

Sm To serve and give his life as a ransom

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[0 : 00] If you'll please open your Bibles to the Gospel of Matthew, in the 20th chapter, Matthew chapter 20. Matthew chapter 20.

And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way he said to them, See, we are going to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flawed and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day.

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked him for something. And he said to her, What do you want?

She said to him, Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom. Jesus answered, You do not know what you are asking.

Are you able to drink the cup that I am able to drink? They said to him, We are able. He said to them, You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.

[1 : 45] And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers. But Jesus called them to him and said, You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.

It shall not be so among you, but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave. Let's pray together.

Dear Heavenly Father, we again ask for your Spirit's help as your word is open to us, that you would make it clear to us, that you would help us understand. Lord, that you would apply it to our hearts, not just in understanding, but also, Lord, in changing who we are.

Lord, that we would be those who would serve, even slave to others. Lord, which we know is so contrary to our very nature, but we pray that you would make your word clear to us now, that you would apply it, and again, we pray that Christ would be exalted in it.

We ask this in his name. Amen. As we begin to look at this passage, just to remind you of where we've been, you may remember back in chapter 13, we saw Jesus' transition to a more private ministry.

[3 : 04] Remember, up to that point, it was much more public work that he was doing, and we saw in chapter 13 that he withdrew a little bit and was teaching the disciples more privately, and even the encounters, the narratives that we see, what we see is that Jesus is more in a smaller group, more with the disciples, working with them.

And so, in this time, Jesus has been teaching the disciples about the kingdom. What is the kingdom of God like? And the teaching in particular, we've seen, is focused on humility and service, that those who are in the kingdom are those who are humble and those who are serving others.

And so, we've seen this throughout, as we've looked at different passages, going all the way back to chapter 16, verse 24 and 25. We read, And that really sets a pattern for what we see in the coming chapters, this paradox almost seeming that we have to lose our life if we're to gain our life, we're to serve others, even to take up our cross and follow him.

And now this takes on more meaning as we get now to the third time Jesus predicting he's about to take up that cross. He's headed for his own death. Now, you may remember, that's what Jesus said in chapter 16 we just looked at.

What happens in chapter 18 when we get to the beginning? We've been focusing on that the last few weeks. 18, verse 1, you remember, the disciples are arguing amongst themselves which one of them is going to be the greatest in the kingdom.

[4 : 39] And part of the discussion with that is, who's going to sit next to Jesus when he gets his throne? Who's going to be Jesus' right-hand man? Who's going to be vice king, or whatever you want to say, in the kingdom?

And so Jesus' response to that in chapter 18, verses 3 through 4, Jesus brings a child to them and he says, Truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And so he calls them out for their pride, tells them unless they become like a child, they won't even get into the kingdom, more or less sit beside him as vice king.

Really the greatest in the kingdom is going to be the one who's the humble one. Then in chapter 19, the disciples are turning children away. There are children who are wanting to come to Jesus, and they're turning them away.

And Jesus says in chapter 19, verse 14, Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for such belongs the kingdom of heaven. And we talked even about not only the idea of children in particular being brought into the kingdom, but of such like these.

[5 : 46] That kind of childlike mentality that looks to God for everything that's dependent upon him, that's humble. And immediately after that, Jesus turns away the rich young ruler, who outwardly seems so favored and so blessed by God.

He had the money, he had the political position, the power, and yet, as blessed as he seems, Jesus closes out that encounter by telling the disciples, many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.

And that's Jesus' kind of summary of his encounter with the rich young ruler. Here's a man who seems to be first, but really is last, because he's trusting in his wealth. He hasn't humbled himself. He hasn't followed God like a child.

And then after that came the parable of the labors in the vineyard, which closes with chapter 20, verse 16. So the verse right before our passage, where we left off last time, he says, So the last will be first, and the first last.

And so again, we have that repeating of that kind of idea. And so all throughout this, we see Jesus' teaching about humility and service. We have to humble ourselves. We're to serve others. We're to look to God for everything.

