

# READ THIS FIRST

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## The Gospel of Mark: The King and His Kingdom

### Note from Pastor Luke Simmons

The mission of Second Mile Church is to “embody Jesus’ mission and message in every place that God sends us.” The Bible refers to the followers of Jesus as his “ambassadors” (2 Cor 5:20) and expects us to faithfully represent him to the world. In order to faithfully live out this mission we must grow intimately familiar with who Jesus is and what he has done. Thus, it makes sense to have our first weekly study focus on the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus, as described in the Gospel of Mark.

Though this series, “The King and His Kingdom,” will not be an exhaustive study of the person of Jesus, we will become thoroughly acquainted with his message, mission, attitude and actions. Not only will we see Jesus in action, but we’ll also get a glimpse of what life looks like in Jesus’ Kingdom. Mark is a fast-paced, hard-hitting, action-packed book and we will spend fourteen weeks examining the highlights of his account.

This study guide, designed for individual study or for use in Community Groups, is intended to help us dive deeper into the Scripture and apply the things we learn. The Bible calls us to “be doers of the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22). These study guides are designed to help us not just hear the word on Sunday, but put it into practice Monday through Saturday.

My prayer for this series is that God will use it to deepen your love for Jesus. Whether you are just beginning to explore what it would be like to follow Christ or you’ve trusted him for a long time, my hope is that your heart would be delighted by his majesty, power, humility, trustworthiness, sacrifice and victory. Only as we grow satisfied in Jesus will we be able to bring his love and grace to our hurting world.

Because the Tomb is Empty,

Luke Simmons  
Lead Pastor

### The Format

Each study begins with a **key verse** that summarizes the truth found in the entire section. These key verses, if memorized, would allow you to learn the big ideas found in Mark’s Gospel. Then there is an **introduction** to the passage that you can use for review or, if you miss a Sunday, you can track with us wherever we are. Next are some questions for **investigation** (getting into the text) and **implication** (applying these truths to daily life). Each study concludes with a section on **other issues**, which expand on any other issues or questions raised by the passage that we may not take time to cover during the sermon.

### Suggestions for Individuals

- Before you begin, pray that God would open your eyes to see what he is saying in the Bible and give you the spiritual strength to do something about it.
- Work through the study and write out answers to the questions.
- Resist any temptation to skip over the **implication** section. It is important to ponder how the truths apply to your life. Though these questions are sometimes penetrating and difficult, they are designed to help you think seriously about your life.
- Take what opportunities you can to share with others about what you’ve learned and how you’d like your life to change as a result.

### Suggestions for Community Groups

- It is recommended that you study the passage *after* it has been preached. This way you can discuss the issues raised by the sermon as well as the study itself.
- In your time together as a community, focus on the **implications** for your lives individually and as a group. Share with one another how you sense God calling you to change, pray for one another about these things, and invite one another to encourage you and hold you accountable to apply the truth.
- In your time together as a community, use this guide as a launching point for discussion and care for one another. Resist the urge to try to discuss every question or “get through the material.”

### Questions or Comments?

If you have feedback or questions about the series or studies, please feel free to email them to [info@secondmilechurch.com](mailto:info@secondmilechurch.com).

Week 10

# KINGDOM LEADERSHIP

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Mark 10:35-45

.....  
*For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to  
serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

(Mark 10:45, ESV)  
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## Introduction

Are you a leader or a follower? The truth is that you're probably both. We all have areas of our life in which we're out front, setting the pace and other areas in which we are coming along and following others. Whether formal or informal, there are people who we influence and those who influence us.

So if we are constantly leading *and* following, why does there seem to be such an over-emphasis on leadership? For example, at the time of this writing, a search of Amazon.com yielded 308,788 books related to "leadership" and only 2,370 related to "followership." Though we might like to say that our culture is responsible (after all, there are now unprecedented opportunities for leadership in all walks of life), the truth is that people have always been captured by the idea of being influencers. This passage demonstrates that the desire for leadership, greatness, power, and authority existed in the first century just as strongly as it does today.

This passage is a terrific leadership lesson from the best leader who ever lived, the King of kings, Lord of lords, and Leader of leaders—Jesus. Interestingly, he doesn't teach that the desire for greatness, leadership, or influence are wrong. Rather, he redefines what greatness is. Like most of Jesus' teaching, the normal way of thinking is turned on its head and reversed. Greatness in God's kingdom is different than greatness in the world. Leaders in God's kingdom must be different than leaders in the world.

And, like all great leaders, Jesus is more than just a talker. He's actually practices what he preaches—so much so that it will eventually lead to his "giving his life as a ransom for many" (10:45).

