

JESUS PREDICTS HIS GLORIOUS DEATH AND RESURRECTION

Matthew 20:17-34

Key Verses: 20:18-19

"We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!"

In the last passage we learned Jesus' generosity and hard work. Jesus was compared to a landowner and this landowner went out to get workers at 6:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m., 12:00 noon, 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. Usually a daily work agency opens its office at 8:00 a.m. and hires people for two hours and then closes. But Jesus in the parable works all day long from 6:00 in the morning to 5:00 p.m. We also see our Lord Jesus Christ's generosity. Jesus agreed with those who came at 6:00 a.m. to give them one denarius. But he also gave one denarius to those who came at 5:00 p.m. If we are generous like our [Lord Jesus Christ](#), our hearts might be like the summer ocean. However, most of us have big bodies, but have hearts like the eye of a needle. May God bless us to have a heart like Jesus. In today's passage Jesus teaches his disciples his glorious death and resurrection. But his disciples were still earthbound and didn't listen to him. He taught them to the end instead of arguing with them. Finally, there is a conclusive story about two blind men. This is Easter Sunday. May God penetrate into our souls and plant Jesus' glorious death and resurrection in our hearts so that we may have life on earth and eternal life in God's house.

First, the Son of Man (17-19). Look at verse 17. "Now as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the [twelve disciples](#) aside and said to them...." Jesus finished his earthly messianic ministry with his divine compassion and God's love. He also taught his disciples as time permitted. They were on their last journey to Jerusalem. Starting from Galilee, Jesus came to Jericho around that time. Jesus took the twelve disciples aside and said to them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!" (18,19) In these short verses Jesus concisely manifested God's plan of salvation work; more specifically, Jesus' death and resurrection. Here in verse 18 Jesus professes himself to be "the Son of Man." In Mark's Gospel "the Son of Man" is repeated more. But Matthew saw Jesus as the King. He didn't use the words "the Son of Man" frequently. "The Son of Man" is a most exquisite description of himself. "The Son of Man" reveals his incarnation. John 1:14 says, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." Originally, Jesus is God. He was with God and nothing was made without him. But he renounced his glory and power and his righteousness as God and came down to this world and lived among men. John interpreted the meaning of "the Son of Man" in such a beautiful way that anybody can understand the meaning of "the Son of Man." The incarnation of Jesus is full of grace and truth. Here the word "grace" in Greek means, "charis." "Charis" is the root of all

the beautiful words in the Bible. "Eucharitis" in Greek means beautiful and wonderful. The Son of Man who came to this world and lived among us is indeed beautiful and wonderful, as we have studied in the last several chapters. He is full of grace, but also he is full of truth. What is truth? Truth is never-changing, universal and invaluable. The things of the world all perish and spoil and fade away. Where on earth is such a thing that does not? Yes, there is Jesus who is truth. Hebrews 13:8 says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." Most people wander while living in this world, not knowing their specific direction of life or destination of life. But Jesus, as our advocate, embraces us and passes us through the twelve pearly gates. Jesus is full of grace and truth. This Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. The chief priests and the teachers of the law are chosen people to do the work of God. They are chosen people to take care of God's flock of sheep. But they all became thieves. Now we see that they will condemn Jesus, and because they do not have the right to pronounce the death sentence, they will hand him over to the Roman governor to be crucified. In this way the Son of Man was arrested and mocked and flogged and crucified and died. The death of Jesus is to save men from their sins. The death of Jesus is to bring his children to God's house. Ultimately, the death of Jesus destroys the power of sin and death with God's love. The death of Jesus is in fact the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. The death of Jesus is the universal love of God to save men from their sins and bring them back to God. If we study hard, it is easy for us to understand Calculus II. If we study a little more, we can also understand Linear Algebra and we can understand the principles of politics, economics, medicine, astronomy, and speech. But it is not easy for us to understand the death of the Son of God. When we look up at the cross, sometimes we feel sorry. Sometimes the Son of God's crucifixion looks pathetic, so pathetic that we cannot but cry. But we should not look up at the Son of Man's crucifixion with sentimentalism. Isaiah 53 expressed the Son of Man's death on the cross so vividly and so meaningfully. While on earth the Son of Man healed the sick and preached the gospel to the poor. And with great divine compassion he healed men with leprosy and opened the eyes of the blind. But the Son of Man was despised and rejected by the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. How painful it is for us to know. They should have been the most close co-workers of Jesus. But they despised and rejected the Son of Man. They made the Son of Man a man of sorrows and familiar with sufferings. They made the Son of Man like one from whom men hide their faces. He was despised, and they esteemed him not. Jesus only loved them and healed them and preached the good news of the kingdom of God. But the old Christians, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, never esteemed the Son of Man.