[6 : 58] And so now we're reaching the end of that private ministry. We see that expressed to us at the beginning of this, verse 17, as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. He tells them why he's going to Jerusalem.

So they're about to enter the capital, where the temple is, where the people are, where those who have persecuted Jesus are. So we're seeing an end to the private ministry. And Jesus is telling them that he's going to Jerusalem for the express purpose of being crucified.

And so the question is, what's Jesus going to say to them? What's his last encouragement to them? What does he say to his disciples as they approach Jerusalem? What last teaching will he communicate to them just before this momentic week begins?

And so what I want us to look at first is this idea of Jesus is going to the cross, the fact that he's headed to the cross. And then we're going to look at the encounter with the sons of Zebedee.

And then finally, what we see at the very end of that encounter at the end of our passage today. So first, Jesus going to the cross. I've said already, verse 17, we see that as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the 12 disciples aside.

[8 : 13] So there's already movement here. We're headed that way. They're walking toward Jerusalem. And he takes them to the side. They stop for a moment. Maybe they stop and take a break. They sit down for a moment or whatever.

But he takes them aside. And he tells them why he's going to Jerusalem. But it's important to see they're already headed that way. This is what's going on. Jesus is actually guiding them. He's leading them toward Jerusalem.

And the first thing he tells them is that he's going to Jerusalem to be killed. Now, this is actually the third time that Jesus has made this prediction. And each time we see greater revelation.

In Matthew 16, Jesus told them that he's going to die. You may remember, that's the time when Peter rebukes him. And Jesus says, get behind me, Satan, for you're concerned with the things of man and not the things of God.

So he's told them this once before. And the response of Peter, and again, perhaps as the spokesperson for the disciples is, no, you're not. No, no, no, you're not going to die.

[9 : 12] That's not a good plan. We can go to Jerusalem, but you know what's going to happen when we get to Jerusalem. And what do the disciples think is going to happen when they get to

Jerusalem? If Jesus is truly the Messiah and the Messiah is to sit on the throne of his father, David, what's going to happen when we get to Jerusalem?

You're not going to die. That would mess the whole plan up. You're going to defeat Rome. You're going to conquer the Pharisees. Everyone's going to bow their knee to you. You will reign on your throne forever. And one of us is going to sit pretty close to you.

I mean, that's what's going through their mind. So Peter rebukes them. No, you're not going to die. And he says, get behind me, Satan. And then Matthew 17, 22 through 23, we read there, as they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, the son of man is about to be delivered into the hands of men and they will kill him and he will be raised on the third day.

It says, and they were greatly distressed. So the disciples are distressed by this. They're bothered by what he says, but though they're greatly distressed, they still don't understand.

It needs to be repeated. Jesus has to say it to them a third time. Jesus is also saying it because it's imminent. It's about to happen. This is what's, in any moment, this is what we're going to do.

[10:25] We're almost to Jerusalem. I want you to understand again for the third time. This is what's going to happen in Jerusalem. I'm going to die. We talked about even in chapter 17, their distress was probably more about what Jesus said, that he's still not getting it.

That if he died, that's going to mess the plan up for the Messiah, than it is about them actually having Jesus die, seeing him leave. And I said already, each time Jesus predicts his death, he does so with greater detail.

So in 1621, here's what he says. From that time, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised.

And then verse 1722 actually adds the concept of betrayal. It says, the son of man is about to be delivered into the hands of men. So we see already from the beginning that the scribes, the Pharisees, excuse me, the chief priests and the elders are going to be involved in Jesus' death. Chapter 17, we find out that he's going to be betrayed. He's going to be handed over to them. But here we see the greatest detail. Look with me, verse 19. We see at the very beginning of verse 19, and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flawed and crucified and he will be raised on the third day.

[11:42] So we see here, even an expansion of that, not only is it the chief priests and the scribes that are involved in this and the elders who are involved, they're actually going to hand him over to the Gentiles.

And we're actually told the form of death, that he will be crucified. Well, Gentiles in Jerusalem, we probably already would have thought of the Roman Empire, but it was only the Roman Empire who had the authority to crucify.

