

Jesus, the servant, our example

Part 1

Speaker	George Davison
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[00:00:30] Er hat das Wort gesprochen, und er ging auf den Weg, weil er eine große Botschaft hatte. Vers 32. Und sie waren auf dem Weg, bis zu Jerusalem. Und Jesus ging vor ihnen. Und sie waren überrascht. Und als sie folgten, waren sie befreundet.

And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what thing should happen unto him, saying, Behold, as we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes, [00:01:09] and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles, and they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him, and the third day he shall rise again. And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldst do for us whatsoever we shall desire.

And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you?

They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy doorway.

But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask.

Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

[00:02:06] And they said unto him, We can.

And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of, and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized.

But to sit on my right hand, and on my left hand, is not mine to give.

But it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared. And when they came to it, they began to be much displeased with James and John.

But Jesus called them to him, and said unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

But so shall it not be among you.

But whosoever will be great among you shall be your minister.

[00:03:04] And whosoever of you will be the chiefest shall be servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Now verse 51.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord that I might receive my sight.

And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee poor.

And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

Now two verses only in the next chapter, three and four.

And the blind man said unto him, What do, why do ye this?

Say ye that the Lord hath needed him, and straightway he will send him hither.

[00:04:06] And they went their way, and found the call tied by the door without it, in a place where two were met, and they loosed him.

And that was all.

Now we have in mind tonight, my brother, that we trust from the Lord himself, to pass on a simple word about service in the Christian company to which we belong.

I'm sure that most of us, if not all of us tonight, know that the gospel by Mark particularly, said how the Lord Jesus Christ before us, as his servant, adored us.

It has often been pointed out that Mark's gospel is based on the prophetic word of Zechariah 9.

[00:05:01] Behold your King.

Luke's gospel is rather based on the prophetic word in Zechariah 6. Behold the Lamb.

Whereas John's gospel seems rather to be based on that word from the 40th chapter of Isaiah. Behold your God.

But Mark's gospel I think has been rightly estimated in relation to a verse in the 42nd of Isaiah. Behold my servant.

And here they are as it were, headings of these gospels, in the various presentations of our Lord Jesus Christ in his perfect service in this world, both for the glory of God and the blessing of man.

Mark's gospel in particular brings it down, we may say, to our level in regard to serving God in the place where Christ has been.

In our reading on Where is the Light at Norwich, [00:06:03] it was indicated that we can live a life exactly like Christ in this world.

Some people, as it was said, rather given that surely we can never live like Christ, surely rather than we ought to live like Christ, for the very life that was in him, that produced these features, is in every one of us all by the Spirit.

We may excuse ourselves as to how far short, but never let us say we cannot do it. And here is a verse I think we shall see tonight from the lips of the Lord himself that ensures us we can do it, and how well we have learned in the beginnings, that the more we are devoted to God, and the more we do imitate the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, so shall we obtain at the end of this path along which we are going, before his judgment day, well done, thou would unfaithful servant.

[00:07:01] And hence here in the little section then, we have this brought before us, service for our Lord Jesus Christ during his absence, and of exactly the self-same character of his service in manhood in this world.

I don't need to force to qualify that that does not involve, of course, dying for sins upon the cross. In a company like this, we don't think these provisos are needed. We know very well that what he did in relation to dealing with the question of sin, no other being in the universe from Michael Darwin could have ever done what Christ had done. But in the pathway through this world, and in service of God, here we have this very power, the very life that was in Christ, that we might be just as devoted to the Lord God as Christ was himself.

You would no doubt note then, as we read down this chapter, a statement occurring three times in the way.

[00:08:05] Very striking to notice the first time that comes in, that rich young ruler as we speak about him, meeting Jesus in that way, kneeling down before him, very earnestly asking him, what must I do that I may inherit eternal life?

It says about that young man the Lord loved him, looking upon him, seeing where he's difficulty lay, go and tell all that thou hast, come follow me, thou shalt have treasure in heaven. But he went away sorrowing at that thing, because he had great possessions. That's the first time the statement is used in the way. As we read at the end of the chapter, another well known picture, blind Bartimaeus.

And as the Lord asked him what he desired, he didn't say what the rich young ruler did, what must I do to inherit eternal life, [00:09:01] but know that I must receive my sight. And strikingly the Lord said to this man, what he didn't say to the other one, go thy way.

Thy faith was made thee whole, and immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

See these two contrasts in a moment.

