

# Mark 10:32-45

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[ 0 : 00 ] I want us to kind of start this year, this and-depth year by looking at the kind of church we want to be really. And looking at what does it mean to be ministry-minded, to remind me and to remind you about who we are.

I suppose how we do church. And so very often, normally we go through books of the Bible, that's what I prefer to do. But we're probably going to look at a number of small passages. And I want to start with one verse in Mark 10.

It's Jesus' mission statement in Mark 10 verse 45. Mark 10 verse 45, a very famous verse. It says, For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.

I'm always a little bit cynical when it comes to mission statements. Churches have a mission statement particularly. At Kitty Islands, she wrote an article on the plague of mission statements. And she said, I wanted to write a funny piece on mission statements. But what I quickly realised was that nearly all mission statements are laughable. Most of them are not funny. They are really funny.

[ 1 : 12 ] And I don't know, you might have a mission statement for your life, some people do that today. I'd rather. But I do think Jesus did. I think Jesus had a mission statement. And here it is, it is the verse I just read.

For the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. If you are going to have a mission statement, it is going to capture your values.

It is going to capture your goals. It is going to capture how you want to achieve them. It is going to capture your identity. Now just look at that verse I read to you.

And first of all I want to see this. Jesus' mission statement identifies who he is. It identifies who he is. Who is he? Who is he from verse 45?

How does he describe himself? Can you look down? The Son of Man. It captures his values, doesn't it? Can you see that? What are his values?

[ 2 : 20 ] He has come not to be served, but to serve. And it spells out his goal. What is he aiming at? His goal is to lay down his life as a ransom for many. So let's think about those three things. First of all, it identifies for us who Jesus is.

And do you notice how he describes himself? It is his favourite self designation. If you read the gospels, you will know this is how Jesus is always referring to himself.

He refers to himself as the Son of Man. And that doesn't just mean, oh, he's another human being. It could mean that. And in one sense, it does mean that. That he's become just another human being like that.

Splashing bones. Except without sin, the Bible says. He's entered into the human race. He's got an authentic human existence. In every respect.

Psychologically and emotionally and socially. He's one of us. But can you notice it doesn't say for even a Son of Man. It doesn't say that to the left. It says the Son of Man.

[ 3 : 24 ] He is the Son of Man. And there's a number of allusions where he refers to himself in this way. And it's all pointing back to Daniel Chapter 7. Let me read to you from Daniel Chapter 7.

Try and imagine the scene. It's a picture of a court. The court of heaven. The court is in session. And the Ancient of Days, God Almighty, is surrounded by thousands upon thousands.

10,000 times 10,000 of angels. There's angels as far as you can see. And the books are opened. And then you read this.

I saw in the light visions. And behold, with the clouds of heaven, there came like one, a Son of Man. And he came to the Ancient of Days.

And he was presented before him. And to him, the Son of Man was given dominion and glory and kingdoms. That all peoples and nations and languages should serve him. And this guy's dominion is an everlasting dominion.

[ 4 : 30 ] Which shall not pass away. And his kingdom shall not be destroyed. You see what it's telling you? It's saying that the greatest human being who's ever lived. The greatest human being that you can imagine, he's like the Son of Man.

The greatest person who's ever walked. There has never been, nor will there ever be, anyone worthy of glory or of, or adulation or praise.

He is truly awesome. And so even someone with the ultimate authority that Jesus has. Even the Son of Man, look at him out at 1045.

He came not to be served, but to serve. It's the US Open and the tennis at the moment, isn't it? I don't know if you've seen the club, Serena Williams has retired. And it's an amazing thing, isn't it? What he says, probably better at home alone. But you know when they sit down at the end of their games.

[ 5 : 38 ] And they go sit by the uplier's chair. And they sit in the sun, and if it's too hot, the ball boy or the ball girl runs to them as quickly as they can with an umbrella. They stand upright with an umbrella.

And there's a drink that's handed to them. And there's a towel given to them instantly. They're the great ones, aren't they?

They are served. They nod, or they give an eyebrow and a ball right in their hand. Now I know it's probably a bad little speech because I don't tend to be a soothe, but forget about that for a minute. But the point of the solution is that the tennis players, they're the great ones, aren't they? When Serena Williams sits down, Roger Federer, Rafa Nadal, they're the great ones, and they are served. So can you imagine a leak sprints in Flushing Meadow where the US Open is?

And an announcement comes over the tannoy. It says, one of the toilets is blocked, can Serena come and unlock it? Can Nadal, can he come off court and fix the gathering?

