

Mark 10:45 | “The Incarnation Impacts our Relationships”
Preached on December 24, 2023 by Pastor Matt Brown

You can turn in your Bibles to Mark 10:45 this morning. *[pause]*

This Christmas, I’ve been doing a series on how the incarnation of Christ impacts our lives.

And we saw how it impacts the most important things, it impacts our giving, and now we will see how it impacts our relationships. *[pauseeee]*

You know, Christmas is often called “the season of giving”.

It is a time that many give each other gifts, or many people give donations to various charities. *[pause]*

Even those who aren’t Christians join in on this ‘season of giving’, as they give to others, and sacrifice money, time, and effort for the sake of others.

And even the most Ebenezer Scrooge type of person gives gifts on Christmas. *[pause]*

I’m in no way saying that that’s wrong, for that’s a good thing!

But it’s interesting how someone could be a selfish, tightfisted, and conceited person all year round, but when Christmas comes rolling around, they become a giving person. *[pauseeeee]*

The same thing can happen to us.

During the holidays, we are willing to give by making big meals, hosting large groups, and spending money.

Yet on a normal day in February or September, we seem to be concerned more about our own interests, rather than the interests of others. *[pause]*

We can’t stop thinking about how other people aren’t serving us in ways that we expect them to, but we breeze over and give little thought to ways we may not be serving others.

And in your mind, other people are never doing enough for you, and you are always doing more than enough for others. *[pauseeee]*

Or what about getting along with others?

Sometimes Christmas is more of a jolly, feel-good time, so we tend to get along with people, but what about in the doldrums of winter when your spouse is getting on your last nerve?

What about on a normal school day and your kids are driving you crazy? *[pauseeeee]*

Or maybe in your life, Christmas isn’t a good time at all.

Maybe you are bitter because you are once again the one doing the serving and putting all of the effort into everything.

Or when all of the family members get together, it's not a jolly time of cheer, but a grueling time of tension.

Your family members bicker and fight, and someone always blows up and walks out.

Snarky remarks are made, and hurtful comments are flung around. *[pauseee]*

Well the truths that we will learn this morning from God's Word are truths not meant merely for the snippet of Christmastime...

...But rather, they are truths that can radically impact and change our lives and relationships with others all year round. *[pause]*

No matter if it's Christmas, or it's May at work or October at home.

No matter if it's your relationship with your spouse, your friends, or your coworkers - what we will find is that the incarnation of Jesus can impact all of that. *[pauseee]*

To get some context for the verse that we will be looking at specifically, I will READ, starting in verse 35 of Mark 10. *[READ Mark 10:35-45]*

There's an insidious trait that we all have to some degree.

It's not often quickly recognized in ourselves, but it permeates and influences what we do and how we think...

We have to be first, we have to be the best, we have to be in charge, we want the glory and honor, and we want to be served. *[pause]*

We see this with James and John.

When they thought about Jesus, they couldn't help but think of his soon-to-be glorious rule. *[pause]*

All they could think about was the victory, the success, the glory.

They couldn't miss this chance before it all went down to secure their prime spot in the kingdom. *[pause]*

So James and John approach Jesus and have a request.

But the way they ask it, it's not really a request, for they are trying to force Jesus to do what they want. *[pause]*

They say, "We want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." *[pause]*

How is that a request, if He must do whatever they ask? *[pause]*

You can tell that they aren't approaching Jesus with humility, but sort of in a way of using Jesus for their own ends. *[pause]*

Amazingly, instead of immediately putting James and John in their place, and he could have - Jesus asks them what their request is.

And they want to sit on the right and left hand of Jesus in His glory. *[pause]*

They are thinking ahead to the time when Jesus will reign as King, and they want to get their seats reserved ahead of time.

But Jesus tries to get them thinking, 'Are they really prepared to do this?' *[pause]*

Do they realize what that entails and what Jesus has to go through before He gets to that point?

He has a cup to drink and a baptism to be immersed with before glory.

That is, He has to suffer and die for the sins of the world. *[pause]*

They will not face that exact cup or baptism, but they will face suffering and possibly death for Him, as they follow Him.

And they must also realize that it's really God the Father's job to assign seats. *[pause]*

After dealing with their seat request, Jesus goes after their wrong mentality. *[pause]*

The problem was that they were thinking like the world, whose rulers abuse their power and authority.

They dominate and rule to their own advantage, but Christ's disciples are not to be like that.

Instead, they are to be servant leaders. *[pause]*

This really flips our world's thinking on its head.

