

## 5.7.C(40).Life-Giving Service. Mark 10:32-45

As a Shepherd of the flock, and one called to bear your people and to *lay down your life* for them as Jesus does as the Good Shepherd (John 10:10-11), know that God will forge an unseen bond linking you and your people. You have the *distinct privilege* of suffering for them, laying your life for them, even suffering loss for them, that they might thrive and bear fruit.

This picture of “life-giving” is the hallmark of parenthood, and that is what you are as a shepherd, a



parent. So, the picture of a parent foregoing a meal to feed a hungry child is essentially what it

means to shepherd. And, you will be asked to make these choices, *for the sake of Mashiach*, as you tend his flock. So, every moment of rest, opportunity for gain, or small indulgence you give up for the Sake of the Lord and his flock will be *life-giving*, for the Lord God sees your sacrifice and will multiply into Kingdom life! For, the Lord says:

Truly, truly, I say **to** you, unless a grain of wheat **falls** into **the** earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. John 12:24

Give your life freely for your people to enjoy fruitful life in the Kingdom! But, resolve to expect no gain for yourself. The Lord holds your reward for you in the real life of your Kingdom future!

### **Case Study: Fruitful Kingdom**

The clearest manifesting of the Kingdom and its fruitfulness was the organic and natural growth that sprung up during our monthly “free dinners” we hosted for our graduate and international student friends in Hawaii. We invited the Lord to join us for every dinner and to reveal his Kingdom’s goodness, and the stories abounded of atheists and seekers being healed, sensing the hand of God in their lives, and people testifying of the true God in the midst of their unbelief. We recording around sixty people moving from atheism to a belief in God, a dozen disciples baptized, and one pastor rise up out of his agnosticism!

But, behind the scenes, we had a wonderful team of like-minded laborers who sacrifice to welcome, feed, and pray for and meet the needs of these dear ones for years. I remember praying every Saturday with the team for each of the people on our guest list, that grew into the hundreds.

The Kingdom comes when your team of shepherds are ready to lay down your lives for the sheep entrusted to you by the Lord!

### Read Mark 10:32-45.

<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.” (Mark 10:42-45)

## Background:

### Greatness in the Kingdom:

#### Rank and Privilege:

As a fully mature disciple, you will of course recognize that there are many who are not mature. You do not need to live in denial, telling yourself that “I am no different than others.” That is not true. As a fully mature disciple, you are the culmination of the Lord’s long process of “working” in your life to make you capable of the kingdom “works” that last (Ephesians 2:8-9)—rescuing the lost sheep, building the Lord’s House, and establishing the “throne” of his rule in human hearts! When you reach maturity, you become a treasure in the Kingdom, for now there is another one to take up the same *mantle*, to drink the same cup of the Lord Jesus.

And, the first disciples were right. To share in this distinction is *rare* in the Kingdom. But, with

achievement comes privilege—what are the privileges for those who reach maturity in the Kingdom? How will they be recognized and rewarded with power?

From the outset, let's agree to focus on the labor on this earth in our discussion. At this point in the story, the Lord Jesus was "going up to Jerusalem" (10:32) and his imminent condemnation to "death" and his resurrection (33-34). But, the disciples were bickering over the days of "glory" when the Lord takes hold of all that is his. He responds simply by saying: 1) the Father is the one who "prepares" positions in the Kingdom (40); and, "greatness" in the Kingdom (43) is very different in the Kingdom, both in this current earthly world of labor, hardship, and sacrifice, and in the "glory" to come when Jesus Mashiaich will sit on his eternal throne in "righteousness and uprightness" (Psalm 45:6), even "fighting" for the cause of "meekness." (4).

There are no rightful tyrants in the Kingdom, not in this world or the next. Power never *justifies* abuse, lawless indulgence, or oppression. Rather, those anointed with great power are given a greater responsibility to serve “all” (Mark 10:44).

For, at the very basis of worldly power is anonymity, of separation and alienation, so at the very heart of the earthly ruler is Self-interest and ambition—gaining at the expense of the sacrifices of others. Such vampire-rulers feed off of the life of their subjects, consuming and depleting resources to enrich themselves. They live selfishly, because they live among strangers.

But, the Kingdom is first a House of Sons—brothers and sisters who share in the King’s interests and purposes. The Oneness of our House means that what is good for one is good for all, but the suffering of the one affects us all.

