

CHAPTER 10

In this chapter, we have,

- I.** Christ's dispute with the Pharisees concerning divorce (v. 1-12).
- II.** The kind entertainment he gave to the little children that were brought to him to be blessed (v. 13-16).
- III.** His trial of the rich man that enquired what he must do to get to heaven (v. 17-22).
- IV.** His discourse with his disciples, upon that occasion, concerning the peril of riches (v. 23-27), and the advantage of being impoverished for his sake (v. 28-31).
- V.** The repeated notice he gave his disciples of his sufferings and death approaching (v. 32-34).
- VI.** The counsel he gave to James and John, to think of suffering with him, rather than of reigning with him (v. 35-40).
- VII.** The cure of Bartimeus, a poor blind man (v. 46-52). All which passages of story we had the substance of before, Matthew 19 and 20.

◀11▶ MARK 10:1-12

THE DOCTRINE OF DIVORCE

Our Lord Jesus was an itinerant Preacher, did not continue long in a place, for the whole land of Canaan was his parish, or diocese, and therefore he would visit every part of it, and give instructions to those in the remotest corners of it. Here we have him in the *coasts* of Judea, by the further side of Jordan eastward, as we found him, not long since, in the utmost borders westward, near Tyre and Sidon. Thus was his circuit like that of the sun, from whose light and heat nothing is hid. Now here we have him,

I. *Resorted to* by the *people*, v. 1. Wherever he was, they flocked after him in crowds; they came to him *again*, as they had done when he had formerly been in these parts, and, *as he was wont, he taught them again*.

Note, Preaching was Christ's constant practice; it was what he was used to, and, wherever he came, he did *as he was wont*. In Matthew it is said, *He healed them*; here it is said, *He taught them*: his cures were to confirm his doctrine, and to recommend it, and his doctrine was to explain his cures, and illustrate them. He *taught them again*. Note, Even those whom Christ hath taught, have need to be taught *again*. Such is the fulness of the Christian doctrine, that there is still more to be learned; and such our forgetfulness, that we need to be reminded of what we do know.

II. We have him *disputed with* by the Pharisees, who envied the progress of his spiritual arms, and did all they could to obstruct and oppose it; to divert him, to perplex him, and to prejudice the people against him.

Here is,

- 1.** A question they started concerning divorce (v. 2); *Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?* This was a good question, if it had been well put, and with a humble desire to know the mind of God in this matter; but they proposed it, *tempting him*, seeking an occasion against him, and an opportunity to expose him, which side soever he should take of the question. Ministers must stand upon their guard, lest, under pretence of being advised with, they be ensnared.
- 2.** Christ's reply to them with a question (v. 3); *What did Moses command you?* This he asked them, to testify his respect to the law of Moses, and to show that he came not to destroy it; and to engage them to a universal impartial respect for Moses's writings and to compare one part of them with another.
- 3.** The fair account they gave of what they found in the law of Moses, expressly concerning divorce, v. 4. Christ asked, *What did Moses command you?* They own that Moses only *suffered*, or *permitted*, a man to write his wife a *bill of divorce*, and to put *her away*, ⁽⁴⁰²⁾Deuteronomy 24:1. "If you *will* do it, you must do it *in writing*, delivered into her own hand, and so put her away, and never return to her again."
- 4.** The answer that Christ gave to their question, in which he abides by the doctrine he had formerly laid down in this case (⁽⁴⁰⁵⁾Matthew 5:32), *That whosoever puts away his wife, except for fornication, causeth her to commit adultery*. And to clear this he here shows,

(1.) That the reason why Moses, in his *law*, permitted divorce, was such, as that they ought not to make use of that permission; for it was only *for the hardness of their hearts* (v. 5), lest, if they were not permitted to divorce their wives, they should murder them; so that none must put away their wives but such as are willing to own that their hearts were so hard as to need this permission.

(2.) That the account which Moses, in this *history*, gives of the institution of marriage, affords such a reason against divorce, as amounts to a prohibition of it. So that if the question be, *What did Moses command?* (v. 3), it must be answered, “Though by a temporary proviso he allowed divorce to the Jews, yet by an eternal reason he forbade it to all the children of Adam and Eve, and that is it which we must abide by.”

Moses tells us,

[1.] That God made man *male and female, one male, and one female*; so that *Adam could not* put away his wife and take another, for there was no other to take, which was an intimation to all his sons, that they *must not*.

[2.] When this male and this female were, by the ordinance of God, joined together in holy marriage, the law was, That a man must *leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife* (v. 7); which intimates not only the nearness of the relation, but the perpetuity of it; he shall so cleave to his wife as not to be separated from her.

