

**Mark 10:32-45**  
November 18, 2018

Chapman University sponsors an annual research poll called 'A Survey of American fears'. Here is how they gathered their data—

“The team asked 1,207 adults from a range of demographics what they are most afraid of in their daily lives, with [80 different book-shaking terrors](#) (everything you can ever think to be afraid of—especially the completely natural and godly fear of clowns) to choose from across four different categories: personal fears, natural disasters, paranormal fears, and the fear of extremism.”

- 1 - Corruption of government officials** (same top fear as 2015 and 2016) – 74 percent
- 2 - American Healthcare Act/Trumpcare** (New entry for 2017) – 55 percent
- 3 - Pollution of oceans, rivers, and lakes** (New in top 10) – 53 percent
- 4 - Pollution of drinking water** (New in top 10) – 50 percent
- 5 - Not having enough money in the future** – 50 percent
- 6 - High medical bills** – 48 percent
- 7 - The US will be involved in another world war** (New entry for 2017) – 48 percent
- 8 - Global warming and climate change** – 48 percent
- 9 - North Korea using weapons** (New entry for 2017) – 48 percent
- 10 - Air pollution** – 45 percent

What surprised me about the top ten fears of Americans is not listed. Death. Death was—according to this poll—48<sup>th</sup> on the list. 48<sup>th</sup>! Just edging out Illegal immigration and insects.

I think the reason that people aren't afraid of death is because they don't like to think about death. I get that.

I know death is not pleasant to talk about but when you read the scriptures and get to know Jesus you find that he is talking about death and dying all the time.

We join Jesus today on the road to Jerusalem today and he is going to talk about his death then ours.

Actually, he is going to give us one of the grand secrets of the Christian life—Constant death by slavery to others must be our way of life.

I know that may sound impossible and unlikely, but that is what Jesus says directly to us today. Because we follow a crucified savior, we must constantly live a life of death and slavery to others.

Death is must be our way of life.

Jesus talks about his death  
Jesus talks about the death of all disciples  
How is Jesus inviting you to die?

<sup>32</sup> And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, <sup>33</sup> saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the

Gentiles. <sup>34</sup> And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise.”

<sup>35</sup> And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” <sup>36</sup> And he said to them, “What do you want me to do for you?” <sup>37</sup> And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.” <sup>38</sup> Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?” <sup>39</sup> And they said to him, “We are able.” And Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, <sup>40</sup> but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.” <sup>41</sup> And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. <sup>42</sup> And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup> But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup> and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. <sup>45</sup> For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

PRAY

Jesus talks about his death

Jesus talks about our death  
How is Jesus inviting us to die?

## 1. Jesus talks about his death (Mark 10:32-34)

Jesus has already predicted his death twice in our journeys with Jesus through Mark. This time, he tells the disciples exactly how all of it was going to happen.

<sup>33</sup> saying, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem,

They have been travelling there for a while now.

and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes,

Jesus doesn't tell them how he would be delivered to the religious authorities—that shock would be for later.

and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles.

The Jews pronounce him guilty of blasphemy and deserving of death so they hand him over to Pontius Pilate and the Romans.

<sup>34</sup> And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him.

And they executed him by means of crucifixion.

And after three days he will rise.”

And everything happened exactly like he said. We will see it unfold when we get to Mark chapter 14 all the way to the end of the book.

Jesus was no victim of circumstance. He came to earth to die. Most leaders of religious movements do whatever they can to avoid death and live but Jesus seems to walk right into the chainsaw.

He came to die.

Mark gives us the barest hint of his demeanor as they walk the road of execution.

Verse 32,

<sup>32</sup> And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him....

They were not just on the road going to Jerusalem—Jesus is the pace-setter. He is walking ahead of them.

They know he is going there to die. And look at their response—they were amazed and they were afraid.

Amazed and afraid.

That summarizes how I would feel if I saw Jesus leading a parade of people heading to his death. I've never seen anyone walk to a firing squad or the gallows—but I know this: No one goes willingly.

No one tells their executioners—c'mon lets go.

And here we have Jesus walking ahead of the others toward his death.

Amazed and afraid. I get it.

Amazed because they have to be thinking—who leads the way to their death?

And afraid because as his disciples what would happen to them?

Don't think for one moment that Jesus relished the idea of his dying. Not at all. He didn't want to die. He didn't want to die on a cross.

But he lived a life of complete obedience to God the father.

If they were paying attention, and understood, they would have started to maybe begin to realize that Following Jesus means a life of constant death and slavery.

Their fear and amazement melted away and two of his followers asked an amazingly tone-deaf question.

And that leads to a conversation about their life of death.

## **2. Jesus talks about the death of all disciples (Mark 10:35-45)**

<sup>35</sup> And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.”

