

Lecture 22 – Commitment to the Kingdom (cont.)

“And whoever wants to become great among you must be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Matthew 20:27-28 (NIV)

Key Terms

Distributive justice, retributive justice, climactic parallelism, ransom, justify, propitiate, reconcile

Objectives

*To understand the meaning of the parable of the workers in the vineyard

*To understanding Matthew 20’s teaching on leadership and Christ’s ransom

Lead Questions

*In what ways is Christ’s life a ransom for you?

*What are the differences between modern views on leadership and Christ’s teachings on leadership?

Commitment to the Kingdom: Matthew 19-20

I. Theme of Service for Kingdom Shown in Love for Spouse & Children.

A. Antithetical questions:

1. “What is the least I can do?”
2. “If I do a lot, will God notice?”

II. Rich Young Ruler and Commitment to the Kingdom.

Peter’s response and Jesus’ warning: Don’t serve God for your benefit, or you are in danger of losing your first love = being far from God = being last in the K.

III. Workers in Vineyard—Illustrating the Teaching to Peter.

A. Parable of workers in vineyard

1. The story
2. The order of events. Ones who work all day must be paid last.
3. Offensive then and now. Illustration: Parable of the difficult exam
4. Unfair? Actually, workers stumble over the landowner’s generosity, not his injustice.
 - a. Distributive justice
 - b. Retributive justice

B. Meditations on implicit grace in the teaching of Jesus

1. Life issue
2. The rabbinic parable of the exceptional laborer. Superficial parallels and real differences.
3. Jesus’ custom of causing creative distress.
4. Even believers lose sight of grace and dwell on merit. Then we risk becoming last in K.

What are some ways that you stumble over God’s generosity?

Matthew 20:17-28, Ransom: Jesus’ Purpose

I. Exposition of Matthew 20

A. Context: the rich young ruler’s request

1. In response to Peter’s question, “What then will there be for us?” as rich young ruler left, Jesus promised the disciples they would “sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Matt 19:28)
2. Jesus warned against interest in rewards (19:30, 20:16). Section begins with Pharisees and 12 asking regarding the minimum they owe (19:3). It ends with God asking if He can do the maximum.

3. Right after Jesus reminds the 12 He must soon be crucified, mother of James and John said, “Grant that one of these sons of mine may sit at your right and left” (20:21).
 - a. Request is for positions of honor.
 - b. Request shows faith that Jesus will reign, yet seeks supremacy over others.
- B. Can you drink?
1. Jesus: “You don’t know what you are asking.” To ask for wealth or high position is to ask for cares, anxiety, envy. To share in Christ’s glory, one must share in His suffering.
 2. Can you drink? The cup = retribution, wrath in OT (Isa. 51:17-8, Jer. 25:15-27; Rev. 18).
 3. 20:24, The ten become indignant...Even desire for equality can be grasping.
- C. The Gentile way and the Christian way
1. Comparison of way of Gentiles, disciples, Jesus. Climactic parallelism
 - a. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom to many.
 2. The meaning of *διακονος* (*diakonos*) - not deacon or minister - and *δουλος* (*doulos*).
 3. Gentiles’ way. Not pejorative, factual: World measures greatness by number of servants.

How would you answer someone who equated leadership with power and influence?

II. Theological reflections on Matthew 20:20-28

- A. The two sides of Matt. 20:25-28: Meditating on His deity and His humanity.
- B. Jesus’ humanity and its application to us
 1. Serve “just as” the Son of Man.
 2. Imitation of Christ motif:
 - a. Seen first in the beatitudes - the traits of Jesus.
 - b. Seen second in Matthew 10 - traits of Jesus’ ministry are to be traits of our ministry
- C. Matthew 20:28 and the “I came” statements of Jesus (Jn. 12:46-47, Lk. 5:32, 19:10)
- D. The meaning of ransom and other terms for the atonement
 1. Ransom - realm of commerce
 2. Justify - realm of law
 3. Propitiate - realm of the temple
 4. Reconcile - realm of social relations
- E. Service in word and in reality. An illustration: Jr. High Retreat
- F. Transition to Jesus’ identity, Matthew 20:28

In this passage, Jesus makes some implicit claims to His deity. Implicit Christology

 1. Claims to be an example for us
 2. Claims to be Son of Man
 3. Claims to be a ransom for many