The world in its affluence on the one hand, the world in its abject poverty on the other, and beloved that's true of this world today, what they boast in, what they live in, what they are acquiring, I suppose they were never more prosperous than they are today, in these earthly, material things that they

possess, and I'm certain were never in greater poverty, of the heavenly, spiritual, and eternal things, that in the infinite grace of God, we have been called into.

Whether then the world in its affluence, or the world in its poverty, in between the two we have this picture, [00:10:03] of this Christian company, and identification with our Lord Jesus Christ, and I believe it's a daily exercise, or ought to be with each one of us, to take care we are not overcome with its affluence, on the one hand, nor so dejected by its poverty on the other, that we too are inclined to give up this way, in following the Lord, in every step of that pathway, which as we well know, has ended in the glory of God. It's in that way then that this picture is set, that we primarily want to speak about tonight.

So in verse 34, And they were in the way, oh yes, not only the rich young ruler, and I suppose I ought to say, seeing Bartimaeus, not blind Bartimaeus, he was there when the Lord met him, but not when he followed Jesus in the way, illuminated in the power of the Son of God, [00:11:03] following Jesus in that way, and I suppose became one of this company, that we began to read about in verse 32, And they were in the way, going up to Jerusalem, and what a beautiful touch this is of encouragement, Jesus went before them.

Oh how thankful we are for little touches like this, that I may give it to them here, persecution there, whatever it may be, and I think again the Lord was there before me, that when the moment comes that I might reach that difficult end, the Lord knows exactly what I need, and that particular difficult end, he's been there before us.

How many scriptures bear that out, I'm sure are well known to you, and here is another one, Jesus went before them.

May we say that he simply then beloved in this way, [00:12:01] the Lord is not behind us, driving us along that way, no, no, the Lord's in front of us, encouraging us along that way, never let us think he wants to drive us, into some position he has not been in, but he does want to lead us beloved, into a certain position that he has been in, that now that he is gone, we might continue this service on behalf of God, following Jesus in the way, he went before them, and as they followed, they were afraid, they were amazed, and as they followed, they were afraid, I suppose had we asked them at that moment, what are you frightened of, I don't very much if they could have put it into words, but I ask you, have you ever been at a cross like that, fear probably has gripped the heart, and to put it into words, probably you could not, but somehow that burden was there, and the pleasure was there, [00:13:01] and very much inclined to bring us to a stand still, as though we dare not go any further, because of what is going to happen in that way, it seems as though these disciples had arrived at that, doubtful I am sure, if they could have given it a name, they were following the Lord, very much amazed, and as they followed, they were afraid, and the Lord takes them into his own company, and began to tell them, what things should happen unto him, I remember some years ago, a brother just referring to this, saying probably if the Lord had begun to tell them, what things were going to happen to them, they might have run away, no, he didn't tell them at the moment, what things were going to happen unto them, but he did begin to tell them, what things were going to happen unto him, and I suggest again, don't you think that's the greatest encouragement we ever could have, to follow the Lord, [00:14:01] not to begin to think what it means to me, what does it mean to him to get me there, what does it mean to him to keep me there, and take me right through to the end, and I'm sure you've experienced, as I assure you I have at times, just another ministry of the Lord, and his wonderful love and grace, all that he has done, and his love to us, what he has borne and overcome, I think there's