[3.] The result of the relation is, That, though they are *two*, yet they are *one*, they are *one flesh*, v. 8. The union between them is the most intimate that can be, and, as Dr. Hammond expresses it, a sacred thing that must not be violated.

[4.] God himself was *joined them together*; he has not only, as Creator, fitted them to be comforts and helps meet for each other, but he has, in wisdom and goodness, appointed them who are thus joined together, to live together in love till death parts them. Marriage is not an invention of men, but a divine institution, and therefore is to be religiously observed, and the more, because it is a figure of the mystical inseparable union between Christ and his church.

Now from all this he infers, that men ought not to *put their wives asunder* from them, whom God has put so near them. The bond which God himself has tied, is not to be lightly untied. They who are divorcing their wives for

every offence, would do well to consider what would become of them, if God should in like manner deal with them. See ~~280~~ Isaiah 50:1; ~~281~~ Jeremiah 3:1.

5. Christ's discourse with his disciples, in private, about this matter, v. 10-12. It was an advantage to them, that they had opportunity of personal converse with Christ, not only about gospel mysteries, but about moral duties, for further satisfaction. No more is here related of this private conference, that the law Christ laid down in this case — That it is adultery for a man to put away his wife, and marry another; it is adultery *against the wife* he puts away, it is a wrong to her, a breach of his contract with her, v. 11. He adds, *If a woman shall put away her husband*, that is, elope from him, leave him by consent, and *be married to another*, she *commits adultery* (v. 12), and it will be no excuse at all for her to say that it was with the consent of her husband. Wisdom and grace, holiness and love, reigning in the heart, will make those commands easy which to the carnal mind may be as a heavy yoke.

~~282~~ MARK 10:13-16

CHRIST'S LOVE TO LITTLE CHILDREN

It is looked upon as the indication of a kind and tender disposition to take notice of little children, and this was remarkable in our Lord Jesus, which is an encouragement not only to little children to apply themselves to Christ when they are very young, but to grown people, who are conscious to themselves of weakness and childishness, and of being, through manifold infirmities, helpless and useless, like little children. Here we have,

I. Little children brought to Christ, v. 13. Their parents, or whoever they were that had the nursing of them, brought them to him, that he should *touch them*, in token of his commanding and conferring a blessing on them. It doth not appear that they needed any bodily *cure*, nor were they capable of being *taught*: but it seems,

1. That they had the care of them were mostly concerned *about their souls*, their better part, which ought to be the principal care of all parents for

their children; for that is the principal part, and it is well with them, it if be well with their souls.

2. They believed that Christ's blessing would do their souls good; and therefore to him they brought them, that he might *touch* them, knowing that he could reach their hearts, when nothing their parents could say to them, or do for them, would reach them. We may present our children to Christ, now that he is in heaven, for from thence he can reach them with his blessing, and therein we may act faith upon the fulness and extent of his grace, the kind intimations he hath always given of favour to the seed of the faithful, the tenour of the covenant with Abraham, and the promise *to us and to our children*, especially that great promise of pouring his *Spirit upon our seed*, and his *blessing upon our offspring*, ^{<241B>}Isaiah 44:3.

II. The *discouragement* which the disciples gave to the bringing of children to Christ; *They rebuked them that brought them*; as if they had been sure that they knew their Master's mind in this matter, whereas he had lately cautioned them not to *despise the little ones*.

III. The *encouragement* Christ gave to it.

1. He took it very ill that his disciples should keep them off; *When he saw it, he was much displeased*, v. 14. "What do you mean? Will you hinder me from doing good, from doing good to the rising generation, to the lambs of the flock?" Christ is very angry with his own disciples, if they discountenance any in coming to him themselves, or in bringing their children to him.

2. He ordered that they should be *brought to him*, and nothing said or done to hinder them; suffer *little children*, as soon as they are capable, to *come to me*, to offer up their supplications to me, and to receive instructions from me. Little children are welcome betimes to the throne of grace with their Hosannas.

3. He owned them as members of his church, as they had been of the Jewish church. He came to set up the *kingdom of God* among men, and took this occasion to declare that that kingdom admitted *little children* to be the subjects of it, and gave them a title to the privileges of subjects. Nay, the kingdom of God is to be kept up by such: they must be taken in when they are little children, that they may be secured for hereafter, to bear up the name of Christ.

