

“New Direction” | [Mark 10:32-34](#)

Dogs seem to have a sixth sense when it comes to going to the vet. You can grab the leash and head to the car every day of the week and they come happily anticipating they will end up at a great destination – a doggy park, an off leash park, a trail with all kinds of smells to explore. Their tail is wagging and they may even wine a little because they are so excited.

Then it is time to go to the veterinarian. Maybe a booster shot, or a check up, or a tooth problem. Does not matter what it is, you grab the leash and call the dog to come to the car, and what does the dog do? Sits on the kitchen floor and will not move. You coax it with a few treats, or put on your super-happy voice and call, “Come on puppy. Come on. I have a treat for you!” But the dog seems to know better...

Well, the disciples are not so smart. They were smart enough to say “yes” to Jesus’ invitation to come walk with him. They were smart enough to stay close to him, watching the power flow from His life, hearing the words of truth flow from his lips. They were being transformed as they walked with Him. They finally figured out that Jesus truly was the Messiah, the promised one from God, but they are struggling with what kind of Messiah. They wanted him to be a mighty military leader, but Jesus talks about dying. They wanted victory and Jesus speaks of a cross.

Now Jesus is heading towards Jerusalem. Twice already Jesus has told the disciples what to expect when they get there: **The Son of Man must suffer and be rejected by the priests and teachers of the law, killed and after three days rise again.** Yet the disciples do not understand. They still think they are going to play in the park! The disciples think that when they arrive in Jerusalem they will enjoy the markets. They will celebrate Passover, chat it up with old friends and watch Jesus take over the city. It will be a wonderful time for them.

Can you see the disciples almost skipping along as they walk the dusty roads towards Jerusalem? What they fail to notice is that Jesus’ steps are slightly slower, with very little spring in his step.

Chapter 10 opens with teaching on marriage and divorce, and moves to one of the Kingdom’s most precious commodities: children. Jesus lovingly takes the children into his arms and blesses them (contrast that to the disciples trying to send them away).

It is in this chapter we meet the Rich Young Ruler. Well, actually we are not told he is a ruler in Mark’s Gospel, nor that he is young. All we know is that he is a rich man who wants to inherit eternal life. He wants to go to heaven. He is a wise man.

The man called Jesus good, but Jesus responded that only God is good. If Jesus is truly good, he must be God! If he is God, he is worth listening to.

Then Jesus speaks about what the man is most familiar with – the Law. Jesus says he must not murder, commit adultery, steal, or lie and he must respect his parents.

“I have done these things since I was a small boy,” the man said.

Then we read in verse 21 that Jesus looked at him and loved him. Jesus wanted what was best for him, so knowing his heart Jesus said to the man, **“You lack one thing. Go, sell all that you have and give the money to the poor. Then you will have treasure in heaven. And come follow me.”** You want the comforts your money can buy you. Are you willing to give that up?

The man became sad, and he walked away from Jesus because he had great wealth. Then Jesus told his disciples it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

We are told the disciples were amazed. They had been told all their lives that riches were a sign of God’s blessing, and therefore the rich were guaranteed a place in heaven. Jesus says it is just the opposite. The rich may be the ones who miss out on heaven because they value their money more than they value their relationship with God.

The disciples asked, “Who then can make it to heaven?”

Jesus’ response is important. He said, **“With man this is impossible. But not with God; all things are possible with God.”**

Here is the best news you are ever going to hear. Though there is no way for us to earn, buy or deserve a place in heaven, getting there is still possible because it is God who will provide the way. It is God who makes it possible for sinful people to be forgiven, cleansed and made ready for heaven. How can we find the way to this salvation God offers?

“I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” Jesus said.

Well, Peter saw the link between sacrifice and heaven so he reminds Jesus about all the things the disciples gave up to follow Jesus. Truly it did cost them.

Jesus counters with, whatever you lost in worldly things, God will more than make up.

Now we arrive at our passage for today. It is in the midst of this Jesus once again foretells his arrest and death and resurrection in Jerusalem.

Hear the Word of the Lord: (Read Mark 10:32-34)

Did you catch the two reactions of those around Jesus?

The disciples were astonished. Jesus is leading the way and he moves with resolve towards the place where he predicts he will face suffering and even death. The courage of Jesus, the dedication to the task before him, the lack of fear astonished the disciples.