The elders and the chief priests, they can't crucify anyone. They don't have that ability. It's only the Roman Empire that does so. And so now he says, specifically, Jesus says that he's going to be handed over to the Gentiles, the Roman Empire, to be crucified.

And he adds with that the idea of mocked and flawed as well. So he's going to be mocked, he's going to be made fun of, he's going to be physically abused before he actually goes to the cross. And so each time greater detail, and now he kind of expands it to the greatest detail, this is what's going to happen. Maybe he gives them a little of time so they can take it in.

[12:45] Kind of begins with, okay, I'm going to die when we get to Jerusalem. One of you is going to betray me. It's the Roman Empire that's going to put me to death that's going to be a crucifixion. So maybe a little bit of time, it'll help you take it in, you know, how you can give people a little bit of information so they don't become overwhelmed.

But here's what I really want you to see in all of this, that Jesus is going to the cross. It's voluntary, and it's purposeful. Jesus' death is voluntary and purposeful.

This is what God's Word tells us all throughout the Word. So for example, the Gospel of John, chapter 10, verses 17 through 18. For this reason, the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again.

No one takes it from me. In case you didn't understand what it means that I lay down my life, let's just make it clear. No one's going to take my life from me. But I lay it down on my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and have authority to take it up again. This charge I receive from my Father. So that concept there in that prayer from Jesus is so important for us to understand as we

go into the last section, and this is where we are, at the last section of the Gospel of Matthew.
[14:02] So as we move into the last week of Jesus' life, I don't want us to forget this concept, and Jesus is explaining it to them, He's going for the purpose of dying.

It's purposeful, and it's intentional. Jesus has designed this. He's intending it to happen. He's choosing to lay His life down. He reiterates, no one takes it from me.

I'm laying my life down. And so I want us to understand that that's what's going on as we see the end of the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus chooses to go to the cross.

It's not as though Jesus had this grand plan that He was going to sit on the throne in that day, and He got defeated. He didn't foresee that Judas was going to betray Him, or that the chief priest would turn against Him.

In fact, we've seen throughout the Gospel so far that Jesus has told people, don't tell them that I've healed you. Don't make it known. Keep it private. We talked about, why would we keep it private?

[15:06] Well, I've argued all along it's because of the persecution. Jesus doesn't want to accelerate the crucifixion. He doesn't want it to happen too soon. There's a special time He wants it to happen. And we just read about that even in our reading earlier of the Passover.

The timing of this is meant to coincide with the Passover. He's the Passover Lamb. He's not meant to die before that. He's going to lay His life down on the altar for a purpose for us.

And so we see this later repeated by Peter in Acts 2.23. In his sermon there, he says, This Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

I think Peter does something that's really hard for us to do. And that's to balance the sovereignty of God with man's responsibility. Peter preaches a sermon. He accuses them, You lawless men, put Jesus to death.

Why? Well, in accordance with the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. Not as though man's plan somehow trumped God's plan. They defeated God's plan.

[16:12] They overcame Him. Redemption wasn't plan B. This was God's plan from the beginning. And sinful men willfully acted how they wanted to, exactly in line with God's plan to have His Son crucified.

In Acts 4, 27-28, we see this again clearly presented. Truly in this city they were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus.

Here are the human forces. They're gathered together against Jesus. It says, Whom you anointed. Both Herod and Pontius Pilate along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel.

He basically just included the whole world, didn't he? Herod, Pontius Pilate, the governing authorities, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

So again, to make it especially clear, this is after the fact that were gathered together the political leaders, the Gentiles and the Jews to put Jesus to death.

[17:16] Why? According, excuse me, to do whatever your hand, this is God's hand, and God's plan had predestined to take place. This is what God had designed.

And so I want us to understand that. That may not be necessarily a new concept, but I want you to keep it in your mind as we go through these last chapters of Matthew. This is what God has intended.

Jesus has purposed this. It's not even that Jesus is acting against his will because of being forced to by the Father. Jesus willfully is going to the cross. And we're going to look in a minute on why he's doing that.