4. That there must be something of the temper and disposition of little children found in all that Christ will own and bless. We must *receive the kingdom of God as little children* (v. 15); that is, we must stand affected to Christ and his grace as little children do to their parents, nurses, and teachers. We must be *inquisitive*, as children, must learn as children (that is the learning age), and in learning must *believe*, *Oportet discentem credere* — *A learner must believe*. The mind of a child is white paper (*tabula rose* — *a mere blank*), you may write upon it what you will; such must our minds be to the pen of the blessed Spirit. Children are under government; so must we be. *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* We must receive the kingdom of God as the child Samuel did, *Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth*. Little children depend upon their parents' wisdom and care, are carried in their arms, go where they send them, and take what they provide for them; and thus must we receive the *kingdom of God*, with a humble resignation of ourselves to Jesus Christ, and an easy dependence upon him, both for strength and righteousness, for tuition, provision, and a portion.

5. He received the children, and gave them what was desired (v. 16); *He took them up in his arms*, in token of his affectionate concern for them; *put his hands upon them*, as was desired, and *blessed them*. See how he out-did the desires of these parents; they begged he would touch them, but he did more.

(1.) He *took them in his arms*. Now the scripture was fulfilled (²³⁰¹Isaiah 40:11), *He shall gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom*. Time was, when Christ himself was taken up in old Simeon's arms, ⁴¹²⁸Luke 2:28. And now he took up these children, not complaining of the burthen (as Moses did, when he was bid to *carry Israel*, that peevish child, *in his bosom, as a nursing father bears the sucking child*, ⁴⁰¹²Numbers 11:12), but pleased with it. If we in a right manner bring our children to Christ, he will take them up, not only in the arms of his power and providence, but in the arms of his pity and grace (as ²³⁶⁸Ezekiel 16:8); underneath them are the *everlasting arms*.

(2.) He *put his hands upon them*, denoting the bestowing of his Spirit upon them (for that is the hand of the Lord), and his setting them apart for himself.

(3.) He *blessed* them with the spiritual blessings he came to give. Our children are happy, if they have but the *Mediator's blessing* for their

portion. It is true, we do not read that he baptized these children, baptism was not fully settled as the door of admission into the church until after Christ's resurrection; but he asserted their visible church-membership, and by another sign bestowed those blessings upon them, which are now appointed to be conveyed and conferred by baptism, the seal of the promise, which is *to us* and *to our children*.

~~417~~ MARK 10:17-31

A HOPEFUL YOUTH FALLING SHORT OF HEAVEN

I. Here is a *hopeful meeting* between Christ and a *young man*; such he is said to be (~~418~~ Matthew 19:20, 22), and a *ruler* (~~419~~ Luke 18:18), a person of quality. Some circumstances here are, which we had not in Matthew, which makes his address to Christ very promising.

1. He came *running* to Christ, which was an indication of his humility; he laid aside the gravity and grandeur of a ruler, when he came to Christ: thus too he manifested his earnestness and importunity; he *ran* as one *in haste*, and longing to be in conversation with Christ. He had now an opportunity of consulting this great Prophet, in the things that belonged to his peace, and he would not let slip the opportunity.

2. He came to him when he was *in the way*, in the midst of company: he did not insist upon a private conference with him by night, as Nicodemus did, though like him he was a ruler, but *when he shall find him without*, will *embrace* that opportunity of advising with him, *and not be ashamed*, ~~420~~ Song of Solomon 8:1.

3. He *kneeled to him*, in token of the great value and veneration he had for him, as a teacher come from God, and his earnest desire to be taught by him. He bowed the knee to the Lord Jesus, as one that would not only *do obeisance* to him now, but would *yield obedience* to him always; he *bowed the knee*, as one that meant to *bow the soul* to him.

4. His address to him was serious and weighty; *Good Master, what shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?* Eternal life was an article of his creed, though then denied by the Sadducees, a prevailing party: he asks, What shall he do now that he may be happy for ever. Most men enquire for good

to be *had* in this world (^{<1906>}Psalm 4:6), *any good*; he asks for *good to be done* in this world, in order to the enjoyment of the greatest good in the other world; not, Who will make us to *see good*? But, “Who will make us to *do good*?” He enquires for *happiness* in the way of *duty*; the *summum bonum* — *chief good* which Solomon was in quest of, was *that good for the sons of men which they do should do*, ^{<2113>}Ecclesiastes 2:3. Now this was,

(1.) A very serious question in itself; it was about eternal things, and his own concern in those things. Note, *Then* there begins to be some hope of people, when they begin to enquire solicitously, what they shall do to get to heaven.

(2.) It was proposed to a right person, one that was every way fit to answer it, being himself *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, the true way to life, to eternal life; who came *from heaven* on purpose, first to *lay open for us*, and then to *lay open to us*; first to make, and then to make known, the way to *heaven*. Note, Those who would know what they shall do to be saved, must apply themselves to Christ, and enquire of him; it is peculiar to the Christian religion, both to show eternal life, and to show the way to it.