[ 6 : 47 ] You can never do it with you. It would never happen. Because they are the great ones, and they're the ones in the limelight. So in the workplace, there's always someone in charge, isn't there?

In the workplace, there's always a boss. I remember in the office that I used to work in, there was a woman in charge of the stationary cupboard. And didn't you know it? She had the keys to the stationary cupboard.

And without her permission, you couldn't get your stationary, you couldn't have a pen, you couldn't do a piece of paper. Now I know I'm down here on the stationary cupboard, so I think of the past. But if you wanted to function in that office, if you wanted your paper clips, and your pieces of paper, and your pens, she was in charge.

Well, Jesus is not in charge of the stationary cupboard. In Daniel 7, what he's telling us is that Jesus, the one who we worship in the morning, is in charge of absolutely everything.

[ 7 : 49 ] That's what this term, the Son of Man, means. He's God's universal ruler. He is the one to whom all authority belongs in heaven and on earth.

Sometimes you see on people's desks, on their computers, the boss is coming, look, isn't it? Well, the boss is coming. That's what this is saying.

This is who Jesus is, according to Daniel 7. He's given all authority and glory and sovereign power and all peoples. It doesn't matter where you're from, whether you're from Iran or Afghanistan or Argentina or England or America.

All nations, men, women, boys and girls, in every language, they're going to worship him. And his dominion is everlasting and his kingdom will never pass away.

I do say, yeah. Yeah, I'm sure it was alright. But it is actually happening.

[ 8 : 54 ] Until you look at the history of the last 2,000 years, and it is happening. His kingdom is a universal kingdom. It is coming and it is growing. It is estimated that 35,000 people will become Christians today.

I find that stat just mind-blowing. I thought it was 3,500, but no. You've got to be Googled. It's 35,000 people will become Christians all around the world.

It is a growing kingdom. It is a universal kingdom. And the epicentre of the kingdom is no longer in Europe or America. The great growth is in places like Africa, South America and China.

And what Daniel saw all those hundreds of years before is actually happening before our very eyes if we look for it.

And this God, this God is coming to the house. The house of this world. If I can put it like this without being blasphemous.

[10:00] If God is in the house, He is the one in Mark 10 to 45 who's got the candle on. God is the one to make of the tea. Because even the son of man who comes, not to be served, but to serve.

And that's astonishing, isn't it? Do you remember what they said when, what Jesus said to Peter when they came to arrest little Jesus? They came to arrest Jesus in the garden and Peter pulls out a sword to protect Jesus.

And what did Jesus say to him? Jesus says to him, doesn't he? Put away your sword. Put away your sword, Peter. Don't you realise, Peter, that I can appeal to my Father in heaven and you will at once send me all the twelve legions of angels.

But how then should the scriptures be fulfilled that it must be so? What does it mean to be served? What does it mean to be served? To be served is to have other people doing things to you. It's how people work for you. It's how people assisting you.

[11:19] It's how people carrying your bags. It's how people that will get things done. It is how people that will make life just a little bit easier for you and better for you.

But the son of man, he did not come for that purpose. The son of man did not come to be served. Jesus said, I did not come into this world to get you to do things for me.

And that might come as a massive surprise to you. You might have thought that Christianity was all about us doing things for God. Doing things for Jesus.

It's about us carrying favour with Jesus. About getting on his right side by doing things. And no, Jesus said, if that's what you think this morning, you've completely misunderstood. The gospel is not about what you do for me.

It's about what life comes to do for you. Jesus is served by angels. He is served by myriads of angels. In the garden, when they came to arrest him, he could have flipped his fingers.

[12:31] And hundreds of thousands of angels turned up. He didn't need Peter with his little sword. But he says to Peter, put away your sword. Because that isn't the reason I can. I didn't come to be served.

But I come to be served by giving my wife as a ransom. And you notice, if you look at verse 32 of chapter 10. And they are amazed, astonished into what was there.

And those who followed were afraid. There's something about the look in his eye as he walks to Jerusalem. There's something about his determination. There's something about his whole demeanour which astonishes them.

He's striding towards his death. He's deliberately, in a very focused way, going to Jerusalem for the last time. And do you remember Thomas, one of the disciples, said, listen, we may as well go with him and die.

Because if he goes to Jerusalem, they will, okay. And three times in Mark 8, 9 and 10, Jesus has warned them, each time I'm going to die. I'm going to be delivered.

[13:35] I'm going to be crucified. I'm going to be handed over and nailed to a cross. He's gone three times in three chapters. And now he's on his way and he's staring into the face of his own death.

