

Mark 10:13-52 The Countdown to the Triumphal Entry
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1. 10. 13-16: Children part 2

As at the end of chapter nine, both literal and figurative children become central to Jesus' teaching. How does Jesus' message in chapter 10 differ from his earlier examples in chapter 9? Chapter 10.14-15 seem to have two distinct injunctions: Do not hinder the children and receive the kingdom of God like a child. How does one receive the kingdom like a child? What characteristics of childhood is Jesus pointing to?

2. 10.17-31: the rich young ruler

This story appears in all three Synoptics with slightly different details about the young man. In all three, however, we learn immediately that he is rich. This story is in the form of a "call story," in which Jesus invites someone to join him. This is the only call story that has an unfavorable ending, with the young man going away rather than following.

- Why does Jesus respond to the man's greeting with a statement about goodness?
- Identify the five imperatives in verse 21; what does obedience mean for this young man and for us?
- Contrast the teaching on children with Jesus' teaching in vs. 24 onward: how does one reconcile the difficulty of entering the kingdom with the command to enter as children?
- Contrast the young man's response with the disciples' response. Why are the disciples so amazed? Discuss Peter's statement to Jesus and Jesus' reply.
- Respond to Augustine's explanation of goodness:
God, therefore, is uniquely good, and this he cannot lose. He is good. He is not good by sharing in any other good, because the good by which he is good is himself. But, when a finite human being is good, his [sic] goodness derives from God, because he cannot be his own good. All who become good do so through his Spirit. Our nature has been created to attain to him through acts of its own will. If we are to become good, it is important for us to receive and hold what he gives, who is good in himself. (*Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* 141)

3. 10. 32-45: the Third Passion Prediction

During chapters 8, 9, and 10, Jesus predicts his death and resurrection three times. This third prediction, the most detailed of the three, follows the same format of setting, prediction, misunderstanding, and instruction.

- Discuss the tone in 10.32: What kind of procession do we see here as the Jesus makes his way to Jerusalem?

- Read 10.33, 9.31, and 8.31. How does Jesus' description of his death differ slightly? What nuances do these variations give to his prediction?
- James and John reveal their misunderstanding by asking Jesus to be at his right and left hand in glory. Contrast Jesus' response to them with his rebuke of Peter in chapter 8.
- Why does Jesus choose the images of the cup and baptism to describe his imminent suffering? What can we learn through this analogy?
- Jesus' final instruction in vs. 45 includes the word "ransom," which is only used here and in the parallel verse in Matthew. Unpack the idea of a ransom; what does it reveal about Jesus' redeeming work and about us, the people he set free?

4. 10. 46-52: the healing of blind Bartimaeus

This miracle story serves as a transition between the preceding section on discipleship and the upcoming passion narrative. It is also a call story that sharply contrasts with the rich young man's story.

- Bartimaeus calls out to Jesus as the "son of David," which is the first public use of this name. Why is Jesus being referred to as the son of David now, at this stage in his ministry?
- Compare Bartimaeus' initial request with the rich young man's question. How are they alike or different in tone? Why do they lead to such different results?
- It must have been obvious that Bartimaeus was blind. Why did Jesus ask him, "What do you want me to do for you?"
- Contrast Bartimaeus' faith with that of the rich young man. What can we learn from Bartimaeus' request?
- The lectionary reading that accompanies this passage is from Jeremiah 31. Read Jeremiah 31.7-9 and 31. 31-34. How does Jesus' ministry, as described in this chapter, establish the New Covenant?
- Respond to this quote by Clement of Alexandria:
 God provides a fairer wind for more willing souls, but if they early abandon their eagerness, the wind which God provides is thereby obstructed. For to save the unwilling is an act of compulsion. But to save the willing is the act of one showing grace. (*Ancient Christian Commentary* 143)