And water? And air? You were designed for glory; your soul is hungry for it and you can't stop longing for it. There is no question of ceasing our hungry search for glory.

We must seek glory, both to behold and to become. We must. It is not a question of whether we will seek it; it is only a question of how. So the solution is not to delude ourselves into thinking we can stop being hungry. The solution is to go about seeking glory according to the will of God, and according to the Gospel of Christ.

So today I want to advise you in your glory seeking. I have three points to make from the text but I need to begin by stating the obvious: In your glory seeking, the object you seek must be God himself.

This is because your highest possible awe, your highest possible pleasure and wonder can only be found in God. You will never make enough money to satisfy your soul's hunger. You will never get enough physical pleasure to satisfy your soul hunger. You will never reach a high enough position to satisfy your soul hunger. There is only one object in the world that will quench your thirst for glory, and it's God.

This is self-evident. The man who makes a million dollars wants two. The man who gets physical pleasure wants more physical pleasure. The man who gets promoted immediately starts angling to get promoted again. It never stops. And the reason it never stops is that even the sinful soul cannot be filled by anything less than God.

So what this means is that all your searching for wonder and interest and fulfillment and awe will be in vain unless you are looking for God. And, all your searching for your own self-improvement, self-distinction, self-worth, self-actualization, all of it will be for nothing unless you are seeking it in God. You will never become what you were meant to be, you will never reach your intended potential and design unless you look for it in God.

So I'm going to tell you three things about your glory seeking but my point to begin is that the object you should seek is God alone.

### **Suffering**

Now here's my first point: Glory Must Come Through Suffering and Loss.

Jesus has just predicted his betrayal, arrest, mocking, scourging and crucifixion. John and James think this is a good time to ask for the highest and comfiest position in the kingdom. See the contradiction? See how out of step the disciples are with Jesus? This is just a little ridiculous.

Jesus tells them, "You don't realize what you're asking for." Indeed they don't. They think they can take the fast track to glory in the kingdom; they'll just ask Jesus for a favor and viola, they've got season tickets, all expenses paid, back stage passes; they know Someone in a high places and they're going to skip all this self-denial and suffering stuff to go right for kingdom glory.

But can they get to kingdom glory by that route? No, says Jesus. Jesus asks them a question: "Are you ready to drink my cup and undergo my baptism?" "Oh Yes," they say. "Yes, certainly we are ready and able."

Now Jesus is referring to his suffering here by both images. He drinks a cup of suffering and he is baptized, or immersed in suffering when he goes to the cross.

And John and James know this; they know Jesus is talking about suffering. So they are saying they are ready to drink down kingdom suffering to arrive at kingdom glory. But here's the problem: In a few chapters, when Jesus is arrested, John and James are going to hightail it with the rest. They are not able to drink Jesus' cup with Jesus.

So, big surprise, John and James don't know themselves. Neither did Peter, neither did the rest, neither do we, too often.

But the first point here for us, in our glory seeking, is this: The glory our soul craves will come through suffering and loss for Christ. It will come through self-denial for Christ. It will come through being hated for Christ and for righteousness' sake.

It will not come the way the whole world thinks it will come: Through pleasure, possessions and position.

Notice that Jesus connects kingdom glory with kingdom suffering. Before the crown of glory comes the cup of suffering. In fact, the crown of glory comes *Through* the cup of suffering. This way lies glory.

What this means for us is we must arm ourselves with the same purpose Jesus had, namely the purpose to suffer. I don't say you should go looking for suffering. Only do two things: Deny yourself for Christ; deny sin for Christ and deny good things for Christ. Also, make a habit of

pointing others to Christ and righteousness. Do those two things consistently and you will suffer plenty.

Whoever hungers for glory (and that's everyone), and whoever is wise, will patiently submit to Christian suffering.

### **Divine Grace and Prerogative**

Now here's the second point: In our glory seeking we must submit to God's grace and prerogative.

After telling John and James they will indeed suffer, Jesus breaks the news to them: Assigning positions in the kingdom is not for Jesus to do, but for the Father alone.

Now this is interesting: Jesus said glory must come through suffering, but now he adds that, even so, our suffering is not a work we perform which puts God in our debt; nor can we angle and manipulate and cajole God to give us the kingdom glory we desire.

Kingdom glory is a gift to be given, not a wage to be earned. We can ask for it; we cannot work for it. Our suffering is not meritorious; it does not earn glory for us. It is a necessary path to glory; but it is not a meritorious path to glory.

What does this mean for us? Perhaps we think when someone cusses us out for Jesus God is now bound to give us our wages, and that wage is glory. So, all I have to do is perform enough works, suffer enough for Jesus, go to church enough, give enough, and then God will be obligated to give me the glory I desire!

If we think this way, we have a serious problem. Christians are not wage-earners, but gift-receivers. And the kingdom is a gift. And kingdom glory is a gift. And whatever kingdom position God has appointed for us is a gift. Gift, gift, gift. Grace, Grace, Grace.

And it being a gift means it is a matter of divine prerogative; God alone has the right to seat people at Jesus' right and left hand. It is a matter of divine freedom and sovereignty. John and James cannot angle their way into those seats. Such things can only be given through grace.

So in our glory seeking we should submit to God's will for our position and role. We should walk the path and know God will bring us into the kingdom; but we must not demand a certain position, a certain level and kind of glory, as if we could somehow manipulate God. So the second point is that in our glory seeking we must submit to God's grace and will.

## **Heavenly Glory, Earthly Humiliation**

The Third point is that glory doesn't come through glory, but humiliation. Specifically, heavenly glory does not come through earthly glory, but through earthly humiliation.

Jesus tells the 12 that glory and status in the kingdom is opposite to the way the world does things. In the world those with glory and position lord it over their subjects. They exploit those under them and take advantage of them. They use their power for their own gain, at the expense of those they rule.

But God's kingdom is different. The glory seeker should willingly choose humiliation and lowliness; they should become the lowest servant on the totem pole. If you want to go high, you'd better go low.

Or, whoever humbles himself will be exalted. Earthly lowliness is the door to kingdom glory.

What does this mean for us? It means we ought to abandon our hopes of earthly position and glory. We should aim instead to serve and assist, to labor for others and to gladly take orders. One pastor used to tell me everyone wants to be a servant until someone treats them like one. I'm afraid that's true.

In order to get low enough to serve all, we'll have to stop thinking so highly of ourselves. We need to view ourselves as God does. God doesn't think humble service is beneath our dignity. We shouldn't either.

And let's notice the kind of service here is probably spiritual service, namely, service which has the aim of bringing people to God. Why? Because Jesus uses himself as the example. Even he came to serve. Serve in what way? By ransoming us with his life, i.e. Spiritual Service.

So think of yourself, determined to be the spiritual servant of all, serving others with word and prayer and personal holiness, leading men to God, whether they be saved or lost. Picture yourself giving up your life to do so. Jesus gave up his life to do so in a matter of hours. We will give up our lives to do so over several decades, but it's the same in principle.

Shun any idea of being in the spotlight. Forget earthly recognition and stop angling for position. Let it all go. Give up any ambition for such position and you will find yourself with a very high position indeed.

## **Conclusion**

So seek glory, brothers. Seek it through suffering, seek it through service, and submit to God's grace and will through it all. Don't stifle your appetite for glory, as if you could. Rather entice it with Biblical promises of reward and glory to come. Then become like Jesus in lowliness that you may become like him in exaltation.