You just got finished telling us that you are going to die in a nasty, shameful, public way. And so James and John have a question. These guys were not called the Thunder Brothers for nothing.

<sup>36</sup> And he said to them, “What do you want me to do for you?” <sup>37</sup> And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.”

What a response! What do you want me to do for you? Instead of—guys don’t you realize that I am dying for you. You! That is what you need most and that is what I’m going to do.

And then they ask to take the places of honor in his new kingdom. It is a little like this—you know how when you watch politicians on TV having a press conference—the candidate is at the podium and he/she has a gaggle of people just standing behind them?

These are the people with me. James and John are saying—Jesus we know you deserve the place of honor. You stand in the middle, just let us be to your left and right.

You can decide our titles later, but we just wanted to suggest a placement.

Wow.

Now, we may laugh at the James and John for this kind of stupidity. And it was stupid. James would die quicker, but John lived to an old man.

I'm sure people asked him to tell that story a lot.

Whenever I find myself reading this story and I'm tempted to say—How can you guys be so stupid?

They are doing there what we do all the time.

Do you see what they are doing?

They are trying to leverage their relationship with Jesus to get what they want.

They are trying to use Jesus.

James and John come to Jesus with their own agenda for their betterment and blessing. They want to use Jesus.

We might not be so brash as to pray—can be seated in the highest place of honor in the universe?

“Mark’s vision of the moral life is profoundly ironic. Because God’s manner of revelation is characterized by hiddenness, reversal, and surprise, those who follow Jesus find themselves repeatedly failing to understand the will of God... [therefore] there can be no place for smugness or dogmatism... If our sensibilities are formed by this narrative, we will learn not to take ourselves too seriously; we will be very self-critical and receptive to unexpected



manifestations of God's love and power." Richard Hays

They were trying to use Jesus for what they wanted. They didn't yet understand that we need Jesus—not the stuff he can do for us.

Following Jesus means a life of constant death and slavery.

Here is the brutal reality—

If you are following Jesus to get from him—

- A spouse
- Obedient Kids
- A happy marriage
- Enough money
- Healing
- A good reputation

If you are following Jesus to get those things you are using Jesus and not really following him. You are using him.

Asking for things from him but not really wanting him.

"Any person who only sticks with Christianity as long as things are going his or her way, is a stranger to the cross." Tim Keller

The person following Jesus for his benefits will not long be following Jesus. Following Jesus means a life of constant death and slavery.

At this point the disciples were physically following Jesus but they had a long way to go.

Soon all of these men who tried to use him to get personal favors would be scattered. At this point in Mark 10, it was a good time to be associated with Jesus but on down the road the tide would turn.

When Jesus was arrested, they feared that their association with him would claim their lives.

They ran because their association with Jesus would mean suffering.

Sometimes our association with Jesus causes suffering—authentic followers continue to follow even through those times.

Jesus is so very gracious in his response. You don't know what you are asking.

And they double down—Jesus asked:

**Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" <sup>39</sup> And they said to him, "We are able."**

Meaning are you willing to follow me even to death? Because that is where I am going. Can you do that?

And Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, <sup>40</sup> but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”

They would follow him to their own deaths, but he couldn't promise the places of honor. James would be killed by Herod in Acts 12, John would die an old man in Patmos.

By then, they were really following Jesus not for what he give them, but for who Jesus was. But that was off in the future.

When the others heard what James and John asked and they were indignant. Not because of how inappropriate the question was but because they each wanted the places of honor.

They wanted to be great. Then Jesus taught them about greatness—

Vs. 42

And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup> But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup> and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.

Do you understand what he is saying?

Instead of clutching for power to get your way—lay your life down for others. Consider yourself the slave of all.

Wow.

Don't let this wash over you—here is one of the things it means to follow Jesus—You are a slave to others.

What rights do a slave have?

None.

What voice does a slave have?

None.

Is a slave in control of his own life?

No.

Does a slave have someone tend to their needs?

No.

Slaves don't expect gratitude  
Slaves don't expect recognition  
Slaves don't expect respect  
Slaves don't expect credit

Slaves are owned and they are accountable to their master.

Our master is Christ.

We were once slaves to sin, and were in bondage. Now, we are slave to Christ and we are directed to serve others as slaves.

A slave is owned. At the bottom, that is what it means to be a slave. And it is also what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

And this is what Jesus is saying to you and to me. He is saying, "I own you."

Following Jesus means a life of constant death and slavery.

The great in the kingdom become slaves and servants of all.

But why?

**<sup>45</sup> For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."**

Why?

Because it is what our master did. We serve others as slaves because Jesus served us even to the point of death.

Following Jesus means a life of constant death and slavery.

Because we follow Jesus and his way was the way of the cross.

If there was anyone who should have been waited on hand and foot it was Jesus. But even the Son of man came to serve. And not only serve but to give up his life.