For a second, though, let's just think of this in context. They're going to Jerusalem. Why are they going to Jerusalem? So Jesus can die. Now, think about everything I just said in the introduction. What has Jesus been teaching his disciples? Humility, service, dependence upon God. He's been teaching this all along. He's just told them, we're going to Jerusalem and I'm going to be put to death.

[18:21] And then what happens in verses 20 on through the rest of our section today. They're almost to Jerusalem. The disciples still don't get it.

Jesus tells them again they're not understanding it. They're headed to Jerusalem and I think the expectation of the disciples still is that they're headed for the throne.

Jesus is going there to take his rightful throne and not that he will die. If he will soon take his throne then the time for deciding who's going to sit beside him is short, isn't it?

You understand, right? We're in a political season right now. We're approaching the time of the election and one of the big news lately was we know that we have an incumbent president and vice president but for the other party they had chosen who they wanted to be the presidential candidate. Well, who's going to be the vice presidential candidate? And so we're getting closer to the election and we have to decide who's going to be the vice presidential candidate. Picture that going on with the disciples right now.

[19 : 28] Jesus is about to be elected. Well, that's not quite how it works but Jesus is about to take the throne. He's about to be the king. Who's going to be vice king next to him? We better sort this out very soon.

And so I find it remarkable that Jesus tells them we're headed to Jerusalem. And they're like, yeah, we know we're walking that way. We got it. But I'm going to die. And what they hear is we're headed to Jerusalem.

You know, they kind of block out the whole second part of that. They kind of miss the point again that Jesus is going to die. And all they can think about is we know what's in Jerusalem. That's where the throne is.

The temple's there. Jesus is about to take it. Well, we better figure out who's going to be vice king, if you will. Now, back in 18, they were already arguing about this.

Jesus talked to them about humility. But we know for a fact that they've already argued over who's going to sit next to him on the throne. They've even asked Jesus about that.

[20 : 29] But now, there's a better plan. Quite brilliant, in fact. James and John had their mom come and ask Jesus for them. Hey, mom, why don't you go talk to Jesus?

Jesus likes you, you're nice, you're sweet, you know, you can kind of lay on the charm a little bit. Put in a good word for us. Maybe he'll elect us to be vice king next to him.

I have to confess, I sometimes do this with Amanda. I'm like, sometimes a gruff man doesn't get very far. I'm like, why don't you go lay the charm on? You know what I'm talking about. Why don't you go ask real nice, put the, the sweet southern charm and see if it gets us anywhere because they're not listening to me.

And it's almost this way, it's like, mom, go ask for us. Maybe there's intimidation, but maybe they're hoping she can somehow curry favor that they are not able to. Now, now, I realize in some way I'm assuming motive, and I'll get to that in just a second.

It doesn't say what the motivating force is behind it. It says the mom comes and asks. It doesn't say James and John ask or two. I'm convinced they did.

[21 : 42] Here's the basis of my being convinced they did. Look at verse 22. Here's Jesus' answer. You do not know what you're asking. Is he speaking to the mother or to James and John?

You do not know what you're asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink? They said to him, we are able. They said to him, we are able. So Jesus doesn't even answer the mom.

It sure seems like he straight ignores her and goes straight to James and John. You don't know what you're asking. So I think there's a motivation implied here, if not specifically said that James and John get mom go ask, can you get us on the throne next to him?

And we see in verse 24 that this upsets the other disciples. And when the ten heard about it, they were indignant at the two brothers. Now we know why they're indignant, don't we? Did you not just hear Jesus say he's going to die?

And you're asking to sit on the throne next to him? Why are you not getting this? Come on guys, Jesus is dying, he's not going to sit on the throne right now. Is that why? Thank you.

[22 : 51] No. Right? Again, maybe I'm implying a lot, but why are they indignant? Well, I think there's a clear answer to why they're upset about this.

It's not that James and John don't understand what Jesus is saying, because I don't think any of them do yet, which is why Jesus is repeating it again for them. No, they're angry at James and John because James and John beat them to the punch.

they got there first. They're asking him again. This just happened back in chapter 18. We just asked him and now you're asking again. And you got your mom to ask?

