

## He Said What Part 8

You Must Be A Slave

*Mark 10:35-45*

*Memory Verses: Mark 10:43-44*

### MANUSCRIPT

#### Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

Have you ever noticed how certain words that you thought were harmless can weirdly trigger people. I had a friend whose mother forbid him from saying the word "fart." I get it... but let's be honest... it happens and what else are you going to call it? Fart sounds so much better than flagellation. Just saying. My wife hates the word "supper." Now I know we can all disagree on this, but when I grew up the three meals were breakfast, lunch, and supper. Some can use "dinner," but I was told that was another word for lunch so... we are all messed up. And every time I say the word "supper," Lisa freaks out... like I just poured acid on her. It's a little weird. But she's fragile, so I will ask you, please don't ever, for any reason ever, at anytime, say that word around my wife. "Wink, wink."

Then you have words that society as a whole has agreed should be off limits. We all know what words they are and we often refer to them as the "F" word or the "N" word. They are too dangerous to say out loud. I've noticed that every year we add more words to that list, and one of the words we've added lately is the "S" word. No, not that "S" word, or the other "S" word, but the new "S" word; "slave." And I get it. The word slave brings back some of the darkest days and worst acts in American history. It reminds us of the fact that at one point it was seen as okay to own other humans in this country and treat them any way their master saw fit. Let me be clear, no one should ever be enslaved to another person or people or organization... PERIOD! Slavery is wrong and regardless of what some may say, the Bible does not condone it!

But, slavery is a historical fact, and it existed a long time before 1619. In fact, slavery has existed almost as long as humanity has existed. As soon as one group realized they could conquer another group of people and then do what they want with them... we got slavery. The Egyptians enslaved the Hebrews. The Africans enslaved Africans. The Irish enslaved the Irish. The English enslaved the Irish and Scottish. And eventually the English and Americans enslaved Africans. And still today, even though every western country has now forbidden slavery, we have what some estimate to be the most enslaved people on earth of all time. We must do whatever we can to free people from physical slavery.

And while it's not okay to be enslaved to another person, group, or organization physically, let me make it clear, the Bible does advocate for freedom from spiritual slavery to sin and for spiritual slavery to Christ.

Suffice to say, Jesus is not afraid to say the word "slave." Look with me in **Mark 10:35-45**. Jesus says in **verse 43 & 44**, "whoever would be great among you must be your servant and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all."

We must be a slave of all? This doesn't sound very politically correct Jesus! Why? Because as a people we aren't at all interested in being submissive or subjugated to anyone, much less being anyone's slave. No one wants to be at the bottom of the social ladder. We all want to be masters. We all want to be leaders more than we want to be followers. We all want our freedom to do what we want. In the words of the disciples, we all want to be the greatest. But, Jesus cautions us from this way of thinking.

**Greatness isn't equated with ones status as much as it is with ones sacrifice. To be great in God's eyes we must sacrifice our greatness for the sake of His glory & those He has called us to serve.**

#### Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to see here is that... **To Be Great In The Kingdom of God We Must Be Slaves To Christ's Glory**. In essence a slave is someone who has a master which they must follow unequivocally. They have very little room in which they are allowed to live independently of the master's wishes. For those brought over on ships from Africa to early America, they found themselves in situations where they had very little to eat, very little in means of shelter, and very few possessions. They were worked very hard in fields and most were separated from their families. Everything they did was based on the decision of their masters. They were not free to do anything they wanted. And, if they got out of line they were beaten and sometimes killed. This is without a doubt monstrous. This is evil. This is so far out of the bounds of what Christ represents or the manner in which God wants humans to treat one another that it doesn't even make sense that many so called Christians engaged in this abuse. Shame on them. And even though we must assume that there were some who owned slaves that treated their slaves more fairly and lovingly, it doesn't make up for the fact that to own another human being is sinful. There are no excuses.