(3.) It was proposed with a good design — to be instructed. We find this same question put by a lawyer, not *kneeling*, but standing up (^{<2125>}Luke 10:25), with a bad design, to pick quarrels with him; he *tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do?* It is not so much the good words as the good *intention* of them that Christ looks at.

5. Christ encouraged this address,

(1.) By *assisting his faith*, v. 18. He called him *good Master*; Christ would have him mean thereby, that he looked upon him to be *God*, since there is none good but *one*, that is *God*, who is one, and his name one, ^{<3149>}Zechariah 14:9. Our English word *God* doubtless hath affinity with *good*; as the Hebrews name God by his power, *Elohim, the strong God*; so we by his goodness, the *good God*.

(2.) By directing his practice (v. 19); *Keep the commandments*; and thou *knowest* what they are. He mentions the six commandments of the second table, which prescribe our duty to our neighbour; he inverts the order, putting the seventh commandment before the sixth, to intimate that *adultery* is a sin no less heinous than *murder* itself. The fifth

commandment is here put last, as that which should especially be remembered and observed, to keep us to all the rest. Instead of the tenth commandment, *Thou shalt not covet*, our Saviour here puts, *Defraud not. Me apostereses* — that is, saith Dr. Hammond, “Thou shalt not rest contented with thy own, and not seek to increase it by the diminution of other men's.” It is a rule of justice not to advance or enrich ourselves by doing wrong or injury to any other.

6. The young man bid fair for heaven, having been free from any open gross violations of the divine commands. Thus far he was able to same in some measure (v. 20), *Master, all these have I observed from my youth.* He thought he had, and his neighbours thought so too. Note, Ignorance of the extent and spiritual nature of the divine law, makes people think themselves in a better condition than they really are. Paul was alive *without the law*. But when he saw that to be *spiritual*, he saw himself to be *carnal*, ~~ROM~~ Romans 7:9, 14. However, he that could say he was free from scandalous sin, went further than many in the way to eternal life. But though we *know nothing by ourselves, yet are we not thereby justified.* ~~COR~~ 1 Corinthians 4:4.

7. Christ had a kindness for him; *Jesus, beholding him, loved him*, v. 21. He was pleased to find that he had lived inoffensively, and pleased to see that he was inquisitive how to live better than so. Christ particularly *loves* to see young people, and rich people, *asking the way to heaven, with their faces thitherward.*

II. Here is a *sorrowful parting* between Christ and this young man.

1. Christ gave him a command of trial, by which it would appear whether he did in sincerity aim at eternal life, and press towards it: he seemed to have his heart much upon it, and if so, he is what he should be; but has he indeed his heart upon it? Bring him to the touchstone.

(1.) Can he find in his heart *to part with his riches* for the service of Christ? He hath a good estate, and now, shortly, at the first founding of the Christian church, the necessity of the case will require that those who have *lands, sell them, and lay the money at the apostles' feet*; and how will he dispense with that? ~~ACTS~~ Acts 4:34, 35. After awhile, tribulation and persecution will arise, because of the word; and he must be forced to sell his estate, or have it taken from him, and how will he like that? Let him know the worst now; if he will not come up to these terms, let him quit his

pretensions; as good as the first as at last. “*Sell whatsoever thou hast over and above what is necessary for thy support;*” probably, he had no family to provide for; let him therefore be a *father to the poor*, and make them his heirs. Every man, according to his ability, must relieve the poor, and be content, when there is occasion, to straiten himself to do it. Worldly wealth is given us, not only as *maintenance* to bear our charges through this world, according to our place in it, but as *talent*, to be used and employed for the glory of our great Master in the world, who hath so ordered it, that the poor we should have always with us as his receivers.

(2.) Can he find it in his heart to go through the hardest costliest services he may be called to as a disciple of Christ, and depend upon him for a recompence *in heaven*? He asks Christ what he should do more than he has done to obtain *eternal life*, and Christ puts it to him, whether he has indeed that firm belief of, and that high value for, eternal life that he seems to have. Doth he really believe there is a true treasure in heaven sufficient to make up all he can leave, or lose, or lay out, for Christ? Is he willing to deal with Christ *upon trust*? Can he give him credit for all he is worth; and be willing to bear a present cross, in expectation of a future crown?

2. Upon this he flew off (v. 22); *He was sad at that saying*; was sorry that he could not be a follower of Christ upon any easier terms than leaving all to follow him; that he could not *lay hold* on eternal life, and *keep hold* of his temporal possessions too. But since he could not come up to the terms of discipleship, he was so fair as not to pretend to it; *He went away grieved*. Here appeared the truth of that (~~402~~ Matthew 6:24), *Ye cannot serve God and mammon*; while he held to mammon he did in effect *despise* Christ, as all those do who prefer the world before him. He bids for what he has a mind for in the market, yet goes away grieved, and leaves it, because he cannot have it at his own price. Two words to a bargain. Motions are not marriages. That which ruined this young man was, *he had great possessions*; thus the *prosperity of fools destroys them*, and those who spend their days in wealth are tempted to say to God, *Depart from us*; or to their hearts, *Depart from God*.