For we think that the greatest are the ones who *get to be served*, but Jesus tells us that the greatest are the ones who serve others.

And that's when Christ gives Himself as the prime example of this truth, for He says...

"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." *[pause]*

So we find that...

I. Jesus' purpose for coming was to serve us by dying for us!

Imagine what you would think if you saw the president of a huge company that you worked for cleaning the toilets at the workplace.

Or imagine what you would think if you saw the President of the United States mowing the grass at the White House. *[pause]*

Those things don't often happen in our world, do they?

Yet, what did Jesus, the great Son of Man, do?

He came to serve. *[pauseeee]*

To really feel the impact of what Jesus is saying here, we must think through that title, 'the Son of Man'. *[pause]*

We know that Jesus is the Son of Man, and He liked using this term to describe Himself.

It's a good title, for it describes His humanity, yet with that, it brings with it images of glory and dominion. *[pause]*

It comes from the book of Daniel, chapter 7.

And just listen to this...

"I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.

And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him;

His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."¹ *[pauseeee]*

In other places in the gospel of Mark, Jesus tells us that the Son of Man will come "in the glory of his father with the holy angels."²

And also that the Son of Man will be seen "seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."³ *[pauseeee]*

So here is this title 'Son of Man' and it describes someone who will be served and will rule the nations. *[pause]*

Jesus is this very Son of Man, and yet what does He say?

"Even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve." *[pauseeee]*

¹ Daniel 7:13-14.

² Mark 8:38.

³ Mark 14:62.

Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, will someday be given “dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him.”

And if He, *even He*, came to serve and not to be served, who are we to think that any service is below us? *[pauseeee]*

Let’s think about the words given to us in Mark 10:45, for when you dwell upon them, you will find that they are teeming with grace and significance. *[pause]*

First, the Son of Man *came*.

This is what we celebrate at Christmas.

The Son of God has eternally existed in the past, and He came to this earth by taking on flesh, and being born as a baby. *[pause]*

So His coming is historical.

It’s not some fairy-tale, or feel good fiction story.

No, He actually came here. *[pause]*

Christmas is not a celebration of some made up story, but a celebration of a real-life, historical reality - God took on flesh. *[pauseeee]*

He did this voluntarily for us.

His coming was not a forced mission, but an intentional, willful mission done out of love. *[pauseeee]*

The Son of Man, the One who deserves all things, lovingly came to earth.

That right there boggles the mind, and stirs the heart. *[pauseeee]*

Because He could have thought, “I’m not going to that place, for that place is full of pain, sorrow, sickness, and suffering.”

Or, “I’m not going because they sin all the time, and can never get their act together. Do you know how they are going to treat me?”

But He didn’t, for He *came!* *[pauseeee]*

Have you ever been so excited and joyous when you found out that someone sacrificed money and time to make it to your special event?

And you said, “You came!” *[pause]*

How much more joy should we have in our hearts to know that God Himself personally came to us?

It doesn't show our inherent value, it shows His immense love. *[pauseee]*

He didn't deem us too far gone!

He didn't regard us with disgust!

Amid all of our sins and failures, He determined to love us by drawing near, not drawing away. *[pauseee]*

It would have been enough for Him to simply come to earth.

That right there was undeserved, unmerited, and gracious.

That right there showed enough love to blow our love out of the water by an infinite amount.

But Jesus didn't just say that He came, but He came to what?

To serve. *[pauseee]*

Being the Son of God, Jesus could have come and simply enjoyed all of the good things of life on earth.

He could have made each of us serve Him, without doing anything for us, and He would have been completely just to do so. *[pause]*

He could have lived in luxury and ease, and grasped for money and fame.

Yet His whole purpose for coming wasn't merely to "get" but to "give". *[pauseee]*

Whenever we go somewhere, aren't our first and main thoughts about what we will get out of it?

Like, "What am I going to get out of going to church today?"

"What am I going to get out of going to this get together?"

But Christ's coming was about others.

It was about what He could give to us. *[pauseee]*

Jesus didn't think, "That is too below me to do!"

He didn't think, "They don't deserve to be served."

He didn't think, "I've got better, more important things to do."

But He came to serve. *[pause]*

And what's astonishing is what His serving would entail. *[pause]*

You see, He didn't merely serve by building us a house to stay in, gathering us some food here and there, or just giving a little money towards our needs.

No, His service wasn't small, but monumentally large. *[pause]*

His service was sacrificing His own life for us.