nothing more calculated, to develop in each one of our hearts, an intense desire, to keep following Jesus in that way, and so he began to tell them, what things shall happen unto him, I must not turn to too many asides, these verses are full of them, but here's one which may interest you, if you care to check it out, Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be delivered, unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles, [00:15:01] if you care to take the trouble, to trace this statement through, you'll find it's given three times in each gospel, three times the Lord told them, about his journey to Jerusalem, and that the end of that journey, was going to be his death, but it's striking that only on the third time, did he bring in the Gentiles, said we mustn't turn too much to asides, but if you care to check it out, I think you'll find it right, the first two times he told them, it was the chief priests and the elders, and the third time added into them, the Gentiles, and it may be just one little touch, as we do pass down, let us remember it is not only, the, I hardly know what to call it, the religious community in this world, something like the Jews in Jerusalem, but the ignorant portion of this world, like the Gentiles, who nor God, be sure of this brethren, is no more wanted in the religious circles, [00:16:02] which is only a pretense, than is wanted in man's world today, and all that is going on with it, whether it be the elders of Jerusalem, or the Gentiles, they were all going to manifestly declare, they would not have him as their Lord, and they came in this world, so never let us expect much sympathy in this pathway, for the mere profession of Christianity, nor indeed from men, whose only hopes are in this world, Christ is outside of both realms, and that's the Christ that we are called to follow, in this world, but I mustn't force too much of that, it's more a dispensational touch, in another way, they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him, and the third day, he shall rise again, in other words, what they are going to do, and after that, what he is going to do, for whether it be his resurrection at his own hand, [00:17:02] raising up, destroying his temple, and in three days, I will raise it up again, or as that subject servant of God, God raised him again, out from among the dead, out of himself, all of God, and I do not doubt, the whole Godhead was involved, for it said, put the dead in the flesh, quickened by the spirit, the whole Godhead was involved in his death, and involved in his resurrection, and he has come out tonight, and at the right hand of God, he lives, forevermore, has that a voice to us, it ought to have, beloved, just think now, am I getting a little bit frightened, of the Christian pathway, a little bit tempted to give it up, but anyway, there's not one of us in this world forever, we all know that don't we, who knows that we'll be in this world tomorrow, for certain day, not one of us can be sure of that, but the point is, what we are absolutely certain about it, we'll be in that world, in the resurrection, that's in the last times been said, [00:18:01] we are more sure of the things we cannot see, than the things we can see, how true that is, and the one certain thing, for every one of us, beloved, is that we will be in the resurrection, we will be in the world to come, you'll know as well as I do, I'm not sure I'll be in this world tomorrow, and neither I do, but he brings in the resurrection you see, to show them, let the world do its worst, they'll throw me out of this world, cast me out of it as it were, by way of the cross, but there's another world beyond that, the world to come of which we speak, that's what Paul said to the Hebrews, you're going into that world beloved, and so am I, and it is that I believe, the Lord will keep before us all, not to be unduly occupied, with what may be marking us in the pathway, but the wonderful result of it all in the world to come, for which we are going, that immediately you see effected these other two, as the Lord said that, [00:19:01] and on the third day, shall rise again, and James and John, we mustn't pause too much to think about them, had they not understood what the Lord was talking about, but one thing apparently they did understand, was that there was going to be a kingdom, maybe they didn't quite understand it wasn't going to be just yet, but they knew there was going to be one, their hearts were set upon that end, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, they came unto him saying, Master, Teacher, we hope that thou wouldst do for us, whatsoever we shall desire, and he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto him, Grant us, grant unto us, that we may sit one on thy right hand, and one on

thy left hand, in thy glory.

I say again, beloved, I am not perfectly certain, what prompted these men to say it, apart from one thing, the great desire to have an outstanding place in the kingdom, [00:20:02] to which they were going.

May I ask you a question?

Are you, what, looking for an outstanding place in the kingdom to which you are going? Do you think that is egotistical?

No, my dear believer, it is not egotistical at all. It has got to do with all this divine teaching. God wants you interested in that glory. He wants you interested in a place in that glory. Now remember the first time I read this, that's what I thought about it. Oh, just themselves before them. But reading it down a little more carefully, I had to change my mind and I did. At least I have, whatever. In regard to what the Lord himself said, if I asked you very simply, privately, personally, would you like a good place in the glory of that kingdom, in the world to come, to which you are going?

You know, if you had said to me, no, I wouldn't believe you. Because I am perfectly certain you do. I tell you quite frankly, I do. [00:21:01] Oh yes, that kingdom that's coming, and a place on display in the thousand years of Christ. Why should we not desire it in the Christian pathway along which we are going?

We'll see in a moment, of course, there are conditions attached to it, but beloved, don't let us lose the desire. Never let us forget that glory to which we are going. Nor forget commensurate upon service here. It will determine our place there. And that's exactly what is coming out in these words, whatever may have been in the minds or hearts of those disciples.

I don't know if you've heard the corresponding passage brought alongside of this.

I don't know where I heard it from, someone who said, wonder what James and John thought when they were standing by his cross, and saw one thief on his right hand, or there were more than thieves, those men who were murderers, saw one murderer on his right hand, and another murderer on the other. Did they think about this? One of thy right hand, and one of thy left hand in my kingdom. [00:22:03] Would they have thought, well is this the way of the kingdom? And the Lord is about to tell them that just is the way of the kingdom. His right hand and his left hand in slavery determines his right hand and his left hand in that kingdom to which we are going. Oh yes, the Lord tested them on that at once. Why, he said, you don't know what you're asking. They say unto him, grant unto us that we may see one on thy right hand, the other on thy left hand in thy glory. But Jesus said unto them, ye know not what ye ask.

In other words, I'm perfectly sure they weren't aware of the implications, whatever their desire may be.