Even the Son of Man. The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve. And to give his life to the rights of the man. And so that's the first thing. He's identifying who he is.

He is the one who is born into the human race. But he's more than that. He is the ultimate human. He is God's universal ruler.

The one to all authority in heaven and earth is being given. That's who he is. But why then is he can? What's his purpose? Why does he go to the cross? Why does he strive towards Jerusalem? That leaves us for the second of this mission statement. Not only does it explain to us who Jesus is, but it captures his values. Three things I want to say about that.

[14:35] His values. His values. That he came to serve instead of being served. The first thing is this.

That's contrary to human nature. It's against how we naturally are to that means. Edith lived in a little world bound by north, south, east and west by Edith.

We are incurably self-centred, aren't we? We're self-absorbed, self-protected. If you want evidence of that, go on your own social media. And you see it here in the disciples of the university file.

James and John, the sons of seven, came back to him and they said to Jesus, Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we are for you. That is shocking. In the previous verses, Jesus said, I'm going to be handed over to the Gentiles.

I'll be mocked. I'll be spat on. I will be flogged. It'll kill me. And then James and John come and say, And we want you to do whatever we ask. It's a shockingly selfish prayer.

[15:45] It's a genial kind of prayer. It's the sort of thing that kids say to their parents. But we know better than to fall for it. Will you give me whatever I ask? It's incredibly insensitive too, in the light of what Jesus has been saying.

He's just described as suffering. He's about to endure. He's already walking in a purposeful way to a kind of death. John Stott describes this prayer request as the worst, most blatantly self-centered prayer ever prayed.

Can you imagine the prayer meeting on Wednesday? I say, is there anything anyone else would like prayer for? I really don't pray that God would do whatever I ask Him.

Can you imagine it? Listen to me in verse 35. Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask for. And He said, what do you want me to do for you? And He said, you grant us the sixth one on your right hand and the one on your left in your glory. Jesus said, you know what you're talking about. You know what you're asking for. You've got no understanding.

I didn't come. I didn't come. I didn't come to be served. And he said, then what do you want me to do for you? And he said, your grand test has said, one on your right hand and one on your left in your glory.

[16:46] Jesus said, you know what you're talking about. You know what you're asking for. You've got no understanding. I didn't come to be served.

But I came to be served to give my life as a rancid man. It doesn't mean he came to be servile. It doesn't mean that Jesus didn't give you what you want. It doesn't mean that Jesus kind of panned at your selfishness.

What if Jesus had given them what they wanted? What if he could answer their prayers in the way that they liked? Do you know what would have happened to them? Look over to Mark 15.

You'll see it. Mark 15, verse 25. 27. Jesus said to them, actually, you will all fall away.

For it is written by the Lord, like the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered. They're all left. They all fell away.

[17:50] Jesus was not enthroned in some gorgeous cathedral between two campbells. But the Lord Jesus was enthroned on a cross between two thieves.

One on his right and one on his left. One day, they will take Prince Charles, and they will not take him to Pentadal Prison, and hang him.

They will take him to Westminster Avenue, and they will crown him. And he will become King Charles of the Lord. King of England. Just imagine Charles being cracked for his coronation.

And they say, Charles, as you process into the Abbey, into Westminster Abbey, and as you walk down the aisle, everyone is going to turn their back on you. And as you get up to the front, there will be peers of the round in all their finery, with their ermine collars, and their red robes.

The moderator of the Church of Stockholm will be there with the Bible. And when you make your way to the transept at the front of the church, they will spit in your face. And when the Archbishop lifts the crown, and as he's about to crown you, a sniper, somewhere in the eaves, is going to fire a bullet, and it will shoot you through the head.

[19:10] Shocking, isn't it? That's how it was for Jesus. That's how his kingdom came. His crucifixion was his coronation. It is gory, and yet there is glory there as well.

And that's what the disciples have understood. The kind of kingdom that Jesus is bringing to this world is totally different from any other kingdom. It's clearly not what the disciples had in mind at all. It's culturally genuine nature. We are essentially self-centered, and self-protecting, and self-absorbed, and self-advancing. Even in church, we are in our lives for ourselves.

What did that do for me? What is it for me? I didn't get much out of that. Rather than what can I do to serve others? So his value is a contrast with human nature, but it's also really counter-cultural.

It's so different from our culture. It runs contrary, doesn't it, to the Catholic word of politics. And not just politics, sports slam. That people out for themselves, to make a name for themselves, whatever

the cost.