Jesus was rightfully entitled to wealth and power and prestige. And he came to serve by dying.

If there was anyone who deserved to be regaled and it was Jesus. God the son had come to his earth and the people he created killed him.

Even Jesus came to serve.

How did he serve? He gave his life as a ransom for many.

He had all wealth and became poor.  
He had all power and became weak.  
He had all honor and became a curse.  
He had all glory and became a scourge.  
He had all majesty and became dull.  
He had all splendor and became plain.

He gave his life. As a ransom.

“Let us consider once more the extent to which our Lord went in his service; and I think we shall once more be prepared to say that it is beyond computation. We do not measure it by saying that he gave up his life; the mere doing of that might have been a small thing which others have done before and after him. No, what he did was to give that life as a ransom. That is to say he deliberately took his life and

put it into the bondage of guilt and shame and death in which our lives were held by the divine justice. To become a ransom means to take the place of the other and accept all the consequences. And this Jesus did." Geerhardus Vos

Yes he did.

He took our place and accepted all of the consequences for our many sins. He gave himself as a ransom.

We use the word ransom almost exclusively pertaining to kidnapping. And that is fitting. The power of sin had kidnapped humanity and held it hostage.

Divine justice had to be paid, not to the devil but to God Most high. Jesus made the payment of his life to ransom us from the clutches and bondage of death.

We followers of Jesus can follow him because he has purchased us. Because he has gave up his precious life for you and I—we must give up our lives for others.

We followers of Jesus are slaves to each other. Are you? As a follower of Jesus are you living a life of death for others? Other Christians?

Jesus says that he came to die as a ransom—or to buy our freedom. We are freed from sin and enslaved to Jesus. We are enslaved to Jesus and others.

Verse 43 is staggering.

But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup> and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.

Jesus is looking at you and me and he is saying—greatness—for my followers is that you be a slave of others.

“To confess ‘Jesus is Lord’ is to say to other followers of Jesus, ‘I am your slave.’ Slavery to Christ is exhibited in slavery to Christians.” Murray Harris

What would this community look like if we lived like that? What would our families look like if we lived as if we were enslaved to them? How could we impact our neighborhoods if we lived like slaves in them?

Clearly this does not mean we are to be demanding with others, but this is speaking to all of us in this room who are Christians.

We are all fellow-slaves as we follow Jesus. A primary expression of our following of Jesus is the selfless serving of others.

You see we have this dual obligation—we are obligated to Jesus because he has ransomed us—and we are obligated to other Christians. Primarily people in the church you are a part of.

### **3. How is Jesus inviting you to die?**



This is where the whole Christian thing gets uncomfortable. Following Jesus is not comfortable or easy. There is a claim in your life.

When you accept Jesus you accept all Christians too. It is easier to say you want to follow Jesus than it is to follow Jesus with the Christians around you.

Jesus is perfect.  
Your fellow Christian is not.

Yet because we are ransomed by Christ we are enslaved to each other.

The nature of our service—willing, joyful and blind. Meaning we are enslaved to others for their good regardless of who they are and if they can do anything for us.

How do you spend your time?

Anyone can say they follow Jesus—but does the way you use your time say you follow Jesus? You have been ransomed are enslaved to others in this room (if you are a part of this church—or if you are visiting the church you are a part of) does your calendar look like you are a follower of Jesus and enslaved to others?

It is not hard to find ways to serve people—Get to know them, find out what they value and where they need help. And help them.

There are a world of possibilities for the ransomed slaves among us—

- Encourage a young Christian by reading scriptures together and talking about it.
- Offer to babysit for a young couple regularly for free.
- If you are handy—connect with a single mom or widow and check in regularly to see if she needs anything to be fixed.
- Visit someone who is chronically ill and don't talk about their illness. Just be their friend.
- Go with someone to their chemo treatments.
- If you are established in business mentor a young man or woman.
- Text encouragements randomly.
- Withhold your opinions and be generous with words to build up.
- Invest in the next generation: Youth / CM!
- Serve someone in secret.
- Take meals to others.

There are a million more things that the ransomed slaves can do for each as we follow Christ together.

Time is not the only things we ransomed slaves have to offer for each other.

How do you spend your money?

Part of the reason you have extra money if you have extra money is to help other people. Do you?

Does the way you spend your money look like you follow Jesus? Do you spend your money like a ransomed slave?

You can say you follow Jesus but does the way you spend your money say you follow Jesus?

Are you okay having less so someone else can have more?

Do have extra space in your house to put someone up?

We ransomed slaves who follow Jesus are called to live differently.

We are called personally by Jesus to—he is looking in our eyes and saying,

**But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup> and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.**

We ransomed slaves can freely

Give our lives for others because he has given his life for us.

How is Jesus inviting you to die?