What did we think of that? He likes my mom too. What did I get my mom to come ask? Or maybe it's even, that's not fair. We know he likes your mom. Why would you go and get your mom?

But I think them being indignant is because they're actually jealous that they got beat to it. That James and John did what they wanted and now they think that James and John, their rating in the polls just got bumped up a little bit.

[23 : 55] All the surveys are saying that James and John, they have favor with their mom, yet they're getting in before us. That's not really fair. They went ahead in the polls. And so they're jealous because they're hoping to get that seat themselves.

And this really shows us that the disciples are still where they were back in 18 verse 1. Now, you think about where we've gone and I didn't go back and count maybe eight weeks or so.

We've been maybe even nine that we've gone from chapter 18 verse 1 to this passage and everything that Jesus has taught them, all the experiences that we talked about in the introduction, what he's taught them with the children, what he taught them with the rich young ruler, everything he's tried to teach them, and where are the disciples right now?

They're still arguing over who's going to get to sit next to him. Have they gotten the message? Have they understood it yet? And what are we all thinking? How dumb must they be, right?

Because we've got it. Well, of course, we have much help, don't we, with the word of God, and we know how the story ends. We understand what Jesus is saying with his death because we know what happens at the cross.

[25 : 04] But I think this is very helpful for us to understand. They're thinking like natural men.

They're thinking exactly like every one of us would without the help of the spirit, without the help of the word of God.

To be fair, they have the word of God speaking to them the truth, and they're not getting it yet because the spirit hasn't made it clear to them. And it's exactly where we would be. And so, especially, and we're going to talk more about this in a second, but especially when we think about what is the struggle.

Jesus is teaching them dependence upon God, humility, and service. And so, what is the struggle? Self-dependence, pride, and self-service.

And if there's any of us in the room who think, that's not my issue, well, let's go back to the pride one. We'll talk about that. If you think that's not your issue, come talk to one of the elders afterwards. Every one of us struggles with that, right?

And so, it's not an issue primarily with intelligence. It's an issue of sin and the fact that they're still thinking about what they're going to get out of this.

[26 : 15] Remember, Jesus even says that there's going to be blessing. And then the rich and ruler incident, and remember what Peter asked? We did that. We left everything to follow you. What do we get? And they're still in that mentality now.

We're headed to Jerusalem. The time for divvying up the rewards is near. What do we get? Hey, Mom, why don't you go see if you can get us a little extra? And in case we think they've learned the lesson, Luke 22, verse 24 tells us that in the upper room, the argument's still continuing.

We read Luke 22, 24, a dispute also arose among them as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. So even by the time we get to the upper room, this is still going on. Which one of us is going to be the greatest in the kingdom.

And what we see is that the greatness in the kingdom brings suffering and not glory. Verse 22, Jesus answered, you do not know what you were asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?

And they said to him, we are able. Now what is the cup that Jesus is speaking of? This probably isn't very difficult for us because we can look at the text and say, he just told them he's going to die.

[27 : 24] Are you able to drink the cup? And the cup that he's speaking of is, I think, specifically death. Are you able to die the death that I'm going to die? Maybe to some extent we can even understand the cup as the wrath of God being poured out.

If we understand it in that specific sense of no, they're not able to. But if we understand it really in the broad sense of I'm going to die, are you able to drink that cup with me? Are you going to die with me?

And they go, yeah, we're able to do that. They acknowledge that they can drink the cup. And so let me just ask, what is the cup that they think he's going to drink?

Well, it's obviously not death, is it? They're still thinking about the throne. My guess is that their understanding of the cup is not undergoing death, but undergoing what he's going to undergo.

Perhaps it might be if you heard someone say who maybe they became famous actor or actress. And you don't know how difficult it is to have people recognize you everywhere you go.

[28 : 28] I saw a clip recently of Cristiano Ronaldo and every one of you guys know who that is. But he was out getting coffee somewhere and he was with another guy, they're there having coffee together and someone recognizes him and then everybody's lining up for pictures.

