

Date : 31 August 2025

Theme : Servanthood in Mark's Gospel

Title : Following God's Way to Enter into His Kingdom

Passage : Mark 10:1-31

Key verse : *"With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."* (Mark 10:27)

The Gospel of Mark highlights again and again that to follow Jesus is to live as a servant. But here's the tension: by nature, we resist God's way of servanthood. Instead of serving God and others, we want to serve ourselves. Instead of surrendering, we want control. Instead of humility, we prefer pride. Even in the most important issue of life — *salvation itself* — many try to enter God's Kingdom on their own terms.

In Mark 10:1–31, Jesus reveals that this problem is not new, we see three groups who thought they understood God's way but were actually following their own:

- The Pharisees reduced God's design for marriage into legal loopholes.
- The disciples dismissed children as unworthy of Jesus' time.
- The rich young ruler believed salvation could be earned through his goodness and wealth.

This is not just their story — this is *our* story. Their problem is our problem. Our thoughts, habits, and values have been shaped by a world that rejects God's way. Unless we see this clearly, we risk walking away from Jesus like the rich young ruler — outwardly moral, inwardly blind, tragically lost.

And this is where servanthood matters. Servanthood means letting go of self-will, submitting to God's design, and following His way even when it feels upside down to the world. Today we will ask three questions:

1. What is God's way?
2. If salvation is by God's way, who can be saved?
3. Why does it matter?

(A) What is God's way?

1) God's Way in Marriage: Faithfulness to His design (vv. 6–9)

- From the beginning of creation, God established marriage as a sacred covenant between one man and one woman: *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."* (Gen 2:24).

- But by Jesus' day, divorce had become common, often for selfish reasons. The Pharisees tested Jesus: *"Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"* (Mark 10:2).
- Isn't this us too? We reduce God's commands to what fits our convenience. We want faith without sacrifice, blessings without obedience.
- The Pharisee had cited the rule set by Moses, that a man can divorce, but Jesus redirected them to God's original design at creation as recorded by Moses. The Lord went back to His Word, that God, the Creator, had already given the Maker's instructions for a successful marriage.
- Marriage was meant to reflect God's faithfulness and love (Eph 5:25–27). But when people redefine marriage in their own ways instead of God's way, this is sin.
- God as our Creator is the only One qualified to define the correct way, not man's ideas.
- Marriages will eventually fail if we refuse to comply with the designer's instructions.
- God Himself puts couples together (v. 9), so we must always seek God's guidance and His favour for our life partners.
- The Lord clearly defines divorce as sin when it is used as a cover for replacing a spouse. It is sin even when the intent exists before the act. Such sin leads to adultery, and those who persist are in danger of forfeiting eternal life.

2) God's Way in Entering His Kingdom: Humility like a child (vv. 13-16)

- The disciples rebuked parents for bringing children to Jesus, thinking children were a burden or distraction. But Jesus strongly forbids any hindrance to their coming to Him: *"Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God."* (v. 14). The children will naturally want to come to Jesus.
- God's way is different from the world's way. The world prizes independence, strength, and achievement. But God says the way into His Kingdom is through humility, dependence, and trust — the qualities of a child.
- Why children?
 - Children trust simply and wholeheartedly. They only begin to distrust when betrayed by adults – Parents who break their word can lead children to distrust God.
- Servants must take responsibility to humble themselves before God, for God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. Proud servants are the greatest disgrace to His Kingdom.

3) God's Way of Salvation: Saved by Grace through Faith (vv. 17–31)

- The rich young ruler was a faithful moral, religious person. But he missed the most important truth: salvation is about a relation with Jesus as Lord.
- He asked the right question, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” (v. 17). He wanted to have eternal life but only second to the love of his money. The Lord has said that you cannot serve God and money. We must choose one of the other.
- The Lord tested him in a way to surface his understanding of salvation.
- Jesus listed several commandments, and the man proudly replied: “All these I have kept from my youth.” (v. 20).
- Obviously, he assessed himself to have kept all the commandments, but covetousness reigned in his heart.
- Jesus exposed his heart: “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have... and come, follow me.” (v. 21).
- The man could not — because he valued worldly wealth more highly than following the Lord.
- This is the problem:
 - He considered himself good enough to inherit eternal life but he was not.
 - But clearly, we cannot inherit eternal life without believing in the finished work of His substitutional death and acknowledging Jesus as Lord.

Aren't we like him?

- We want eternal life, but we cannot receive it on *our terms*. We must confess Him as Lord - Rom 10:9.

(B) If salvation is by God's way, who can be saved?

- “*With man this is impossible, but not with God.*” (v. 27).
- The disciples had asked in Mark 10:26 Who then can be saved? Is the lordship too much of a commitment to expect non-believers to make? So the Lord's answer: “With man this is impossible, but for God all things are possible.”
- Salvation is by faith – faith in the Person – Jesus as Lord, not just Jesus as Saviour. It is a relationship issue, not faith in some religious doctrine. It is the Lord we follow, not a religion to believe.
- Servanthood flows from emulating Jesus as Servant.

(C) Why does it matter?

- Illustration: A manufacturer designs a product and gives the manual for how it functions best. If you ignore the manual, it results in poor outcomes. In the same way, God, our Creator, has shown us the way of life. Ignoring His way leads to failure; following His way leads to salvation.

1) It shapes how we live now

- God's way leads us to servanthood.
- Jesus said: "But many who are first will be last, and the last first." (Mark 10:31).
- What does this mean? Many start well but finish poorly, while others may start later but finish well. Poor finishing reflects a lack of faithfulness in following and growing. Sadly, many Christians who start strong gradually drop out.
- Living God's way means rejecting pride, competition, and self-centeredness, and embracing humility, service, and dependence on God.
- "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." (Mark 9:35)
- "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant." (Mark 10:43)

2) How does it affect our eternity?

- Peter asked in Mark 10:28 "See we have left all and followed you." So, what will we get in the end?
- God repays a hundredfold in both this life and in eternity. Servants will be overcompensated.
- Do you really believe that your sacrifices are a worthwhile investment?
- Jesus said: *"Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now... and in the age to come eternal life."* (Mark 10:29–30).
- But this investment can only be made here and now, through the busy (sometimes chaotic) schedule of daily living. What we do in this short lifetime will count for all eternity.

Application

The question is: Are we still trying to enter God's Kingdom by our own way, or are we ready to surrender to His Lordship and follow His way by faith?

- ☐ Am I depending on my own ability to bring people to faith?
 - Even the apostles asked, "Who can be saved?"
- ☐ Am I clinging to a habit that I won't surrender to Jesus?
 - Like the rich young ruler, is there a treasure, habit, or pride I value more than Christ?