May we be humble enough to see Jesus' model for leadership and may those we lead experience the blessing of our service and care.

## Investigation

Read Mark 10:35-45.

1. How does the request of James and John (10:37) show that they still don't understand the meaning of the cross, of "glory" and of "greatness"?
2. What was Jesus referring to by his "cup" and "baptism" (10:38-39)? How do you know?
3. Why does true greatness come from being a "servant" and a "slave" (10:43-44)?
4. What is Jesus saying about his death (especially when he calls it a "ransom") that he has not told us before (10:45)?

## Implication

5. Many people today, like James and John, seem to think that following Jesus will result in power and prosperity. Why do you think people are often surprised to find that the Christian life is really a life of sacrifice and difficulty?
  
6. Who is a significant leader or mentor that you've had in your life? In what ways did he or she model servant leadership? How did it impact you?
  
7. How do we get the power to joyfully become "servants" and "slaves" to those around us?
  
8. Think of two people who are regularly in your life—a Christian and a non-Christian. What are some specific ways can you serve them this week with the love of Jesus?

## Other Issues

### Did Jesus really have to die in order to redeem his people?

Before answering this question, it is important to realize that it was not necessary for God to save any people at all. When we appreciate that "God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of nether gloom to be kept until the judgment" (2 Peter 2:4), then we realize that God could also have chosen with perfect justice to have left us in our sins awaiting judgment: he could have chosen to save no one, just as he did with the sinful angels. So in this sense the atonement was not absolutely necessary.

But once God, in his love, decided to save some human beings, then several passages in Scripture indicate that there was no other way for God to do this than through the death of his Son. Therefore, the atonement was not absolutely necessary, but, as a "consequence" of God's decision to save some human beings, the atonement was absolutely necessary.

In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus prays, "*If it be possible* let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will" (Matt. 26:39). We may be confident that Jesus always prayed according to the will of the Father, and that he always prayed with fullness of faith. Thus it seems that this prayer, which Matthew takes pains to record for us, shows that it was *not possible* for Jesus to avoid the death on the cross which was soon to come to him (the "cup" of suffering that he had said would be his). If he was going to accomplish the work that the Father sent him to do, and if people were going to be redeemed for God, then it was necessary for him to die on the cross.

He said something similar after his resurrection, when he was talking with two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They were sad that Jesus had died, but his response was, "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not *necessary* that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:25–26). Jesus understood that God's plan of redemption (which he explained for the disciples from many Old Testament Scriptures, Luke 24:27) made it necessary for the Messiah to die for the sins of his people.

Paul also writes that if God were to be righteous, and still save people, he had to send Christ to pay the penalty for sins: "It was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies him who has faith in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26). The epistle to the Hebrews emphasizes that Christ had to suffer for our sins: "He *had* to be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:17). The author of Hebrews also argues that since "it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10:4), a better sacrifice is required (Heb. 9:23). Only the blood of Christ, that is, his death, would be able

really to take away sins (Heb. 9:25–26). There was no other way for God to save us than for Christ to die in our place.<sup>22</sup>

**The word “ransom” communicates that people are in bondage. How can that be when people are free to do as they please?**

The word “ransom” means that the person being ransomed is not free. A ransom is the money paid to release someone from slavery or captivity. When Jesus said that his death pays a ransom for us, he is automatically saying that human beings are in captivity. cf. John 8:34 “anyone who commits sin is a slave of sin.” He is saying that the people he is dying for are in a state of bondage, not simply guilt. It means we are like hostages on a hijacked aircraft — not destroyed yet, but under captivity and in mortal danger. The only way for us to get out was to die on the cross.

This assumes that we are in bondage or slavery to bad masters. Admittedly, most people do not feel like sinners at all, let alone “slaves of sin.” But no one is more enslaved than the person who is not even aware that he or she is in bondage! So the fact that most people do not feel enslaved by sin only shows the depth of the problem.

What are the “bad masters” to whom human beings are enslaved, according to the Bible?

a) Sin itself John 8:34 – anyone who sins is a slave to sin. Becky Pippert: “Whatever controls us is our lord. The person who seeks power is controlled by power. The person who seeks acceptance is controlled by the people he or she seeks to please. You do not control yourselves — you are controlled by the lord of your life.”

b) The Law Galatians 5:18; Romans 6:14. What does Paul mean when he says we are all enslaved to the law? Objectively, we are guilty, under the law’s condemnation, because we break the moral law. Subjectively, we are guilt-ridden and anxious, even those of us who are not religious, because we know at some deep level that we should be perfect.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 569.

<sup>23</sup> Timothy J. Keller, *The Gospel of Mark Study Guide*, 136.