He says, no more pictures. You know, let's take a break and he starts talking and someone else comes and can I get a picture? And then the whole line forms again. And everyone there is taking pictures. They're filming him getting his picture taken with people. There's actually people who are working there and he jokingly beats him.

You're supposed to be working. What are you doing getting pictures done? But imagine Cristiano Ronaldo said to you, look, you're about to become as famous as me. Can you drink this cup?

You're like, look, I can deal with a little fame.

I can handle fame. It's not that difficult. I think that's more the picture that they have in mind. I'm about to become the king of the world. That's not easy.

Are you sure he can do it? Yeah, yeah, I could be vice king. I could handle that. I think that's what they're envisioning and not understanding what Jesus is speaking of here. And Jesus actually tells them, you will drink the cup that I'm going to drink.

[29 : 33] And what is he speaking of here? It's death again. It's martyrdom. I think Jesus is foretelling that they will die for their Lord, just as Jesus is going to die. It won't be crucifixion specifically, but they're going to die as martyrs.

And he goes on to tell them that the positions in the kingdom are determined by the father. And so again, look at 19 verse 30, we see many who are first will be last and the last first.

And remember, we saw verse 16, the same repetition. So the last will be first and the first will be last. the reality is we can't know who's going to be greatest in the kingdom.

Disciples can't know. Jesus isn't revealing that to them. It's for the father to decide. And I know this may surprise us, but the father can handle that without our help.

He doesn't need our mom to go and put a good word in for us. That's not what's going to determine who's going to be the greatest. It's not a matter of voting. Disciples aren't going to get voted upon.

[30 : 38] It doesn't help for their mom to be on the political trail with them. What Jesus is teaching them is that humility, self-denial, and service are the characteristics of the kingdom.

That is what must characterize them and their ministry. And I would say ultimately they do learn this lesson. I read to you earlier Matthew 16, I want to read it again, verses 24 through 25.

Then Jesus told his disciples, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find him.

It's really a parallel to verses 26 and 27 in our text. He says, it shall not be so among you, but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave.

And so again, he's teaching them about greatness in the kingdom. And so the lesson again is for us as well. What does greatness look like? Do we have the same struggles as the disciples?

[31 : 41] I've already argued we do. Pride, self-service, and our culture, I mean, consider what he says here. Verse 25, you know that the rulers of the Gentiles lorded over them, and the great ones exercised authority over them.

He's saying, here's the culture of the Gentiles. Those who are in power, they let everyone know that they're in power. They rub it into their power, they go overboard with their power.

I don't want to be too political here, but they make executive orders without the legal authority to do so. And they extend the orders, and they change them any way they want to. But those who are in power, that's what they do.

And our culture, much like the culture then, is telling us, if you want to be thought of as great, this is what you need to do. You need to be proud, you need to boast, you need to rub in what great power and authority you have.

And Jesus says, it's not going to be so among you. But the greatest will be the slave, he'll be the servant of others. And then that moves us really into the last point that I want to focus on for us, and that's verse 28.

[32 : 53] He just said, the first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Jesus is going to model this humility, this self-denial and service. And we see how well this all fits together, and how Jesus closes up the summary.

And I know you may have divisions in your English text, Bibles, or whatever between this passage, but I think it all fits together. Jesus foretells his death, the disciples don't get it, and they want to be sitting next to him on the throne.

Jesus says, no, the greatest among you will be a servant of all, just as, even as, the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. And so, again, he's kind of setting this up to let them see the way they're looking at it.

It's that opposite of the way that they must look example. So, understand, what is he doing as our example?

[34 : 08] The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and what does that service look like? And to give his life as a ransom for many. And so, that goes right back to what we saw in verses 17 through 19, that Jesus is headed to Jerusalem for a specific purpose.

He's going intentionally. Why? To serve. He's saying, I'm going to serve you, disciples. And we can extend that and say, all of you who are Christians in this room, we have a model of service in the fact that Jesus is willfully going to Jerusalem to die, that he might be a ransom for many.