Profile of Kingdom Greatness:

Let's agree that "greatness" in the Kingdom, then, is not a matter of *self-promotion* or *reward*, although the Father assures us that there is a *reward* for Kingdom sacrifice, especially for those who serve "all." But, let's focus on the "greatness" that matters to our Lord Jesus, the greatness which the Father sees and of which he alone approves. On earth, this *greatness* is a greatness whose *glory* is hidden, for what is seen is simply hard and humble service with no recognition, no political power gained, no advantage seized.

### 1) Great Vision:

The first difference distinguishing those disciples given a *great responsibility to sacrificially serve* is that they are given a *greater vision*.

As Jesus approached Mashiach and his impending sacrifice and resurrection, his disciples and the crowds accompanied him. For those without or with little faith, their vision was

clouded with fear—they were “afraid” (10:32). As we have already seen, *faith* dissipates and *fear* overshadows when one takes his eyes off of the Lord Jesus and focuses on what is seen on earth. So, those accompanying Jesus who only saw the impending conflicts were afraid.

But, his disciples, who by now have been hearing about the King’s expectation to “die and rise” (34), are starting to see things differently. Rather than the clouds of fearful threat, the disciples were “amazed” (32-33).

Now, to these “twelve,” with whom the Lord Jesus was not only sharing the Kingdom’s way of “suffering and resurrection” but also the very “cup” of martyrdom which they would one day partake with him, the Lord shows *amazing things*, things of the Kingdom which are known by the Spirit, that “no eye has seen nor ear heard” but are known only by *revealing* (1 Corinthians 2:9-10).

As you mature as a disciple living *sacrificially to serve the Lord in his Kingdom*, you will also see “amazing” things. Not only will these *revealed* mysteries be hidden to fleshly eyes, but expect:

- Revealed Will and Plan.

To those given *great responsibility* in Kingdom, the Lord will often reveal the amazing work he plans to do, requiring them to *walk by faith*. These disciples following Jesus were informed of the crucifixion and resurrection beforehand so they might eventually understand God’s work of salvation.

Remember, those *shown great things* often are given a greater measure of *faith* as well, so that those without their calling will often disbelieve or even attempt to silence them. If you have been shown a great thing, keep it between you and God unless he tells you to disclose it.

- Biblical prophecy becoming reality:

Before their very eyes, the words of Daniel that the Mashiah would be “cut off” in making “atonement” for sins and bringing an everlasting “righteousness” (Daniel 9:24). As these events unfolded surrounding this prophesy, the disciples may have understood at the moment but certainly did in retrospect.

- Promises of God being fulfilled:

God will often make personal promises to you, which he will fulfill in amazing and unexpected ways. These works that are both unexpected and *exceedingly blessed* by his hand affirm his promise to you.

- Hidden Kingdom realities made known:

As the Lord God works through you to reach his people, he will do so in unmistakably amazing and unexpectedly fruitful and providential ways. By these works, you will understand the *secrets* and the dynamic of how his Kingdom indeed takes shape on earth. This work will be hidden or even

threatening to those living in the flesh, so be careful. If you find yourself being opposed by those who don't see what you see but are threatened by the work of God, you will know that you are true and they are fleshly.

Finally, the reason God will work and reveal amazing realities of the Kingdom to you is that he shares with the few who will do his *great works* the depths of his heart. If he can trust you to serve him in the humblest yet most needed ways, you can be sure that he gives you access to his thoughts and heart that few will ever know.

**Case Study: An Amazing Unfolding:**

As the Lord calls you as his *sacrificial servant* to greater and greater areas of responsibility, his *amazing* work is the clearest reward and affirmation of the authenticity of his call.

In my earlier seasons as a disciple, the Lord has always been faithful to the calling he put in my heart. When called to graduate and

international students unreached by the Church, the Lord eventually brought dozens to faith and raised up a dozen disciples from that group.

When the Lord put on my heart a home-group ministry to reach the nations, he installed me at a church gathering over seventy nations and gave me nearly a hundred leaders to lead home-groups to serve these people.

But, the most abiding *call* he put on my heart was to the Jews. So, when he shared his heart of the *blockage* keeping his people from himself, I left my perfect life in the paradise of Hawaii and step into the *frigid hardship of Chicago*.

Over time, he amazed me by opening doors for me. I worked for a Conservative rabbi, attended Shabbat dinners at the Reform congregation of my Hebrew teacher's husband, a rabbi. Finally, through his connections, I settled in a Modern Orthodox congregation whose rabbi gave me access to do field work

among his people. So, I was welcomed into homes as I listened to these Jews discuss Torah.

Once, discussing Torah before an ultra-orthodox Shabbat dinner, a young talmid wondered together, “Does Torah provide within itself guidelines for its own interpretation?”