But I beg both to say again, beloved, if we have not desire, we'll not get very far, you know, in the Christian path, eh? There must be the desire to move, and seeking daily grace to move, subject to his will, never meant that he said of us we didn't have the desire to go on in that service, [00:23:01] having this glorious end in view.

But it may be like them, we're not always aware of what this is going to involve. You know not what ye ask.

Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they said unto him, We can.

I would have said perhaps, had I been there, you can't.

But they said we can.

And the Lord says, ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of, and with the baptism that I am baptized with all, shall ye be baptized?

It was the Lord himself that said that. He could not have been referring to the cross, and he's dealing with the question of sin? Who knew better than the Lord that not another human being could ever have stood there? But what I apprehend by this passage is the cup on the one hand is the presentation of the will of God to them, and the baptism on the other hand, their rejection at the hands of men [00:24:02] as they drank that cup, not as we have said, dealing with the question of sin, but following in that pathway of service for God, absolutely devoted to the will of God in this world.

No, of course, take that from me. The Lord said it himself.

They said we can. And Jesus said unto them, ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of, and with the baptism that I am baptized with all, shall ye be baptized?

That's why we said a little earlier in this reading, we debated it a little up until Norah John went into him the reading, and we had to agree it was perfectly right. His cup, his baptism, is possible for every one of us in this world, and seeking to accomplish the will of God in the pathway along which we are going in the way.

But said the Lord on the other hand, to sit on my right hand and on my left hand [00:25:02] is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.

Are we any wiser about this today?

Do we know yet who it's going to be? Of course we don't.

It always brings to mind when I read this verse, that word in another passage, so that he may obtain all ye remember right into the crib, being so that he may obtain.

Here it is as it were, an open question. Mark, and James, and John may be there, I cannot say, of course I cannot say, but the Lord has left it an open question. It's prepared for someone, for whom it is prepared.

We might of course take an abstract term and venture an answer to that very safely. I'm sure, and it is this, that the one who most closely approximates to the service of our Lord in this world will be on his right hand, and the one who most closely approximates [00:26:01] to that will be on his left hand. Of that I'm perfectly sure there cannot be any doubt. And as to whom that may be, well shall I say,

beloved, it may be you, and it may be me.

Don't think that that's pride, it isn't pride. The Lord would encourage us to strive on for a place in that kingdom. And upon it if pride comes in, I'm not being anywhere near the right hand or the left hand, of that we haven't the most distant doubt. But here is a question open out, a service, and it's ultimately warned. And when the others began to complain, the Lord then rectified the whole matter in that Christian company, and put the thing I'm sure beyond any doubt or argument among the other ones whom to seem to be envious of these men, because they are dead.

For that's such a thing.

And so we read in verse 41, when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John. Do you get displeased when you meet a brother or a sister [00:27:01] striving for a place in the kingdom? Are you going to argue the point of that? Look, you think you're better than me or things like that?

No, no, beloved. We ought to admire and be prepared to help and sympathize with any sincere desire to tread that path where, according to the marks the Lord Jesus Christ has left in this world, ain't following him in that way.

For when this difficulty came up, Jesus called them to him, said unto them, for he knew the thought that they had in their minds, ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles, see these prepositions he uses, over the Gentiles, exercise lordship over them.

And they great ones exercise authority upon them.

Of course that's the world. And that's what I've got in me if I don't watch out.

Of course I want to lord it over the saints of God.

I want to tell you what you ought to be doing. You ought to respect my authority. I'm the oldest brother in the many. [00:28:02] All this sort of thing that comes up, you know. Yes, over them. That's what the Lord said. Exactly what goes on in this world.

Let us lay it well at heart, beloved. This doesn't lead to a prominent place in the kingdom. And the Lord aptly assured them of that. But so shall it not be among you.

Oh yes, that's greatness in the world, you know.

Over people.

Lording it over them. As he says here, among the Gentiles.

And while I make no apology for saying that's in my heart as much as in anyone else's. Desiring to be lording it over people and telling them. I can tell people and they'll do what I tell them, you see. Doesn't it make a big man of me? Oh yes, it's in every one of us. Remember years ago, Mr. Macgrove was in that well-known illustration from Aesop's Fables, you remember, about the two goats meeting on a plank?

And I ventured on a map that rather surprised him. I said, you know, Mr. Macgrove, whenever I'm in a difficulty, I prepare to carry that out every time. [00:29:02] He said, you mean that, George? Yes, I said, I mean it. Very soberly. That whenever I get into a difficulty, I prepare to carry that out every time. What do you mean? I said, providing you lay down every time, you say, let me walk over you. Yes, I'm ready for that every time. The lying down's another matter. So is he and all the other, all these things. But I, the man, prepare to lie down.