Outwardly, the Son of Man's death on the cross looked pathetic. But by being crucified on the cross he carried our sorrows. "He carried our sorrows" means that each person has his or her own sorrows, even if he or she is a prince or a princess. Most people are, in one way or the other, deeply wounded in their souls. They are crying day and night. Last night, I saw a beautiful and attractive teenage girl. I told her to have hope of meeting her father in the kingdom of God by believing in Jesus. She shed many tears. But our Lord Jesus Christ took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows. He was also pierced for our transgressions and he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment

that brought us peace was upon the Son of Man; by his wounds we are healed. In actuality, Jesus told his disciples his sufferings, death and rising again on the third day. But they only heard two words: "sufferings" and "death." They missed the words, "On the third day he will be raised to life!" Therefore, their despair was beyond description. Sorrow and fear overpowered their souls.

What then does it mean that on the third day the Son of Man will be raised to life? It means that Jesus will be resurrected on the third day after his death on the cross. It means that Jesus will be the Risen Christ. These days "Jesus Christ" is sometimes not properly used. But the original meaning of "Christ" is King of kings and Lord of lords and he is the Judge sitting on a throne with his twelve disciples in the kingdom of God. Why is the resurrection of Christ so important? Once Billy Graham said, "We can live without sex, but we cannot live without hope." This quotation might be one of his best ones. That's true. There is an 87-year-old man who is in bed dying. His wife is 25 years younger than he. Because the dying man has a legal first wife, the second wife is no more than the old man's concubine. But this lady cried and cried for three weeks, looking at her grandfather-like husband. It was because she was crushed that her old husband was perishing moment by moment, and it was because she largely depended on him as her hope and trust. So I said, "Man is like grass. Don't depend on him. Depend on God who gave us his one and only Son. By being crushed for our iniquities the Son of Man brought us peace and the living hope." Since then, the lady who was crying in the power of darkness could see the beam of light. Now she sees that Jesus is the one who is worthy of trusting, and Jesus is the living hope. As long as she had her 87-year-old husband she never accepted the word of God. Now Jesus is her trust and living hope.

There is no living hope in this world. 1 Peter 1:3,4 says, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade---kept in heaven for you...." Last night I talked with a girl. I asked her, "Which school are you going to enter and what are you going to major in?" She said she is going to Northwestern University. She also wants to major in chemical engineering. This can be her hope for the time being. But it is not an everlasting hope. Only the kingdom of God established by the blood of Jesus is an everlasting hope. We go to God's house. We pass through the pearly gates of the kingdom of heaven. We can meet all whom we have missed earlier. We can be like Christ and we can talk to Christ face to face. Therefore, Jesus' death and his resurrection is indeed glorious.

Second, "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" (20-28). Those disciples who did not hear the word about the glorious resurrection were bewildered. The mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him. "What is it you want?" he asked. She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom" (20-21). Obviously these two sons were John and James and the woman was their mother. She believed the earthly messianic kingdom they thought Jesus would establish. There she wanted her sons, John and James, to be top cabinet members. Jesus did not answer her, but he turned around to his

disciples and said, "You don't know what you are asking." Here we learn how to fish HNWs. "You don't know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" Unanimously they answered, "Sure! We can." Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father" (23). Jesus had not yet been crucified and become the Risen Christ. So he answered them in this way.

When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers (24). Peter might have thought that he left his mother-in-law, his wife, his Little Peter, and his fishing business which was prospering. He was young. He was very committed to Jesus according to his own words. Once he said to Jesus, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you" (Jn 13:37). Peter had confidence in himself that he was the most committed to Jesus and the most loyal, and he was the most curious. In addition, he thought that nobody could defeat him in arm wrestling. When Peter saw these two sneaky guys using the favor of their mother, he was very upset. But because of Jesus he tried to cool himself down until he felt that his two eyes were bulging out. He overcame himself, breathing hard. Let's see what Jesus said to them. Look at verses 25-27. "Jesus called them together and said, `You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave...." Jesus knew that they all wanted to be the President of the United States. Jesus also understood they were living in a man's world where there are those competing, defeating, crushing, smashing and rising to power. The disciples must have watched Roman soldiers in very elegant and fashionable army uniforms marching around Jericho City where most business was going on. If someone is a man, he cannot escape from this ambition to become the President of the United States. One young man said that he dreamt twelve times that he became president of his country. But each time when he opened his eyes, he was not a president but a factory boy. Many young people fail in their youth because they only want to be somebody great instead of preparing to be a great man in the future. What Jesus said to them was indeed annoying to their ideas. The disciples might have been wishing to wield power and display glory by following Jesus. But he was saying that "the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant...." Because of their spiritual immaturity, even Bartholomew didn't want to serve the top disciple Peter. Rather, he wanted to be served by Peter, the top disciple. Look at verse 27. "...and whoever wants to be first must be your slave...." This verse clearly tells us that spiritual greatness and authority come from serving others and spiritual authority and power come from serving others with divine compassion. In the spiritual world, great men are not ones who are being served, but ones who serve. Look at verse 28. "...just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." In this verse Jesus clearly teaches them how to be good shepherds, and how to be truly great men in the sight of God. Even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom sacrifice. This verse tells us that Jesus didn't mind, even if he gave his life in serving others.