He gave *Himself*. *[pauseeee]*

Whenever we are trying to decide if we are going to go somewhere, we count the cost.

We think, "Yeah, it might take 6 hours to drive there and this much gas money, but it will be worth it, if we spend at least 2 days there and do this and that."

And sometimes we consider things not worth the cost, for we reckon that we won't really get much out of it, and we don't go. *[pause]*

Well thankfully, the cost that Jesus would pay for us didn't deter Him from coming!

He wasn't paying some gas money, or merely spending a couple hours of travel, but His cost was His precious blood. *[pauseeee]*

Consider all of the times that you have sinned against the Lord.

Consider all of your failures and weaknesses, and falling short.

Think about how undeserving you truly are of God's goodness. *[pause]*

Who are we to receive anything, let alone such a sacrificial gift of life-giving service?

Yet He came for the very reason to serve by giving His life as a ransom for us. *[pauseeee]*

We each have sinned against the good, holy, and perfect God, who is all loving and completely righteous.

Because of our sin, we deserve eternal death and condemnation, for we have committed high treason against the Creator, who made us. *[pause]*

So we needed to be ransomed out of that horrible situation, and that's where Christ comes in.

He gave His life as the ransom.

He bought us with His blood, by paying for the penalty that our sins deserved.

Our sins were nailed to the Cross, and now we are free, now we are His! *[pauseeee]*

Christmas is a reminder that the Son of God came to earth and took on flesh, certainly, but there's more to it, isn't there?

Christmas is also that He came to serve us by giving His life as a ransom for us.

That was His very purpose for coming! [pause]

You can't separate the truth of Christmas from the truth of Calvary, for that's *why* He came!
[pauseeee]

The incarnation of Jesus is a big sign declaring that we have been served by the great Son of Man, who came for us to die for us. [pause]

What service could we ever do to match His?

What words could ever express enough gratitude?

Thankfully, He doesn't call us to pay Him back for all He has done, but He does call us to imitate His love and service to others simply out of gratitude for His grace. *[pause]*

And that leads me to point 2...

II. Jesus' purpose for coming should radically impact our relationships with others.

For James and John, they wanted some of the highest honor, recognition, and authority in the kingdom.

And many times we are like James and John. [pause]

We want recognition and honor from others.

We want our name on a building, or at least something named after us.

We want to be seen as high up and amazing in the sight of others. *[pause]*

Maybe it shows itself in wanting to have the popularity that others have on social media, so that people recognize who we are and how great we are. [pause]

Or maybe it's seen in other ways...

Do you ever want to be known as the best mom or wife?

Do you ever want the recognition that you are the top employee or business?

Do you ever want people to say, "She has the most beautifully decorated home."?

Or, "He is the most knowledgeable guy that I know."? *[pause]*

We want to be the "top dog", so to say.

And most often, we would rather be giving orders than giving to others.

We would rather be in charge than serve. [pauseeee]

What about this question: have you ever thought a task was too below you to do? *[pause]*

Husbands and fathers, is changing a diaper too below you to do?

Employees, is there a task too below you to do because you feel like you are high up at the workplace?

Do you ever excuse it away and think, “But I’m entitled to not do it, don’t you know what my position is?” [pause]

Would you willingly wipe tables or take the trash out at church? *[pause]*

You may even be sitting there coming up with reason after reason for why you shouldn’t have to do those things...

“Don’t you know that I have worked hard in the past doing those things, so that I can get to this point and not have to do it?”

“Don’t you know that I have more education and skill, so why should I do something so basic?”

Yet those reasons are utterly annihilated when you remember that “even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life.”

Even Jesus stooped to wash the disciples’ feet.⁴ [pauseeee]

What comes natural to us is that we would rather have the seat of honor, than be on our knees cleaning the floor.

Our desire to be served usually greatly outweighs our desire to serve others.

But Jesus is showing us that it should be the other way around.

It should be more important to us to serve than to be served, for that is true greatness. [pauseeee]

Jesus is our prime example, showing us that we ought to be servant-minded people.

Not just servant-minded when it benefits us, but servant-minded as a way of life. [pause]

Because it’s easier to be servant-minded when you know that if you do, you can get a raise or promotion at work, or be recognized.

It’s easier to be servant-minded when you know that if you do, people will praise you and you may get good things in return from others.

⁴ See John 13.

But are you servant-minded when no one sees or knows? *[pauseeee]*

We are to pattern our lives after the humble, serving Christ.

And when we do so, we are reflecting the Son of Man! *[pauseeee]*

Just think of it.