Starting with Genesis, I was amazed as the Spirit traced the phrase *elle toledot*- these are the generations” throughout the Tanakh, creating a path leading directly to the Davidic Mashiach.

For, at key junctures of the “generations,” God promises a “Seed,” the designated Heir of his household, anointed with the Right of

Redemption: The Seed of Woman, to crush the serpent’s head (Genesis 3:15); the Seed of Abraham, to restore God’s “blessing” to all earth’s families (Genesis 22:18); and, the Seed of David, *raised up by God*, to be the Son of God (2 Samuel 7:14) and the Son of David (12) who is disciplined for iniquity (14) to redeem sons for God’s (13) and David’s House (11), who establish

his throne and the rule of his eternal kingdom (16).

Amazingly, the traditional rabbis and the modern Jewish readers themselves saw *toledot* and *zera* in these same ways. Yet, tragically, they stopped short of realizing that God promises to “raise up Seed” for David as a matter of *redemptive duty* (yibbum) (Genesis 38:8) and *right* (geullah) (Ruth 4:10), thus promising Mashiach to be the Son of two fathers—David (2 Samuel 7:12) and God (14).

## 2. Great Sacrifice (33-34).

The Kingdom and its throne is founded on the House that Jesus Mashiach establishes. So, the sacrifices God requires for the Kingdom’s establishment and growth are family sacrifices, calling for our *greatest* and total efforts. For the sake of family, the greatest and most enduring sacrifices have been made.

In this way, Jesus as “the Son of Man,” humanity’s most honored Heir and Firstborn Son, relinquishes all his rights completely that he might endure the greatest sacrifice for his family. He gives up his basic right to justice as he is “delivered” to his enemies, the “chief priests and scribes” (33). These leaders should know the ancient prophecies of the coming Mashiach and were responsible for preparing the people for his coming. Instead, they are the very ones to reject and prosecute Mashiach.

Not only does he allow himself to be *tried* by the Jews, but he gives himself over to the power of the Gentiles (33). Freed of the restraints of God’s Law, they take away even the *rights and dignity* he has as a person, humiliating and mocking him (34). In the end, he gives up all he has and is “killed.”

But, we will see that Jesus Mashiach gives up the greatest sacrifice of all. As the Son of God,

Jesus has enjoyed a perfect “oneness” with the Father for all eternity (John 10:30). To redeem his people, Jesus “becomes sin” that they might become “the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21), causing the Father to “forsake” him at the cross (Mark 15:34).

If you are to serve the Lord with *great responsibility*, be prepared to lose all that you once thought of as your *right* and *necessary for life*. The things which *make us human* are the very things stripped away for the sake of the Kingdom, and this world is the crucible for this great testing. But, know this. Suffering for the Kingdom, you are not suffering for *unrelated strangers* but for the family of God—the Lord’s family and your family. You sacrifice according to your heavenly Father’s will—the Father of the Mashiach and your Father. Only *our family* can call you to the great sacrifices you will face.

But, you will find that *great sacrifice* opens the door for *great service*.

### 3. Great Responsibility:

When the disciples were sent out by the Lord in pairs, we saw that the Kingdom was structured around households which were led by parental pairs: households of faith formed extended families, and these great families would adaptively extend the Kingdom through languages, peoples, and nations. So, when God assigns *responsible disciples* to care for his people, he appoints them as *shepherds*, for he promises his people: “And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding” (Jeremiah 3:15).

So, when the first disciples consider their *roles* as shepherds of God’s flock, they realize that they have been entrusted with *great responsibility*—not just caring for single households but for generations of households and for the *generating*

and reproduction of these households. One day, they would each take responsibility for entire *populations*—Peter would go to the *diaspora Jews*; Paul would go to the Gentiles, helping to reach the entire Roman Empire for the Gospel.

These disciples *grasped the greatness of their responsibility*, so they naturally thought of the *privileges, the benefits* that would go with their positions of responsibility. For, in the world, great responsibility won great reward. In the world, rulers would be selfishly pampered as they “lorded” over their people and as their *power* translated to great *influence*, manipulation, and subjugation of the people.

But, Jesus defines “greatness” in the Kingdom not as “Selfish privilege” but as “Responsibility to serve,” with the ones having the greatest responsibility as those who have given up their Self-Rights *in order to be rightfully responsible* for “all” (44).

In describing how you should see yourself as a *sacrificial servant* of the Kingdom, Jesus starts by talking about your *personal freedom*, your right to act purely for your own benefit, to close your heart to the needs and requests of others.