And of course, the ransom for many speaks to us of the purpose that Jesus has in doing this. It prepares us as readers for what we're about to see, in the gospel, in the upcoming passages, but also in the upcoming sermons, what we're going to see.

Why is Jesus doing this? Well, he's doing it so he can give his life as a ransom for many. Now, ransom, I think, in our culture, tends to remind us of kidnapping. Not that probably any of us have any kind of knowledge of this, but we've all seen television shows where people are kidnapped and there's a ransom.

I think that's the one place we really use that in our culture. Two million dollars, you get your kid back, or whatever it may be, your spouse or family member, but you've got to pay the ransom to get your child back.

[35 : 29] But I think ransom, even though it reminds us of kidnapping, in this context, it probably refers more to slavery and being set free in the context.

So we think of someone who's a bond servant, someone who sells themselves into slavery. They go into slavery for a time to pay off a debt. And you might have a kinsman redeemer or some kind of redeemer who comes and they pay the debt to deliver that person out of slavery.

And that's the ransom that's being spoken of here. That there's a bondage, that there's a slavery here. And we understand the message of the gospel. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

And that sin, that nature that we're in, causes us to be in bondage both to sin but also to Satan and that we're headed for hell. And so when we think of ransom, if we want to think of it in terms of kidnapping, again, I think bondage and slavery is probably a better term, but it's almost as if Satan kidnapped us from conception.

We're in bondage to him. We're his property. We follow the sinful flesh. We do the will, as it were, of Satan, and we're headed for hell. And the idea of ransom is Jesus is going to pay the price that's required to free us.

[36 : 49] The price isn't paid to Satan. It's paid to the Father. But there's a debt that all of us owe. The wages of sin is death. And so Jesus going to die is for the specific purpose of paying that ransom, that death that's ours, that we deserve, to free us from bondage to death and to Satan and hell.

So he's going to Jerusalem for the express purpose of atoning for the sins of all who will put their trust in Jesus Christ. Christ. What a glorious picture that is for us. That's for some of you in this room.

My prayer would be to be for all of us in this room. But Jesus is saying, I'm going to Jerusalem to die to be a ransom for you, to redeem you from your sins, to save you.

He will pay the price of death for their sins, for our sins, and take upon himself the wrath of God that they and we deserve. God's wrath is going to be poured out on him instead of us.

It's a substitutionary death. And so, again, it's remarkable, and again, it's not any different than we would be, but the disciples hear Jesus is going to die, and they're upset because they want to sit on the throne.

[38 : 08] And the reality is, we want what's best for us, right? And being a vice king seems pretty great, but Jesus is going to do something far greater. He's going to be the substitute to die in their place that they might have not an earthly throne, but that they might reign with him in heaven, that they might have eternal life, that they might be freed from their sin.

1 Peter 1, 18-19 says, you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, not the cheap stuff, right?

Like silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. Like a lamb without blemish or spot.

Jesus is going to be killed as the Passover lamb. His blood is to be shed, that it might ransom us from, here it's described as the futile ways inherited from our forefathers. So, before the gospel ever came to us, Gentiles living in darkness, he's going to save us from those ways, from everything that we hoped in apart from Christ, that we might have eternal life.

I think that ought to be the thought that we're considering as we go to the table in a little bit. That Jesus Christ is intentionally going to Jerusalem to die for your sins that you might be ransomed from the futile ways of your forefathers.

[39 : 32] That you may be ransomed from the bondage to sin and to Satan. And the beauty of this is set off for us by the behavior of the disciples.

I think the contrast is intentional. Jesus says, I'm going to die. And they go, uh, well, what about us? Let's, can we reign on the throne next to you? We want to be great. And Jesus says, no, the great will be those who are servants and slaves of others. Even as the son of man came not to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.

I'm going to die for you. God. And so the contrast with us by our very nature is so drastic compared to Christ.

I think there's only one person when being in existence that can rightfully exalt themselves and it not be sin, and that's God. God is right to exalt himself.

[40 : 47] If he exalted someone above himself, it would be idolatry and it would be sin. And so God rightfully exalts himself. And yet we see Christ who takes upon himself human flesh, who humbles himself to come in the form of human flesh for the purpose not just to look like man, not just to be man, but to die for man, that we might be redeemed.