[ 20 : 20 ] Look what Jesus says in verses 42 to 44. Jesus said, you know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles, lordly no with them, and their great ones exercise authority over them, but it shall not be so among you.

Not so with you. Not so with you. Those four words characterise Christian leadership.

And so the values that Jesus brings are contrary to human nature. So whether it's in the world of sports, or the world of politics, or the world of big business, you know how it is, people are playing the greasy power.

They'll step on others to get there. Somebody has said, in the paradoxical topography of heaven, the way up is the way down.

That's what he's saying, is that the way to become great in the kingdom of God must become a servant. And whoever wants to be first must be a slave of all. He's redefining greatness.

[ 21 : 36 ] True greatness is to serve the needs of others. You see, Christian leadership is servanthood. We pay lip service a lot, so we call our political leaders, don't we, those who are in government, we call them ministers of state, servants of state.

That's the effect the gospel has had in this country. I don't know if you realise that. Certainly don't think our leaders realise that. That they are there to serve.

Where did that idea come from? It came from Jesus. And the trouble is, without Jesus, it doesn't happen. It's a great idea. But without Jesus, what do we see if we see self-serving, hungry for power, greedy for praise, desperate to be wanted, desperate to be recognised, desperate to make a name for ourselves, desperate to be learned.

And so what Jesus says, it's not only contrary to our human nature, it's counter-cultural. It's not really the way things operate, the way things operate in our world. And the third thing is counterintuitive.

Some of you desperately need to hear this this morning. You beat yourself up, believing that you've not done enough. for Jesus. Isn't that right? You said to yourself, I'm not good enough to be a Christian.

[ 22 : 59 ] I don't pray. I don't read my Bible enough. I don't evangelise enough. I don't serve enough. And the more worried you become about that, the more tight you become.

And Jesus says, that's not why I came. Isn't that amazing? Jesus did not come to get you to do things for him. I didn't get you to come to try harder.

I didn't get you to be better, come to be better. I came to do things for you. Not to get you to do something for me.

And that's counterintuitive, isn't it, for all of us. But until you get that, until you understand that, you have not understood the gospel. But once you understand that, once you understand it's not about me, it's not about me serving him.

It's about him coming to serve me. And so it frees you. It frees you. It frees you to do what? It frees you to serve others, paradoxically. So let me ask you this question.

[ 24 : 06 ] Will you let yourself be served? Will you allow yourself to be served by Jesus? And pride is the problem, isn't it?

It's my problem. And we're reading about a man who came home drunk every night. And every night his wife had to help him to bed. And every night she'd take him upstairs, she'd go to dress him, she'd put him to bed.

And one night when she took him to bed, she said, John, let me pray for you. And he grumbled and he grumbled okay. And so she started to pray and she said, Lord, I pray for my husband who lies here drunk.

And a little voice came out from under the covers, don't tell him I'm drunk, tell him I'm asleep. And that's our problem, isn't it? We're too proud to admit a story.

We won't climb down, we won't humble ourselves. We won't admit we've got a problem. We won't admit that we need Jesus. Early on in the chapter there's a really important little section where the parents of believers bring little children to Jesus and the disciples lash them away.

[ 25 : 21 ] It's too important for that. They're bringing their children so that Jesus might bless them and the disciples send them away. It's far too important. And Jesus says, no, no, no, unless you receive the kingdom like one of these, you cannot answer the kingdom.

You've got to become like a start you owe us a little child. It doesn't mean you've got to become childish, but it does mean that you've got to become a child of life.

A little child is tumultingly dependent. They are brought to the Lord Jesus. They rely on others to supply their needs and that's how people become Christians. And that's how you get to the kingdom of God.

And so how is this possible? Here's my third point. I'm running out of time. Here's my third point. We are incurably self-centered. And we live in a culture where self-promotion is the order of the day. And so we're like little birds, you know, the little birds caught in an oil spillage and they are trapped and they're trying to get away with the covenant stuff. And we're contaminated by sin in our culture. [ 26 : 29 ] Selfishness and self-absorption. We can't shake it. And yet Jesus has come to do something about it. And so here's the way that he's coming to deal with it.

Not by giving his life as an example. Jesus is not Gandhi. Inspirational figure that he was. And we can be challenged and we can be inspired by the example but the problem is he can't live like Jesus.

Jesus did not come into this world to give himself as an example. An example of sacrificial love. He came to give himself as a ransom. And the only time we use the word ransom is when there's been a kidnapping.