As the *greatest* in the Kingdom, Jesus does not have the *right* to close his heart, to indulge his flesh, so that he is the only one to benefit. Instead, we have seen him set aside his own self-interests for the sake of the *hungry crowds*, the *leper*, the *demonized synagogue dweller*, the *woman suffering from bleeding*, a *dead little girl*. He even took responsibility for a woman's child who did not belong to the *children of Israel*, the people to whom he is called first.

So, consider yourself. Are you seeking to *serve*, even *serve sacrificially*, so that ultimately you would maximize your Self-interest and greatness in the Kingdom of God?

Or, will you only serve when you are seen, when you are credited with good deeds to improve your status among people?

Or, do you see the Kingdom and its service as a way to achieve *greatness* on this earth?

Instead, the mark of your service should begin with a *heart* burdened with and a *commitment* to serve “all” whom the Father brings to you. To set aside your own *rights and privileges* that they might be *fed* in the Kingdom and secured in the House.

Whether you are called to serve a single household or all households of a clan, a tribe, a nation, a territory, or a generation, consider the *great responsibility* you have been given by your Lord and Father. He is entrusting to you his own people, the members of his own household. As your people grow and thrive, they will reproduce, multiply, and form new households, establishing the throne of our Lord and Redeemer, Jesus

Mashiach. Thus, your great work ensures that *future generations* will spread the rule of our Lord Jesus throughout the land. But, you can only fulfill your duty to *feed* your people if you are willing to lay down your life in sacrifice, including your right to be selfish and self-honoring. But, laying your life down, you will have a great impact—bringing life to those who were once dead.

#### 4. Great Impact.

<sup>15</sup> “And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will **feed you** with knowledge and understanding. Jeremiah 3:15

<sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have **life and have it abundantly.** <sup>11</sup> I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd **lays**

**down his life** for the sheep. John 10:10-11.

As every parents understands, it is the primary responsibility of a care-giver to be a “life-giver” —to

take responsibility to feed and nurture the young and dependent ones in the family. Without a parent to *give life* to these children, they would not survive.

In this way, God knows that a well-fed and cared for people will reproduce and multiply households for the Kingdom, thus establishing the throne and kingdom of his Mashiach. So, he promises his people, “I will give you shepherds after my own heart... who will **feed you**....” (Jeremiah 3:15). But,



this care and feeding is not cheap. Shepherds simply do not put knowledge and information before the people. In a fundamental way, only “life” passes on “life.” As Paul says, “we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves” (1 Thessalonians 5:8b).

Thus, Jesus Mashiach explains that in the Kingdom, he comes as the Mashiach to bring “life abundantly” (10:10), but this life comes with a great price. As the good shepherd, he only brings life by “**laying his life down** for the sheep” (John 10:11).

Of course, only the Son of God, Mashiach, bears the Firstborn’s right to redeem his people, laying his life down on the cross. However, the principle holds true in the Kingdom—*shepherds only bring life to their people* when they offer their lives in **sacrificial service to** the Lord God.

For, parents realize that they are not simply life-givers, but to feed their children, they must be “life-giving-Up.”

To feed and

nurture the younger ones, it requires them to give up life that the other might gain life, sacrificing time, resources, and comfort so that the needy one may receive.

As a shepherd, you know that serving others will always cost you, but this expenditure is the *valuable offering* you give up to please the Father. As David resolved that he would not give to the Lord God sacrifices “that cost me nothing” (2 Samuel 24:24). Cheap service or even Self-serving service feeds only the shepherd, but Jesus was willing to give up “all” to serve the “all,” saying



that he came “to give his life as a **ransom** for many” (10:45).

So, as a level five shepherd resolving to *sacrificially serve* the Lord and the people of his Kingdom, check your readiness to serve as the Lord Jesus served:

- Are you willing to *hear* the Lord’s calling to give you a *great responsibility* for a people he will give to you?
- Will you *walk by faith* to be *amazed* at how the Lord works in your life to care for and feed these people as their shepherd?
- What are you willing to *sacrifice* in order to serve the people whom God has given you?
- Who are the people you are willing to put ahead of your own Self-interests to serve?
- Are you willing to *give up* what is yours in order that your people will *gain life* by your life-giving service?

## Focus:

5.7.(C). (40). Life-Giving Service: Ransom.

1. Witnessing Kingdom Justice: the Heir is humbly killed to be gloriously raised. 10:32-34
2. Kingdom Glory: Sacrificial Servant Leaders. 10:35-44;
3. Kingdom Growth: Son of Man's sacrificial service is life-giving ransom 10:45

## Consider:

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## Question:

Further Discovery: