

SKY Correspondence Course

Lesson 5

Jesus Teaches Service

Lesson Text: Mark 10:32-45

Jesus Himself laid down the highest standard for a human in relation to his fellowman when He described the second most important command as being “you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39). This love for neighbor must transcend the human barrier of racial, ethnic, and social background. It arises above the human weaknesses of jealousy, envy, hate, and bitterness. It teaches all of us how to hate the sin, but to have compassion for the sinner, and it must grow to the place where we will even have love for our enemies when they are persecuting us.

Jesus told His disciples—and by direct extension He is telling all Christians—“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16). What “good works” is Jesus referring to? Obviously the “good works” that Christians can do which non-Christians will praise must reflect a genuine, unfeigned, outgoing concern for other people.

Example of Service

Read Mark 10:32—Jesus and the disciples left the Jordan Valley for Jerusalem. Whether in suffering or in triumph, Jesus always led the way with boldness and

tenacity. Those who followed Jesus were astounded at His determination to go forward into the face of danger. Once again, Jesus gathered the twelve disciples around Him to tell them what would happen to Him. This is the third time that Jesus predicted His death.

Read Mark 10:33—Jesus tells in detail what is to happen to Him: (1.) He is to be handed over (Judas will betray Him) to the chief priests (a coalition of Sadducees and teachers of the law who were Pharisees); (2.) He was to be tried and condemned; (3.) the Gentiles would be involved in His trial and death. This last point is very important. The Gentiles were not guiltless, thus emphasizing that the *entire world* is guilty of the death of Christ. Luke 18:31 explains that “all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.”

Read Mark 10:34—The detailed prediction continues: (1.) They will mock Him in Herod’s court; (2.) they will scourge Him by the orders of Pilate; (3.) they will spit on Him and flog Him (which means to shame and ridicule Him). All of this had been prophesied in Isaiah 53:5. However, the promise that He would be resurrected offered hope. Death would not bring the ministry of our Savior to an end.

The Way to Serve Denied

Read Mark 10:35-37—Privately James and John approached Jesus and made their request. They may have presumed that they could make this request of

Jesus for several reasons. They were among the first called of Jesus' disciples, they had gone with Jesus where others didn't (Mark 9:2-9), and they may have even been first cousins. Their mother, Salome, may have been Mary's sister (Matthew 27:56; John 19:25; Mark 15:40). These disciples knew that to sit beside the throne in a royal court was considered a place of high honor and influence (Psalm 110:1).

Read Mark 10:38-40—Jesus used the word "cup" as a metaphor meaning either joy (Psalm 23:5), or divine judgment (Psalm 75:7-8; Isaiah 51:1-23). Jesus related it to himself. They were asking to share in the glory with Jesus, but were they also willing to share in the suffering? Jesus speaks of "baptism" next. Baptism here represents the deep depths of suffering Jesus would endure in His last hours here on earth (Luke 12:50). Jesus was going to bear God's wrath for the sins of the world. This calamity of suffering would be overwhelming and it would result ultimately in Jesus' death. Both James and John answered Jesus in the positive with a willingness to fight. Did James and John truly understand what Jesus said? Jesus did grant them their request and applied the same cup and baptism figures even to death. James was the first disciple martyred (Acts 12:2) and John endured years of persecution and was the last disciple to die (John 21:20-23). The request for a position of honor, however, was denied by Jesus. Jesus told James and John that it was not His place to give them the places that they requested. God the Father would assign those places (Matthew 20:23). Both James and John seemed to miss the point that Jesus was teaching: those who follow Christ should be seeking ways to serve others, not seeking high positions of authority.

To Way to Serve

Read Mark 10:41-45—It seems that when the news leaked out to the other disciples about the request of James and John, the other disciples became angry with them. This is probably because they were thinking the same thing and the two brothers had beat them to the request.

Read Mark 9:34—In the world, rulers tend to "lord it over" their subjects. This means they are not always just and fair; they take their authority to excess, and they do not serve with humility. In Jesus' kingdom it will not be this way. The person who will be great in Jesus' kingdom is the one who is willing to serve others. Jesus gave us the example: He came, He served, and He gave His life.

The ultimate example of Christianity for all generations and times was set by Christ Himself, who gave His life for all sinners. Read Philippians 2—it shows that He emptied Himself of His divine power and glory and came to the earth, not to be served or waited upon, but to serve all mankind. His every action and thought while on earth depicted the epitome of true Christian outgoing concern; this serving attitude is perhaps best illustrated by His willingness to die pitifully on a tree between two criminals. Thus Jesus personified the greatest love a Christian can have for another which, by Jesus' own words, was to lay down one's life for a friend.

The obligation for each of us to "look on the needs of others" (Philippians 2:4) extends beyond the family and the church to embrace all of one's neighbors—indeed humanity as a whole, who do not as yet have the blessing of knowing God's truth. Christians should "always seek to do good to one another and to all" (1 Thessalonians 5:15), and be "zealous for good deeds" (Titus 2:14). A Christian is known by what he does, and not alone for what he professes. Look around your community and see where there is a need you can fulfill. Maybe it will be visiting the elderly, taking food to a sick neighbor, mowing a lawn, or raking leaves for an elderly or sick neighbor. Whatever it is that you choose to do to help and serve, do it with a glad and loving heart.

A verse worthy to remember:
"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."
(Matthew 25:40, NIV).

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Date: _____
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Questions and Answers

1. What is the second and great command?
 - A. Love only those that look like you
 - B. Love your neighbor
 - C. Love your family as yourself
2. Where is that command found?
 - A. Matthew 22:39
 - B. John 3:16
 - C. 2 Timothy 1:1
3. True or False—This command of love teaches us how to hate the sin, but to have the compassion of Jesus for the sinner. _____
4. Good works are...
 - A. Bible study
 - B. Prayer
 - C. Outgoing concern and service for others
5. On the way to Jerusalem (Mark 10:32–34) Jesus told his disciples again what was to happen Him shortly. This is the _____ time that He predicts His death to the disciples
 - A. Third
 - B. Second
 - C. First
6. Define Pharisee:

7. Where in the Old Testament is the death of Jesus prophesied?
 - A. Isaiah 49
 - B. Isaiah 53
 - C. Isaiah 50
8. When James and John requested a high position in the kingdom, what was it that they missed in the teachings and examples of Jesus?

9. There are those that believe it is their "right" to have a car, but they don't contribute to its purchase, nor do they want to pay to *maintain* the car—pay for the insurance, or put gas in the car. There are even those who put the lives of others at risk by not obeying the laws of the road, or driving while intoxicated. Can you give another example of a "right" someone might demand and then not take responsibility for?

10. What does the word *serve* mean to you?

11. What did Jesus mean when He asked the disciples if they could drink from His cup and be baptized with His baptism?

12. True or False—A Christian is known for what he professes. _____

13. When serving others, Jesus said you should:

- A. Make sure they are aware of *your* labor
- B. Be kind and help them in *their* need
- C. Make others do it *your* way because you know best

14. What steps will you take to serve others in your community?

15. Did James and John request to be close to Jesus for companionship or recognition? Explain your answer.

16. Who was the first disciple martyred?

- A. James
- B. John
- C. Mark

17. Who was the disciple that endured years of persecution and was the last disciple to die?

- A. John
- B. James
- C. Luke

Answers

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1. B
2. A
3. T
4. C
5. A
6. Pharisees were a religious party who were teachers of the law.
7. B
8. James and John were interested in where they would be sitting in the court, when they should have been helping and serving others. Followers of Jesus should be seeking out ways to serve others, not positioning themselves for a place of authority.
9. People think they have the “right” to vote, but some don’t research what they are voting for. They are not responsible voters.
10. Serving is helping others in need and doing so with a glad and loving heart.
11. He as asking if they were willing to give up everthing and have a complete attitude of service.
12. F
13. B
14. I will continue to visit the elderly, give clothes to the needy, help the sick and be happy while I do it.
15. They wanted recognition. James and John didn’t understand Christ and knew that sitting beside a throne was considered a place of high honor. They wanted the lofty position.
16. A
17. A