III. Here is Christ's discourse with his disciples. We are tempted to wish that Christ had *mollified* that saying which frightened this young gentleman from following him, and by an explanation taken off the harshness of it: but he knew all men's hearts; he would not court him to be his follower, because he was a *rich man* and a ruler; but, if he will go, let

him go. Christ will keep no man against his will; and therefore we do not find that Christ called him back, but took this occasion to instruct his disciples in two things.

1. The difficulty of the salvation of those who have an abundance of this world; because there are few who have *a deal to leave*, that can be persuaded to *leave it* for Christ, or to lay it out in doing good.

(1.) Christ asserts this here; *He looked about* upon his *disciples*, because he would have them all take notice of what he said, that by it they might have their judgments rightly informed, and their mistakes rectified, concerning worldly wealth, which they were apt to over-rate; *How hardly shall they who have riches enter into the kingdom of God!* v. 23. They have many temptations to grapple with, and many difficulties to get over, which lie not in the way of poor people. But he explains himself, v. 24, where he calls the disciples *children*, because as such they should be *taught* by him, and *portioned* by him with better things than this young man left Christ to cleave to; and whereas he had said, *How hardly will those who have riches get to heaven;* here he tells them, that the danger arose not so much from their *having* riches as from their *trusting to them*, and placing their confidence in them, expecting protection, provision, and a portion from them; saying that *to their gold*, which they should say only to their God, *Thou art my hope,* ~~(882)~~ Job 31:24. They have such a value as this for the wealth of the world, will never be brought to put a right value upon Christ and his grace. They that *have* ever so much riches, but do not *trust in them*, that see the vanity of them, and their utter insufficiency to make a soul happy, have got over the difficulty, and can easily part with them for Christ: but they have ever so little, if they set their hearts upon that little, and place their happiness in it, it will keep them from Christ. He enforces this assertion with, v. 25, *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man, that trusts in riches, or inclines to do so, to enter into the kingdom of God.* The disproportion here seems so great (though the more it is so the more it answers the intention), that some have laboured to bring the camel and the eye of the needle a little nearer together.

[1.] Some imagine there might be some wicket-gate, or door, to Jerusalem, commonly known by the name of *the needle's eye*, for its straitness, through which a camel could not be got, unless he were unloaded, and made to kneel, as those camel, ~~(0241)~~ Genesis 24:11. So a rich man cannot get

to heaven unless he is willing to part with the burthen of his worldly wealth, and stoop to the duties of a humble religion, and so enter *at the strait gate*.

[2.] Others suggest that the word we translate a *camel*, sometimes signifies a cable-ropes, which, though not to be got through a needle's eye, yet is of great affinity to it. A rich man, compared with the poor, is as a cable to a single thread, stronger, but not so pliable, and it will not go through the *needle's eye*, unless it be untwisted. So the rich man must be loosed and disentangled from his riches, and then there is some hope of him, that thread by thread he may be got through the eye of the needle, otherwise he is good for nothing but to cast anchor in the earth.

(2.) This truth was very surprising to the disciples; *They were astonished at his words*, v. 24. *They were astonished out of measure, and said among themselves, Who then can be saved?* They knew what were generally the sentiments of the Jewish teachers, who affirmed that the Spirit of God chooses to reside in rich men; nay, they knew what abundance of promises there were, in the Old Testament, of temporal good things; they knew likewise that all either are rich, or fain would be so, and that they who are rich, have so much the larger opportunities of doing good, and therefore were amazed to hear that it should be so hard for rich people to go to heaven.

(3.) Christ reconciled them to it, by referring it to the almighty power of God, to help even rich people over the difficulties that lie in the way of their salvation (v. 27); He *looked upon them*, to engage their attention, and said, "*With men it is impossible; rich people cannot by their own skill or resolution get over these difficulties, but the grace of God can do it, for with him all things are possible.*" If *the righteous scarcely are saved*, much more may we say so of the *rich*; and therefore when any get to heaven, they must give all the glory to God, who worketh in them *both to will and to do*.

2. The greatness of the salvation of those that have but a little of this world, and leave it for Christ. This he speaks of, upon occasion of Peter's mentioning what he and the rest of the disciples had left to follow him; *Behold*, (saith he), *we have left all to follow thee*, v. 28. "You have *done well*," saith Christ, "and it will prove in the end that you have done well *for yourselves*; you shall be abundantly recompensed, and not only you shall be *reimbursed*, who have left but a little, but those that have ever so

much, though it were so much as this young man had, that could not persuade himself to quit it for Christ; yet they shall have much more than an equivalent for it.”

(1.) The loss is supposed to be very great; he specifies,

[1.] Worldly wealth; *houses* are here put first, and *lands* last: if a man quit his *house*, which should be for his habitation, and his *land*, which should be for his maintenance, and so make himself a beggar and an outcast. This has been the choice of suffering saints; farewell houses and lands, though ever so convenient and desirable, through the inheritance of fathers, for the house which is from heaven, and the inheritance of the saints in light, where are many mansions.

[2.] Dear relations. *Father and mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters*. In these, as much as in any temporal blessing, the comfort of life is bound up; without these the world would be a wilderness; yet, when we must either forsake these or Christ, we must remember that we stand in nearer relation to Christ than we do to any creature; and therefore to keep in with him, we must be content to break with all the world, and to say to father and mother, as Levi did, *I have not known you*. The greatest trial of a good man's constancy is, when his love to Christ comes to stand in competition with a love that is lawful, nay, that is his duty. It is easy to such a one to forsake a *lust* for Christ, for he hath that within him, that rises against it; but to forsake a *father*, a *brother*, a *wife*, for Christ, that is, to forsake those whom he knows he must love, is hard. And yet he must do so, rather than deny or disown Christ. Thus great is the loss supposed to be; but it is *for Christ's sake*, that he may be honoured, and the *gospel's*, that it may be promoted and propagated. It is not the *suffering*, but the *cause*, that makes the *martyr*. And therefore,

(2.) The advantage will be great.

[1.] *They shall receive a hundred-fold in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters; not in specie*, but that which is equivalent. He shall have abundance of comfort while he lives, sufficient to make up for all his losses; his relation to Christ, his communion with the saints, and his title to eternal life, shall be to him *brethren*, and *sisters*, and *houses*, and all. God's providence gave Job double to what he had had, but suffering Christians shall have a *hundred-fold* in the comforts of the Spirit sweetening their creature comforts. But observe, It is added here in Mark,

with persecutions. Even when they are gainers by Christ, let them still expect to be sufferers for him; and not be out of the reach of persecution, till they come to heaven. Nay, The *persecutions* seem to come in here among *the receivings* in this present time; for unto you it is given, not only to believe in Christ, but also to *suffer for his name*; yet this is not all,

[2.] They shall have *eternal life in the world to come*. If they receive a hundred-fold in this world, one would think they should not be encouraged to expect any more. Yet, as if that were a small matter, they shall have *life eternal* into the bargain; which is more than ten thousand-fold, ten thousand times told, for all their losses. But because they talked so much, and really more than became them, of *leaving all* for Christ, he tells them, though they were *first called*, that there should be disciples called after them, that should be preferred before them; as St. Paul, who was one *born out of due time*, and yet laboured more abundantly than all the rest of the apostles, ⁴⁵⁰1 Corinthians 15:10. Then the *first* were *last*, and the last *first*.

⌘ MARK 10:32-45

CHRIST'S PREDICTION OF HIS SUFFERINGS

Here is,

I. Christ's prediction of his own sufferings; this string he harped much upon, though in the ears of his disciples it sounded very harsh and unpleasing.

1. See here how bold he was; when they were going up to Jerusalem, *Jesus went before them*, as the *captain of our salvation*, that was now to be *made perfect through sufferings*, v. 32. Thus he showed himself forward to go on with his undertaking, even when he came to the hardest part of it. Now that the time was at hand, he said, *Lo, I come*; so far was he from *drawing back*, that now, more than ever, he *pressed forward*. *Jesus went before them, and they were amazed*. They began now to consider what imminent danger they ran themselves into, when they went to Jerusalem; how very malicious the Sanhedrim which sat there was against their Master and them; and they were ready to tremble at the thought of it. To hearten them, therefore, Christ *went before them*. "Come," saith he, "surely you will venture where your Master ventures." Note, When we see ourselves

entering upon sufferings, it is encouraging to see our Master go before us. Or, *He went before them*, and *therefore* they were *amazed*; they admired to see with what cheerfulness and alacrity he went on, though he knew he was going to suffer and die. Note, Christ's courage and constancy in going on with his undertaking for our salvation, are, and will be, the wonder of all his disciples.

2. See here how timorous and faint-hearted his disciples were; *As they followed, they were afraid*, afraid for themselves, as being apprehensive of their own danger; and justly might they be *ashamed* of their being thus *afraid*. Their Master's courage should have put spirit into them.

3. See here what method he took to silence their fears. He did not go about to make the matter better than it was, nor to feed them with hopes that he might escape the storm, but told them *again* what he had often told them before, the *things that should happen to him*. He knew the worst of it, and therefore went on thus boldly, and he will let them know the worst of it. Come, *be not afraid*; for,

(1.) There is no remedy, the matter is determined, and cannot be avoided.

(2.) It is only the *Son of man* that shall suffer; their time of suffering was now at hand, he will now provide for their security.

(3.) He *shall rise again*; the issue of his sufferings will be glorious to himself, and advantageous to all that are his, v. 33, 34. The method and particulars of Christ's sufferings are more largely foretold here than in any other of the predictions — that he shall first be delivered up by Judas to the *chief priests and the scribes*; that they shall condemn him to death, but, not having the power to put him to death, shall *deliver him to the Gentiles*, to the Roman powers, and they shall *mock him*, and *scourge him*, and *spit upon him*, and *kill him*. Christ had a perfect foresight, not only of his own death, but of all the aggravating circumstances of it; and yet he thus went forth to meet it.

II. The check he gave to two of his disciples for their ambitious request. This story is much the same here as we had it ~~at~~ Matthew 20:20. Only there they are said to have made their request by their mother, here they are said to make it themselves; she introduced them, and presented their petition, and then they seconded it, and assented to it.

Note,

1. As, on the one hand, there are some that do not *use*, so, on the other hand, there are some that *abuse*, the great encouragements Christ has given us in prayer. He hath said, *Ask, and it shall be given you*; and it is a commendable faith to ask for the great things he has promised; but it was a culpable presumption in these disciples to make such a boundless demand upon their Master; *We would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire*. We had much better leave it to him to do for us what he sees fit, and he will do more than we can desire, ~~4RD~~ Ephesians 3:20.

2. We must be cautious how we make general promises. Christ would not engage to do for them whatever they desired, but would know from them what it was they did desire; *What would ye that I should do for you?* He would have them go on with their suit, that they might be made ashamed of it.

3. Many have been led into a snare by false notions of Christ's kingdom, as if it were *of this world*, and like the kingdoms of the potentates of this world. James and John conclude, If Christ *rise again*, he must be a king, and if he be a king, his apostles must be peers, and one of these would willingly be the *Primus par regni* — *The first peer of the realm*, and the other next him, like Joseph in Pharaoh's court, or Daniel in Darius's.

4. Worldly honour is a glittering thing, with which the eyes of Christ's own disciples have many a time been dazzled. Whereas to *be good* should be more our care than to *look great*, or to have the pre-eminence.

5. Our weakness and short-sightedness appear as much in our prayers as in any thing. We cannot order our speech, when we speak to God, by reason of darkness, both concerning him and concerning ourselves. It is folly to *prescribe* to God, and wisdom to *subscribe*.

6. It is the will of Christ that we should prepare for sufferings, and leave it to him to recompense us for them. He needs not be put in mind, as Ahasuerus did, of the services of his people, nor can he forget their *work of faith and labour of love*. Our care must be, that we may have wisdom and grace to know how to suffer with him, and then we may trust him to provide in the best manner how we shall reign with him, and when, and where, and what, the degrees of our glory shall be.

III. The check he gave to the rest of the disciples, for their uneasiness at it. *They began to be much displeased*, to have *indignation about James*

and John, v. 41. They were angry at them for affecting precedency, not because it did so ill become the disciples of Christ, but because each of them hoped to have it himself. When the Cynic trampled on Alexander's foot-cloth, with *Calco fastum Alexandri — Now I tread on Alexander's pride*, he was seasonably checked with *Sed majori fastu — But with a greater pride of thine own*. So these discovered their own ambition, in their displeasure at the ambition of James and John; and Christ took this occasion to warn them against it, and all their successors in the ministry of the gospel, v. 42-44. He *called them to him* in a familiar way, to give them an example of condescension, then when he was reproofing their ambition, and to teach them never to bid their disciples keep their distance. He shows them,

1. That dominion was generally *abused in the world* (v. 42); *That they seemed to rule over the Gentiles*, that have the name and title of rulers, *they exercise lordship over them*, that is all they study and aim at, not so much to protect them, and provide for their welfare, as to *exercise authority upon them*; they *will be obeyed*, aim to be arbitrary, and to have their will in every thing. *Sic volo, sic jubeo, stat pro ratione voluntas — Thus I will, thus I command; my good pleasure is my law*. Their care is, what they shall get by their subjects to support their own pomp and grandeur, not what they shall do for them.

2. That therefore it ought not to be *admitted into the church*; “*It shall not be so among you*; those that shall be put under your charge, must be as sheep under the charge of the *shepherd*, who is to tend them and feed them, and be a servant to them, not as horses under the command of the driver, that works them and beats them, and gets his pennyworths out of them. He that affects to be great and chief, that thrusts himself into a secular dignity and dominion, *he shall be servant of all*, he shall be mean and contemptible in the eyes of all that are wise and good; *he that exalteth himself shall be abased*.” Or rather, “He that would be *truly* great and chief, he must lay out himself to do good to all, must stoop to the meanest services, and labour in the hardest services. Those not only shall be most *honoured* hereafter, but are most *honourable* now, who are most useful.” To convince them of this, he sets before them his own example (v. 45); “The *Son of man* submits first to the greatest hardships and hazards, and then enters into his glory, and can you expect to come to it any other way; or to have more ease and honour than he has?”

(1.) He takes upon him *the form of a servant*, comes not to be *ministered to*, and waited upon, but *to minister*, and wait to be gracious.

(2.) He comes *obedient to death*, and to its dominion, for he *gives his life a ransom for many*; did he die for the benefit of good people, and shall not we study to live for their benefit?

MARK 10:46-52

THE EYES OF BARTIMEUS OPENED

This passage of story agrees with that, ^{<4119>}Matthew 20:29, etc. Only that there were told of *two* blind men; here, and ^{<4385>}Luke 18:35, only of *one*: but if there were *two*, there was *one*. This one is named here, being a *blind beggar that was much talked of*; he was called *Bartimeus*, that is, *the son of Timeus*; which, some think, signifies *the son of a blind man*; he was the blind son of a blind father, which made the case worse, and the cure more wonderful, and the more proper to typify the spiritual cures wrought by the grace of Christ, on those that not only are born blind, but are born of those that are blind.

I. This blind man sat *begging*; as they do with us. Note, Those who by the providence of God are disabled to get a livelihood by their own labour, and have not any other way of subsisting, are the most proper objects of charity; and particular care ought to be taken of them.

II. He cried out to the Lord Jesus for *mercy*; *Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David*. Misery is the object of mercy, his own miserable case he recommends to the compassion of the *Son of David*, of whom it was foretold, that, when he should come to save us, *the eyes of the blind should be opened*, ^{<4385>}Isaiah 35:5. In coming to Christ for help and healing, we should have an eye to him as the promised Messiah, the Trustee of mercy and grace.

III. Christ encouraged him to hope that he should find mercy; for he *stood still, and commanded him to be called*. We must never reckon it a hindrance to us in our way, to *stand still*, when it is to do a good work. Those about him, who had discouraged him at first, perhaps were now the persons that signified to him the gracious call of Christ; “*Be of good*

comfort, rise, he calls thee; and if he calls thee, he will cure thee.” Note, The gracious invitations Christ gives us to come to him, are great encouragements to our hope, that we shall speed well if we come to him, and shall have what we come for. Let the guilty, the empty, the tempted, the hungry, the naked, be of good comfort, for he *calls them* to be pardoned, to be supplied, to be succoured, to be filled, to be clothed, to have all that done for them, which their case calls for.

IV. The poor man, hereupon, made the best of his way to Christ; He *cast away his* loose upper *garment*, and came to Jesus (v. 50); he cast away every thing that might be in danger of throwing him down, or might in any way hinder him in coming to Christ, or retard his motion. Those who would come to Jesus, must cast away the garment of their own sufficiency, must strip themselves of all conceit of that, and must free themselves from *every weight*, and the sin that, like long garments, doth *most easily beset them*, ~~see~~ Hebrews 12:1.

V. The particular favour he begged, was, that his *eyes might be opened*; that so he might be able to work for his living, and might be no longer burthensome to others. It is a very desirable thing to be in a capacity of earning our own bread; and where God has given men their limbs and senses, it is a shame for men by their foolishness and slothfulness to make themselves, in effect, *blind and lame*.

VI. This favour he received; his eyes were opened (v. 52); and two things Mark here adds, which intimate,

1. How Christ made it a double favour to him, by putting the honour of it upon his faith; “*Thy faith hath made thee whole*; faith in Christ as the Son of David, and in his pity and power; not thy importunity, but *thy faith*, setting Christ on work, or rather Christ setting thy faith on work.” Those supplies are most comfortable, that are fetched in by our faith.

2. How he made it a double favour to himself; When he had *received his sight*, he *followed Jesus by the way*. By this he made it appear that he was thoroughly cured, that he no more needed one to lead him, but could go himself; and by this he evidenced the grateful sense he had of Christ's kindness to him, that, when he had his sight, he made this use of it. It is not enough to *come to Christ* for spiritual healing, but, when we are healed, we must continue to follow him; that we may do honour to him,

and receive instruction from him. Those that have spiritual eye-sight, see that beauty in Christ, that will effectually draw them to *run after him*.