Who do you want to imitate and reflect?

The self-serving rulers of this world, who live for themselves, or the life-giving Son of God, who gave Himself for you? *[pauseeee]*

Jesus is the great Son of Man, who will someday be given glory and dominion over all.

He is the very epitome of love, grace, and mercy.

He shows us what greatness is, so don't you want to reflect the greatest One of the cosmos?
[pause]

True greatness, true leadership *is* servanthood. *[pauseeee]*

Jesus' purpose for coming radically impacts our relationships with others.

Just consider how this would impact your relationships. *[pause]*

Imagine both you and your spouse with a mentality of servanthood towards one another -- think how that would impact your marriage.

No more bickering over chores and who is doing more, but a desire to serve one another. *[pause]*

Imagine the impact that this could make at your workplace.

You going into the day, NOT thinking, "How can I be recognized today for something I do," but rather, "Who can I serve today?" *[pause]*

Imagine the impact on your family, your friends, or even just the people you meet as you go about your day.

Or think about the difference it would make in our church, if we each came to church not thinking, "OK, what am I going to get out of church," or, "what am I going to receive today."

But rather, "Where can I serve this morning? What can I do to play a part in serving others here at First Baptist?" *[pauseeee]*

As you spend time together with family and friends tonight and tomorrow, will your mindset be one of service or one of simply receiving? *[pauseeee]*

Yet this truth isn't just about Christmas, for it should impact our whole lives, from January all the way to December. *[pause]*

In light of what Christ has done for you, will you keep looking to Him and His example as motivation to serve?

Will you think regularly, "Even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve."? *[pauseeee]*

This all isn't meant to burden you with more to do, but really, to free you to love and serve.

As we continually reflect upon Christ, we can't help but freely love and serve, for his ultimate service has softened our hearts.

As we dwell upon Christ, His mindset forms and shapes our own, for we remember how Philippians 2 tells us to be others-focused by having the mindset of Christ.

"who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped...

...But emptied himself, by taking *the form of a servant*, being born in the likeness of men."⁵
[pauseeee]

What Jesus has done in leaving the heights and perfection of Heaven to come to the lowliness and fallenness of this sin cursed world is a marvel.

And Scripture points its finger to the humble service of the Son of Man and says, "This is the way." *[pause]*

It's the way to true greatness, it's the way to true unity, community, and love among each other.

And it's good. *[pauseeee]*

And the amazing thing is that Jesus doesn't just give us the example of service, but through His death, He gives us the freedom and power to serve.

We are no longer enslaved to sin, but through His forgiveness and the giving of the Spirit, we are empowered to serve one another. *[pauseeeee]*

This passage teaches us to examine and contemplate this...

Jesus came to earth to serve, do you have the same mindset?

Even the Son of Man came to serve.

Just think of it, the great and glorious Son of Man, who will someday come again in glory, came to Bethlehem and then 33 years later died for you. *[pauseeeee]*

⁵ Philippians 2:6-7 (Italics added by me).

This Christmas, other people may not serve you, and you will feel like you are serving everyone, as you clean up the kitchen by yourself.

Or you may feel like your spouse never serves you, while you serve them. *[pause]*

You may not feel served by anyone, but that's not true.

For you have been served by Someone, and He has done the greatest, most significant act of service for you that there ever could be.

He willingly came to this sin-cursed world, and gave His life as a ransom for you. *[pause]*

So you may not feel served nor loved by others, but you have been and you are, and He continues to serve you even today. *[pauseeee]*

Or maybe you don't feel qualified or deserving of such love and service, for you think about all of your past, and the failures you have made in not serving others. *[pause]*

You may think, "But do you know who I am and what I've done in my past?! I don't deserve this."

And you're right, you don't deserve it, but that's what makes it *grace*. *[pause]*

His love and service isn't hindered by our sins, flaws, and failures, but He has loved you and served you even in the midst of all of that, for that's who He is.

Though He knew every sin and weakness that you would ever have, He still came to this earth and died as your ransom. *[pausre]*

In light of His mercy, kindness, love, and service - how could we not be servants to others?

How could we be more about what we get over what we can give, when we have already been given so much? *[pauseeee]*

What an amazing testimony it would be, if someone asked you, "How come you are always serving me, even when I don't do much for you?"

And our response was: "I serve because Christ has served me so immeasurably." *[pause]*

And it's this truth that Christmas reminds us of, for it reminds us why He came - He came to serve, and so we serve.

That's the impact that the incarnation can have on our relationships.