So how can Christ call us into slavery? If slavery is evil why would Christ call us to it? The answer is simple. The slavery of Africans in early America was not consensual. It was fully against their will. Jesus calls us to willingly subjugate ourselves to his will. Jesus isn't going to make us his slaves. He is asking us to trust him and follow him autonomously. **Jesus wants us to follow him so closely and trust him so greatly that our relationship shows that he is our master and we are his to do with us what he wills.** Spiritual slaves. And unlike the cruel plantation masters of years past who beat their slaves into submission, Jesus gently and lovingly entices us into his service. He shows us a life worth living and lovingly woos us into

a life which the Bible refers to as abundant. **Where as human slavery was the worst kind of life, spiritual slavery to Christ is the most joyous freeing life we can have here on earth.**

Look at what he says to some of the other disciples; Philip and Andrew in **John 12:20-26**. Some gentiles come looking to speak with Jesus and Philip and Andrew are concerned about this, so Jesus tells them... it's not just for the Jews to follow me, but anyone who loses his life in service to me can follow me and be saved. Jesus doesn't care what your background is. All he cares is that you give your life to him, to follow him as the master, subjugating your life in service to him! That you would become a free slave in his house, because he is worthy. In our main passage James and John said, we are able to drink the cup you are going to drink, Jesus, and we are able to be baptized with your baptism. Jesus agrees... they will drink that cup and they will experience that baptism. Do you know what that cup is? Do you know what baptism Jesus is speaking of? It's the cross. It's death. It's laying down your life for the sake of mission of Jesus and the glory of God. And yes, Both James and John experienced this; James was beheaded and John was exiled. They willingly laid down their lives for Christ because they were slaves to Christ. So let's boil all of this down. Jesus isn't going to make you his slave without your consent. But Jesus expects full submission to him as master and Lord. Unless you give him full control you will wreck your life. But, under his control you will do great things for the Kingdom and for his glory! And in eternity, you may not sit at his right hand, but you will be honored for your sacrifice! **To be great in God's eyes we must sacrifice our greatness for the sake of His glory & those He has called us to serve.**

Secondly we need to see that... **To Be Great In The Kingdom of God We Must Be Servants Of Humanity**. Look at our parallel passage in **Matthew 20:20-28**. **Verse 24** tells us that when the other disciples heard John and James jockeying for position they were upset. Jesus uses this as a chance to talk to them about what it means to serve others in the name of Christ. As slaves to Christ we are also servants of humanity. How do we serve humanity differently than what they are used to? First, we don't lord our authority over others under us. In other words we don't go on power trips. You may think that you are right or that you have the expertise in an area or that you've been given authority to lead but that doesn't mean that you get to treat others like you are all that and they are lower than you. That is the way of the world but not us. We are humble, we are compassionate, and we lead others with love and teaching, not harsh words and cruel actions.

Secondly, we lead others by serving them. Look at our last parallel passage in **Luke 22:24-30**. Greatness is something attributed to

us in Heaven because of a life lived for Christ, but greatness can also be attributed to us here on earth when we treat people with respect and serve them sacrificially. The greatest person I've ever known was a man named Roger Gilliam who served others so generously that his life is defined by it. In many ways he was a slave to those he encountered. In many ways he was a slave to me. Again, using the term slave; we willingly become slaves to all people. Not, to be used and abused per se, but to be used by God in a way that they see His goodness and are drawn to him. **The Bible tells us that it is the kindness of God which leads people to repentance and salvation. That kindness comes through us.** There are so many ways to serve people. You can help with their needs, you can pray for their needs, you can begin relationships with them, you can do kind things for them. When I think of serving others I can't help but think of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. She gave her life as a slave to people dying of hunger, AIDS, and all kinds of other diseases. She gave her life as a slave to help feed and heal those around her. She said, **"I know I am touching the living body of Christ in the broken bodies of the hungry and suffering."** So, **"be kind and merciful. Let no one ever come to you without coming away better and happier."** **"I'm merely a little pencil in the hand of a writing God, who is sending a love letter to the world."** So, what is stopping you from becoming a servant of others? And who are those that God has placed you around to serve? **To be great in God's eyes we must sacrifice our greatness for the sake of His glory & those He has called us to serve.**

### Application

So how are you a slave to Christ for his glory? Are you willing to drink his cup and be baptized with his baptism? Are you willing to allow him to be your master and have control over your life? And how are you going to be a servant of humanity? Are you willing to serve others so greatly that they can see Jesus through you? Or do you lord your authority over others in some power trip? Are you a boss or a leader when it comes to others. And are you serving them to help them in their needs? Are you willing to be a Mother Teresa; a pencil in the hand of God writing the world a love letter through your life? You must become a slave.

### Conclusion

Why? Because our example is Jesus Christ. Look at our main passage again in **Mark 10:45**. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Jesus, God in the flesh, God of the universe, creator of all seen and unseen, became a slave to us, submitting himself to the cross to save us from our sins. If Jesus was not beneath slavery, neither are we. And in the end, greatness awaits. **To be great in God's eyes we must sacrifice our greatness for the sake of His glory & those He has called us to serve.**