The second reaction was fear. But it did not come from Jesus, but from those who followed. Mark likes to leave us guessing, for this could be the fear of respect and awe at the strength of character seen in Jesus. Or it could be fear for what might lie ahead for the followers of Jesus. We do not know which it means here. It could be both.

Then Jesus once again makes it clear that the path of obedience will be the path of suffering. Jesus pulls the twelve aside and says that in Jerusalem the **Son of Man will be handed over to**

the chief priests and teachers of the Law. They will condemn him to death and hand him over to the Gentiles. The Gentiles will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Then in three days he will rise again.

It is painfully clear that Jesus knows exactly what lies ahead for him. Jesus speaks of the Son of Man and it appears that the disciples have not put two and two together – that Jesus is this Son of Man. But they do know something terrible will happen in Jerusalem, and they are amazed that they still are heading that way.

How many of us would continue our march to Jerusalem if we knew we would face arrest, beatings and death. Yes, Jesus is certain of the resurrection, but there is a lot of pain and suffering before he gets to that victory. Why would he go?

Once again we turn to Isaiah and read the backdrop of Jesus understanding of His mission. Isaiah 53:3-6 reads:

**He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.**

**4 Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.
5 But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.
6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.**

These verses describe what Isaiah referred to as the “Suffering Servant.” This Suffering Servant was Jesus. He would give his life to rescue us. We went astray – we are the sinners. We deserve the wrath of God. The wages of sin is death. But Jesus – the Son of God – was willing to die in our place so we could be forgiven and have life – eternal life. It is hard to imagine that Jesus could love us that much. It is hard to believe we serve a God who would be willing to give His life to rescue us.

But we do.

And today we will come to the table to remember the price Jesus was willing to pay to rescue us from sin, from death, from Satan, from hell. Sadly many people in our city do not see God

this way – the God that loved the world so much he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes on him will not perish but will have everlasting life.

They see God as angry, vengeful, unfair, mean. God is anything but those things. God is love. Jesus proved that on the cross of Calvary.

Sadly the disciples do not understand. When Jesus tells them about the Son of Man suffering and dying and coming back to life, he was talking about himself. But the next thing we read about is the disciples arguing over who will get the best positions in the kingdom of God. Jesus tells them that is not how it works, the places of honour are given by God alone.

Jesus tells them that it will not be easy for his followers. They will have to drink the cup Jesus drinks from. What is that cup? It is the cup of suffering. Jesus' followers must not seek positions of power, but be willing to serve - and serving others can be very costly.

I am going to conclude today by reading from Tonya Kucey's blog. Tonya is a Nazarene Missionary who went to Haiti, and there established a ministry to street children. Haiti has been called the "graveyard of missionaries." It is hard to minister there, and many missionaries have been worn out trying to serve in that country. Listen to what Tonya says about the path Jesus took, the path of suffering, and how that relates to us today. She writes:

"Truth be known, I like comfort. It is my default programming. I like things simple and easy. I do not like to be uncomfortable. Frankly, Haiti heat is hard for this pure-blooded Canadian girl! Not having consistent electricity is a challenge. Not having safe drinking water is a trial. Wondering if any one of the numerous daily mosquito bites will give me a life-threatening disease is difficult. Speculating whether that voodoo priest truly has any power to put a curse on me is concerning. Fighting in the pitch dark of night trying to catch the huge, furry tarantula running around my house is not a fun factor for me whatsoever! Hearing gunshots in my backyard is not hilarious either. Smelling smoke in my house from the near-by protesters furiously burning cars and tires has been a bit traumatizing.

Honestly, nothing about Haiti was or is comfortable for me. But it is a call.

I have been called to put aside my worship of comfort, pick up my cross, and follow Him even if it means suffering, sacrifice, and a surrendering of my desire for comfort.

This is not a call just for us missionaries.

As Christians, I believe that we must be careful that we do not fall into the trap of worshipping comfort over Christ and expect life to bow its knee to our desires. Christ and his disciples were not spared from pain, grief, or struggle. Why should we expect any different for our lives?

So, while not every believer is called to serve in a place like Haiti, we are all called to follow Christ obediently and sacrificially and oftentimes that is anything but comfortable.

Today we walk with Jesus – even through pain and suffering. Are we willing to count the cost?