In the ancient world they did a prisoner of war camps. People were taken prisoner in the ancient world. An army would take prisoners and they were either killed or they were made slaves. And the only way you could get them free is by paying a ransom. And that's the picture of the Angus book. And that's what Jesus is saying about his mission statement. He's explaining to us why he's coming to this world.

[ 27 : 37 ] He didn't just come to give you an example of life. Because quite frankly it would crush us. And we'd say, wouldn't we, well that is wonderful but I cannot live like that.

That's not maybe something you were saying today. Because an example of sacrificial love just condemns you. It doesn't help you. Jesus says, no, I actually came to pay the ransom price.

To set you free. There's a famous illustration, isn't that? Of the two people that, let's say me and you were walking across a bridge. And I want to show you how much I love you.

And so, I run across to the side of the bridge and jump over the bridge into the water shouting, I love you. What are you going to say? Oh, he loves me.

So you're going to say that he needs his mates. It's a really poor example. It's pointless. And yet, if you've fallen off the bridge and are in the water and I jump up over the side of the bridge and rescue you, that's very different, isn't it?

[ 28 : 42 ] That shows my love for you. That's the meaning of the cross. Even the Son of Man, he came to give his life. No one takes his life away from him. He gives his life away.

As a substitute, let me finish with an illustration. There's a bridge on the Potomac River. The 14th bridge, but it's now called that Arlan D. Williams Bridge.

We have something that happened in 1982. On the 13th of January 1982, during an extraordinary period of freezing weather, Air Florida Flight 90 churned off from the EI of Washington Airport. It failed to gain altitude. It crashed into the 14th street bridge. It hit six cars out of a truck killing four motores. After the crash into the bridge, the plane continued forward and it plunged into the freezing river.

Soon after, only the tail section remained afloat. And only six of the airliners, 79 passengers, survived the initial crash. And they were even escaped the sinking plane.

[ 29 : 49 ] According to the other five passengers, one passenger continued to help all the others reach the rescue groups dropped by the helicopter. Repeatedly, he passed the line to others instead of using it himself.

His name was Arlathan D. Williams. While the other five were being taken ashore by the helicopter, the tail section of the Boeing 737 shifted and sank into the water and dragged Arlathan D. Williams into the water.

The next day, the Washington Post described his heroism. It said he was about 50 years old and one of half a dozen survivors clinging to twisted wreckage bobbing about at the night in Petonga River. When the first helicopter arrived to the cockpit of the police crew, he seemed the most alert. Life vests were dropped and then a flotation board. The man passed then to the others on two occasions. The crew recalled that he handed away a lifeline from the hovering machine that could

have dragged him to safety.

The helicopter crew who rescued five people lifted a woman to the riverbank. They dragged three more persons across the ice to safety and then the lifeline sent a woman who was trying to swim away from the second wreckage.

[ 31 : 03 ] The helicopter returned to the scene but Arlathan D. Williams was gone. And every time they lowered the lifeline he passed it somehow. Again and again they pulled it up and there was someone else in the room.

And every time he gave away his place of salvation to someone else. And the last time they got back he'd gone. He died. He died to what? Saving others.

Substituting himself for others. Giving them his place of deliverance. He took the destruction that was coming upon them and four or five people owed their lives to him.

And that's what Jesus is saying his mission is. That's why he came to the human race. And that's why he came one of us to go to the cross. He's not dragged there against his will.

It's not some terrible little tragedy. He deliberately set his face towards Jerusalem and he goes for this very purpose. And not just for four or five people. Can you see our course for many?

[ 32 : 13 ] For many? And that warns you doesn't it? That warns you as we close that it's not everyone. He's warning us that not everyone is going to be rescued.

And so the question as we finish this morning is this. Are you one of the men? There is no reason why any should perish. It's really interesting how the chapter ends is to do with plan part in the way.

Jesus is on his way to choose them. And he won't stop for the disciples but in verse 49 he does stop on his tracks. All the grandiose schemes of Jesus and John he won't stop but there is one man who cries out for mercy who recognises he is and Jesus stops.

And he cries out Son of David have mercy on me. And a blind man has made you see. They are not physically blind and seen. But there are none so blind as will not see.

And his disciples they wouldn't see what Jesus was telling them. They didn't want to hear it. They didn't want to see it. But Jesus stops to show mercy.

[ 33 : 24 ] The Bible says this. It says this to you this morning so that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. So will you call to him this morning?

And if you call him you will stop. and he will have mercy and he will say God's name. Thank you.