

**TEXARKANA REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH****SERIES TITLE: MARK 10:45 | SERMON TITLE: TEACHING IS NOT ENOUGH****DAVE WAGNER**

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**The Greatest Teacher Who Ever Lives**

Jesus is the greatest teacher who ever lives, and I'm not referring to clear communication. Of course I think he is a good communicator, far better than some preachers I've heard. But I refer to the content and authority of his teaching; no man ever spake like this man. Everyone marveled at his teaching for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

In a sense Jesus brought nothing new in his teaching. I've told you before there is ethical continuity between old and new testaments. The morality of the old is identical to the morality of the new, and so Jesus brought nothing new in that sense.

Nor is the theology any different. We serve an immutable God, who does not change, and so we must expect unity of theology between the testaments.

What was new in Jesus' teaching was the system updates. With the coming of Jesus the kingdom of God began its official invasion into the world, and that was certainly new. The OT predicted the kingdom of God; Jesus fulfilled that prediction, or part of it.

And Jesus brought new revelations about the kingdom, things which had been kept hidden since the foundation of the world. For example, no one knew the kingdom would come before it comes; Jesus taught that before the final end of time the kingdom breaks into the middle of history to gather disciples for eternal life.

Beyond all this, Jesus taught the world more about God than anyone before or since. This is because Jesus is from God in a deeper sense than anyone else, and it is because Jesus not only speaks the teaching of God but he also actually IS the teaching of God; he is the Word of God.

All this to say Jesus is the greatest teacher who ever lives.

Now we ought to give thanks to God for this fact, since we sinners are in great need of a teacher. Forgive me for stating the obvious, but we are not a clever race. Someone will object that we put a man on the moon. I respond that yesterday alone we put 125,000 babies in the grave.

Someone will object further that abortion has nothing to do with our intelligence, and so why do we need a teacher? I respond that abortion has everything to do with intelligence, because the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. So, the greatest evidence of human stupidity is human wickedness. I really couldn't care less about technological advance.

No, the Bible says men suffer from mental darkness resulting from sin. Their hearts are clouded with a fog of ignorance. Their eyes are blind and their ears are deaf. Their heart is fat, and thus insensitive to truth. Simply and plainly, the children of Adam are fools.

And this makes God's provision of Jesus Christ, the Supreme Teacher, the more wonderful. Christ comes to alleviate our intellectual darkness; Christ comes to remove what has been called the Noetic Effects of Sin, that is, the destructive effects of sin upon the human mind.

We are right then to view Jesus' work of teaching as one aspect of the salvation he works for us. Don't miss this: In order to redeem us entirely, Christ must address our mental darkness by teaching.

Now this is abundantly witnessed to in the Gospels, and Mark is no different. While we do not have much of Jesus' teaching recorded in Mark, what we have is Jesus repeatedly presented as a teacher and preacher.

### **Where's The Atonement Theology?**

But after we've considered Christ's supreme role as a teacher, and our need of redemptive teaching, and Mark's presentation of Jesus as a teacher, there's a big question that needs answering: Is it the case that the core redemptive need of man is Christ's teaching? In other words, does Jesus' salvation consist chiefly in his teaching us the moral will of God? Does being saved by Jesus mean primarily that Jesus teaches us the right way to please God by righteous action and we obey him?

Someone will say, "Of course not, Dave! We know Jesus came to do more than teach us; he had to die to deliver us from sin." So why would I even ask the question?

Here's why I would ask the question: Do you realize we've passed almost 10 chapters of Mark without a single word about atonement theology? We've seen Jesus exorcise, teach, preach and heal. We've seen him debate and argue. We've seen him say he came from God. We've even seen him predict his coming crucifixion. But we have not heard a word about the meaning of his death.

Someone might object, "But Dave, that's because he hasn't died yet! The Gospel is leading up to that point, at which time we can expect more commentary on the meaning of his death." That would be a good answer, except that it is nearly false.

Because, the fact is, this entire Gospel contains almost not a word about the meaning of Christ's death! We could almost pardon the man who read this Gospel and came to the conclusion that the means by which Jesus saves us is nothing other than teaching God's will and calling us to obey it.

Almost. Out of 16 chapters there are two sentences, and two sentences only, which comment on the meaning of Jesus' death; both are spoken by Jesus.

One is 14.24, which speaks of Jesus' covenant blood being poured out for many. The other is today's text, 10.45.

Now all of this leads to the truth I chiefly want to present to you today. It is this: While the teaching of Christ is necessary to our total salvation, yet teaching alone is not enough to fully save us. We need more than teaching. Specifically, we need Ransoming.

### **To Give His Life a Ransom for Many**

So what is a ransom? The word can refer to a slave who is purchased out of slavery, or a property which has been lost through financial ruin, and which is later purchased and given back to the original owner. In both cases we have the idea of something or someone that has been lost, for which a payment is made to recover it, or them.

Of course in today's context we think of criminals who kidnap the child of a wealthy person and demand a huge sum for their release; this also fits into our idea: A payment given for the release of someone who has been lost or taken captive.

And so, for the first time in Mark, Jesus refers to his death redemptively. His death, then, is a payment designed to release something which has been lost, something being held captive.