That's what's coming out in this passage of the man that walks over the top. And the Lord said, that's exactly what happens among the Gentiles.

But so shall it not be among you.

Whosoever will be great among you, the Lord, not one little bit, shall be your minister. This where thy acumen, that we well know speaks of ministry, is not my waiting till you do something for me, or what you can give to me, but my ever ready to see what I can do for you, and give to you, not letting you giving it to me. No. This diaconate service means, [00:30:01] what can I do for you, to help you and encourage you, whatever it may be.

That's the one, your minister.

Not as we know this word, as bandied about in the religious way today, it is simply your servant. But the Lord doesn't stop there. He goes yet a step further.

Whosoever of you will be the cheapest, the cheapest, ah, this was the thing that was running through their minds, wasn't it? Shall be servant, bonflare of a whole.

There may be times indeed, when we may thank God, that we do pass on a little ministry for saints. Not only me, in giving a simple address like this tonight. It may be visiting, and all the other things that come around, you know, seeking to help, and encourage the saints of God. But it couldn't be any lower now, that the Lord say, bonflare of a whole.

And if I'm looking round, for the chief man in the Christian company, well, no, let's be afraid to bring it home to herself, in our local meetings.

[00:31:02] It's the man that's the bonflare of the company, that's the greatest man in that meeting. And I need not tell you, it isn't I who have manufactured that, it's what the Lord himself has said.

Is this the way then to a place in the kingdom? Humbly it is, for the Lord himself said it was, that the man then who ministers much to the saints, and who is prepared to get beneath them, like a bond slave with a master, that's the man that's chiefest of all. And the Lord crowns it, does he not, in verse 45, for even the Son of Man, came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. That's in John's word coming immediately, when we read a verse like this, that we ought to lay down our lives for the reverend.

I connect them to these earlier statements that I made, when I said, you see, about deciding a place in that kingdom. Oh, pride, why it simply couldn't be prided. [00:32:01] It means that I'm going to see Christ daily, to serve the saints of God, as much as ever I'm capable of serving them, prepared to take the very place of bond slave beneath them, instead of trying to wall them about, telling them

what I think they ought to be doing, but rather being subject, in the way that I can do all I can to help them, and being assured from the Lord's own words, chiefest among you all, I will have a chance for them, that world to come, to which we are going.

Well now, I venture just one more word, before the time has gone, in verse, in chapter 11.

This was now the Lord coming into Jerusalem, on the back of that ass, that would be a little higher up. If any man goes through your chapter 11, if any man say unto you, why do you this?

Say ye, that the Lord hath need of him. That's the word from where I wanted to get pulled out. The Lord hath need of him.

Remember, what an importance the Lord gives us, doesn't he? [00:33:01] He has a work for you to do. He has a work for me to do. And we'll actually say, the Lord hath need of him. This ass is going to follow him, and at least, he's going to be on the back of that ass, as he goes along in that way, up to Jerusalem.

His claim is put in, the Lord hath need of him, and straightway, he will send him hither.

And as these two disciples went their way, they found the cold tide by the door without, in a place where two graves met.

And the Lord said, would there be any difficulty in assessing something, about these two graves?

I don't think so. Can we not say simply, beloved, about where these two graves meet? Is it going to be my will, or is it going to be his will? Beloved, we're at those crossroads, I believe, nearly every day, where those two graves meet. Is this what the Lord wants me to do, or is it just something I want to do? Is this service for him, or is it service for myself? [00:34:01] Will it glorify him, or will it glorify me, at this place, where two graves meet?

If only we ever keep in mind, then, the Lord's desire, that we too might be subject to his will, moving in that way, remembering a day will come, you know, when we have his appreciation of it.

Do you think it matters much, then, what the world thinks about us? Or, indeed, what the saints of God may think about us, so far as that is concerned, if we humble ourselves in the company? Why not be content with what we surely know and what he thinks about us, in going on in his service in this world? And if we are in the company, as thank God we are, the continuation of this company, following Jesus in that way, let us remember, then, the end will be in glory for every one of us, and commensurate with how much, then, I've laid down my life for the brethren, gone under them, and still getting over them. [00:35:02] So it will be in that place we are going, that place on the right hand, or on the left hand, in his kingdom. The Lord, then, help us to go on in courage, quite assured, then, that every service, and every step that we take, will have an answer in that day to which we are going, content with his approval, as we will at the end, as we quote it again, well done, and faithful servant.

Well, now, can we sing together number 100 and 51.

One by one.