And that's the model for us. And here we are as fallen men who think, you know, we ought to be exalted. People don't think of me highly enough. And so it's a stark contrast.

And so what's the application for us? I really just have two points. One is we're called to serve and not to be served. I always like the quote, what is it?

Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country. I probably butchered it, but you get the idea. But do we see there's a similar model for us in the gospel?

Our tendency to human beings is to ask, what am I going to get out of this? What are my benefits? I think often, even as Christians, don't we struggle sometimes with thinking, if I go serve, who's going to see me serve?

[42 : 03] Is it going to be recognized? Are people going to know that I'm doing it? How appreciative is the person going to be? I mean, I think sometimes even we're disinclined or even we choose not to go help someone because we think they're not really going to be appreciative of it.

And so it's all about how much glory will I get for this? And Jesus is saying that's the wrong model. We're called not to be served but to serve. An example for us of what that looks like, because immediately we want to qualify that.

Well, what does serving others look like? How much do I have to do in serving others? So can you give me like, I've got to do 30 minutes of community service a week?

Serving other people for 30 minutes a week? Well, Jesus is gracious to us, isn't he? Because he gives us an example of what this is supposed to look like. Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Even as he gave his life. So that's kind of the standard, isn't it? 1 Peter 2.21 says, Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.

[43 : 13] What's the example? What are the steps we're to follow in? Christ also suffered for you. How did Christ suffer? On the cross? By death?

To give you an example so that you can follow in his footsteps? Can you see the disciples thinking, wait a minute, when I said I was going to drink that cup, that's not the cup I thought you meant. Right? Isn't that what he's saying? Fallen example of Christ, be willing to lay down your life for others. And aren't there probably some of you in this room who are thinking, that's not the cup I was hoping for?

But that's what we're called to. And again, we have this example of Jesus. This is Philippians 2, 3 through 8. We're told to do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

Let each of you look not only to his own interest, but also to the interest of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant.

[44 : 22] Being born in the likeness of man and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross. So there's an example for us, even the application for us.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Our natural response is no different than disciples.

In our flesh, we want to self-promote. We want to look out for number one. We want what's great for us. But the reality is we need the grace of God that we might put off pride and selfishness and put on humility, self-denial, and sacrifice or service.

That's what God's called us to. And so, in application, just to see first that God's called us to have this kind of attitude that's in Christ. That we're called to serve others and it's not something that's natural to us.

If it's not natural, then it's spiritual, and so how are we going to get it? Through prayer? Through study of the word of God? But we need a change in our very nature that we can serve others in humility.

[45 : 28] But my second point of application that I want you to get, especially as we consider the Lord's table, is that our Savior willingly gave his life to atone for our sins and to ransom us from death and hell.

And so there's the human application in terms of we're called to be something to do something. But there's also the spiritual application that I don't want you to miss that leads us to worship God.

Think of how great our Savior is. How great is Christ, who willingly chose to come and die for our sins. And so in the days ahead as we look to this last week of Jesus' life, to think about it's intentional, it's purposeful.

He's going to the cross to be a ransom for you if you'll put your trust in Jesus Christ. And so we see the beauty of the gospel presented, and I pray that you'll think upon that even now as we prepare our hearts to take the Lord's Supper in just a moment.

Let's pray together. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for Christ. Lord, really in both ways. First, that he was an example to us that we would follow in his footsteps.

[46 : 38] But Lord, we know that we could never follow in those footsteps apart from the fact that he's more than an example. He atones for our sins. He takes away our heart of stone and gives us a heart of flesh.

He makes us alive spiritually, that we might desire these things, that we might be able to do these things through your spirit working in us. And we pray that that would be true for all who are gathered in this room, that they would place their hope, their trust in Jesus Christ, that he would be their ransom.

Lord, we know the reality is that all of us will pay for our sins, either in an eternity in hell or through the precious blood of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

And our prayer is that all who are in this room would put their trust and hope in that precious blood. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.