Jesus was indeed happy to serve others who are in need. Finally, he gave his body and blood as a ransom sacrifice.

These days the most frequent words people use are "It is practical," or "It is not practical." In the service of God there is no "practical" or "not practical." We must serve others like a servant with the clear purpose to lead them to Jesus who is the Son of Man, King of kings and Lord of lords. God's house is not an entertainment house. It is the house of prayer for all nations. It is the place where people discuss how to serve God better. During the last one week, JBF members were preparing their Easter messages, their testimonies, singing for singspiration, and even many kinds of skits. They were helping each other and staying up until 12:00 midnight. They looked happy indeed. They looked as if they were ready to do anything for others for the preparation of the Easter Conference. People think there are only worldly joys. But that's a terrible mistake. There is a spiritual joy that passes all human understanding. When we serve one another in Jesus Christ we experience that our hearts are glad and our souls are rejoicing in the Lord. Those who are only served always feel miserable and there is the danger that they will get diabetes or high blood pressure. But if we work hard in the service of God we are indeed happy. One young man from Northwestern began to help our second-generation missionaries' orchestra. Now he is smiling, looking at people around him. So he is frequently misunderstood. He also smiles looking at the sky, even on cloudy days. Some think he needs a doctor's help, but he does not need a doctor's help. True happiness does not come by receiving something or by being served by others. True happiness comes when we serve others in the name of Jesus Christ. When we have no money, even a cup of cold water given to the needy is remembered by God. Let's bring this joy to this country through our prayer and earnest Bible study and by receiving one rejection after another for the purpose of carrying out one-to-one Bible study. Let's read verse 28 together. "...just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Third, "Lord, Son of David" (29-34). When we study about the disciples, we see that finally their names were spread all over the world. When we visited a communist country, we found so many named with a disciples' name such as Andrea, Johannes, Natasha and so on. It is because the disciples learned how to serve others in the name of God and experienced heavenly joy. Look at verse 29. "As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him." This verse shows us a clear picture that Jesus was like a general and his twelve disciples were lieutenant generals, and the large crowd of people who were following him were well-disciplined soldiers. They also look like they were marching to Zion, the city of Jerusalem. The entourage of Jesus was indeed glorious at the moment. But Jesus was not going into Jerusalem as a triumphant general but to take up the cup of suffering and death. Anyway, when they formed a large crowd and followed Jesus, it looked spectacular.

Two blind men were sitting by the roadside. When they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!" (30) Those who were following Jesus were Jesus' people. But let's see how they helped these two blind men. "The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, 'Lord, Son of

David, have mercy on us!'" (31) They were almost grabbed and thrown away. We cannot say that this crowd, even though they followed Jesus, were Jesus' people in their divine integrity. They were just a crowd of people.

Jesus stopped and called the blind men, "What do you want me to do for you?" "Lord," they answered, "we want our sight" (32,33). Jesus' heart went out because of his divine compassion on them and he touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and they also followed him. Here we learn two things. First is they knew the Son of God. At that time people were waiting for the Son of David as the Messiah of the Jews. Waiting for the Messiah's return began from the time of Jesus' ascension, when Jesus was ascending to heaven. The disciples really wanted Jesus to come back even after one hour. At Pentecost there were 120 people in Mark's upper room and they prayed. The Holy Spirit came upon them. What they wanted was not sufficient food or future success, but Jesus' coming again as the Messiah of the Jews. Jesus' coming again had been the main idea. Later it became a traditional idea to the Christians. The fact that the two blind men shouted all the more means they knew that the Son of David was the Messiah. People persecuted them, but they called out "Son of David, have mercy on us!" Here we learn that even though they were no more than blind beggars, they had firm faith in the Messiah, the Son of David. Second is when Jesus asked, "What do you want me to do for you?", they answered, "We want our sight." It is indeed amazing. They had a chance to meet the Messiah, the Son of David. But they didn't ask to become Prime Minister like James and John. In view of history, not knowing what they want, many people have perished. But these blind beggars knew what they wanted.

Today we studied about Jesus' glorious death and resurrection. We also learned that it is not easy to learn the true concept of Jesus' death and resurrection; it is simply because we are full of human calculation. But we can learn from the blind beggars' great faith in the Messiah, the Son of David.