That "something" Jesus calls "the many." We know he's talking about his people. But this means his people have been lost and are being held captive. The question is, lost how and captive to whom?

Mark never answers the question directly. In fact, to my knowledge, none of the Gospels handle the theology of Adam's fall and its effects on the race. We have to go to Paul for those answers.

On the other hand, we do have a hint in Mark's Gospel as to who or what is holding God's people captive. Apart from teaching, what activity has Jesus been engaged in throughout the Gospel? Exorcism.

And what is exorcism? It is the release of men from demonic control. Possibly this should point us to an answer about who holds God's people captive. In this case the answer is Satan.

So does that mean the death of Jesus is a ransom paid to Satan? The Bible never teaches anything of the sort, though the early church did teach this, and it is called The Ransom Theory of the Atonement. The ransom cannot be said to be paid to Satan, as if Satan had any rights in the matter or were the one needing appeasement.

Far better would be to consider God the father as the one to whom ransom needs to be paid; not as if the father is a villain who kidnaps the people, but rather that God is holy, righteous and good, and his justice has been offended by the sins of his people. Christ's death is a payment made to God above all, and it is designed to rescue us out of a multifaceted captivity.

Multifaceted, because there are a number of aspects to it. First, we are captive to God's law. The law condemns us and holds us prisoner, and we are under its curse. Second, we are captive to sin; we are slaves to sin and are not free to do as we please, even though we wish to do right. Third, we are captive to the devil, who has bound us and forces us to do his will, whether we like it or not.

The death of Christ then, as a payment to satisfy the anger of God, ransoms us out of each aspect of this captivity. Jesus was born of a woman, born under the law, that he might rescue those under the law. Jesus was hung on a tree that he might absorb our curse, since cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree. Jesus died to sin, and brought us into his death so we might be freed from sin, since everyone who dies is freed from sin.

And in his death Jesus smashed the serpent's head, and cast out the ruler of this world, so that we are now free from demonic control. Jesus has ransomed us from law, sin and Satan. He did this by offering himself to God as a death-payment, to remove God's wrath from us and purchase us out of the power of our enemies, law, sin and Satan.

**You Need More than a Teacher**

So do you see you need far more than a teacher? You need someone to rescue you from cosmic forces too powerful for you. You need enlightenment, but you need far more than enlightenment; You need a full blown salvation.

Salvation isn't merely taking Jesus as your favorite moral teacher, and you his disciple, the way someone might be a disciple of Calvin, or Augustine, or Plato or Aristotle. All of these men have ethical systems you could follow. You need more than an ethical system. You need someone to bind the strongman so you can escape his house. You need someone to kill the devil so you can be released from doing his will.

There have been preachers who talked as if salvation were nothing more than following Jesus' ethical teaching. As if we needed nothing more than ethical enlightenment and a good moral way. Biblically speaking, that's nonsense.

That's like saying all Israel needed in their battle with the Philistines was a good moral teacher. Suppose that when David reached the front line he began preaching good moral sense to the soldiers. The soldiers might speak up and say, "Uh, David, thanks for that moral teaching, but what we really need right now is someone to kill Goliath."

Jesus didn't come only to preach on the front lines, though he did do that. Jesus came to kill Goliath.

And this is one more place that Jesus overwhelms every religious leader and philosopher the world has ever seen. All Confucius can do is teach you the Way. All Plato can do is teach you the Good. All Augustine can do is point you to someone else. All Descartes can do is provide a few hours interesting reading.

All any of these people can do is TALK. Talk, talk, talk. All talk. But we don't need someone to talk. We need someone to DIE! I don't need clever philosophy; I need someone to kill the Serpent. I need someone to fulfill the law. I need someone to absorb the curse. I need someone to die to sin and then baptize me into His death.

I don't need to be taught; I need to be saved.

Or, to return to our text, I need to be ransomed. I'm broke and I lost the whole farm and I need someone who is really rich to buy it back.

I need a body to be broken, I need blood to be spilled, I need a Savior to die.

## **So Many Needs**

And that's not all I need. I also need a Holy Spirit to come from heaven and take up residence in my heart and bring me to life and make me see the glory of God in the face of Christ.

And then I need to be set apart as holy. And then I need to be purified from sin every day of my life. And then I need an intercessor to plead my case before the Father. And then I need the Son of God to rip apart the sky and descend in flaming fire, with his holy angels, taking vengeance on those who know not God and obey not the Gospel.

And then I need my body to be resurrected, and I need to be saved in the judgment, and I need to be given the promised land, i.e. the whole earth renewed and revitalized. And then I need the presence of God forevermore.

Do you see the point? Anyone who reduces salvation to mere moral teaching and reformation is an unbelievable idiot. They are anti-Christ. Salvation is not an educational program. Salvation is a cataclysmic inbreaking of the eternal and infinite Creator into our world, taking violent action to overthrow the devil and re-create mankind and the whole planet. And he does it all through the spilling of Jesus' blood. I trust you see the difference.

So we need teaching, most certainly. But teaching is not enough. I need a heavenly teacher but also, and even more, I need a heavenly ransom. I need a supernatural salvation. And the only place in the whole world anyone is ever going to find that is in Christ.