

RADICAL SERVICE MARK 10.41-45

Paraphrase/Translation of Mark 10.41-45

⁴¹Now when the other ten disciples heard about the request for prominent position made by James and John, they became quite angry with the brothers. ⁴²So Jesus summoned all twelve of them together and said to them:

"It is common knowledge that the influential rulers of the Gentiles lord over them for their own personal benefit and that the prominent elite exercise authority over them with concern only for their own personal interests.

⁴³"This is not how you are to conduct your lives—always concerned with your own personal status, power, and position! If any of you have a desire to be important, rearrange your values and be concerned with attending to the needs of others like a servant. ⁴⁴If any of you has a desire to be the most prominent, rearrange your values and go so far as to attend to the needs of others as a slave, with no thought for personal power, status, or even freedom!

⁴⁵"For even I, with the status and position as "Head of humanity," did not come with the purpose of being served by others. My purpose is to serve others and to offer my life as a ransom payment in the place of all humanity."

Synthesis of Mark 10.41-45

Exegetical Idea

The disciples should mimic the radically selfless service *to* others of Jesus rather than the self-benefiting authority *over* others of the Gentiles that has thus far characterized their ambitions. (10.41-45)

Exegetical Sentence Outline

- I. The backlash from the request of James and John results in a gathering of the disciples called by Jesus in order to teach them (41-42a).
 - A. The anger of the disciples is kindled when they hear about the request of James and John (41).
 - B. Jesus gathers his disciples together in order to address the situation (42a).

- II. In contrast to the harsh tyranny of Gentile rulers, the disciples' lives are characterized by service because of the selfless sacrificial life and death of their authoritative example, Jesus (42b-45c).
 - A. The disciples are aware of the harsh and self-benefiting authority of Gentile rulers and powerful elite (42b-c).
 1. The disciples are aware of the self-benefiting manner in which Gentiles rulers harshly govern their subjects (42b)

2. The disciples are aware of prominent Gentiles who use their authority for their own personal benefit (42c).
- B. The disciples' manner of life, not patterned by the Gentiles, will be characterized by radical and selfless servanthood (43a-44).
 1. The disciples should not pattern their lives after the Gentiles rulers and elite (43a).
 2. In contrast to the Gentiles, the disciples' life will value radical service to the needs of all others over personal prominence and status (43b-44).
 - a. In contrast to the Gentiles, disciples will value service to the needs of others over personal status (43b).
 - b. In contrast to the Gentiles, disciples will value slave-like service to the needs of all others over personal prominence (44).
- C. The authoritative example which provides the reason for the command to service is the radically selfless life of Jesus himself (45a-c).
 1. The authoritative example for the command to servanthood is in that Jesus, the Head of humanity, denies the reception of service as his purpose (45a).
 2. The authoritative example for the command to servanthood is in that Jesus, the Head of humanity, embraces service to others as his purpose (45b).
 3. The authoritative example for the command to servanthood is in that Jesus offers his very life as a substitute to redeem humanity (45c).

Introduction to Mark 10.41-45

Mark 10.41-45 appears near the end of what France labels Act two of the gospel of Mark. Act two consists of the way to Jerusalem and learning about the cross (8.22—10.52); it is the bridge between Act one—the ministry of Jesus in Galilee (1.14—8.21) and Act three—the time in Jerusalem dominated by the passion narrative (11.1—16.8) (France, 13-14). Three passion predictions in 8.31, 9.31, and 10.33-34 govern the pericopae in Act Two. Each prediction is followed by important teaching by Jesus on what to expect as followers of him and how to live in service and suffering (Evans, 115). A consistent pattern exists in each of these predictions. First comes Jesus' prediction of this own betrayal and death to his disciples. This is followed by the disciples' failure to grasp the teaching and values Jesus is presenting (8.32-33;

9.32-34; 10.35-40). Consequentially, Jesus gives additional remedial teaching on the subject matter (8.34-38; 9.35-37; 10.41-45) (France, 414).

The third passion prediction is the most detailed of the three and the subsequent actions of the disciples (specifically James and John) has been called the "most blatant example of human self-centeredness in contrast to Jesus' humility and self-sacrifice" (Edwards, 321). The ambition of James and John revealed in 10.35-40 shows their desire to establish their own personal position and status (France, 414). Jesus addresses their desire and gives it a more realistic view by again reiterating that his way is the way of suffering. In v 40, Jesus reveals that status in the kingdom of God cannot be bestowed as a favor or even earned by loyalty and sacrifice (France, 414). James and John show a remarkable lack of awareness and propensity for personal ambition that is out of keeping with everything Jesus has taught since 9.33 (France, 414).

It is in response to this interchange and the unrest it causes among the other disciples that Jesus speaks in vv 41-45. This passage shows the radical selfless service that is to characterize those who follow Jesus in direct contradiction to the accepted worldly values of power, authority, and prominence and in direct parallel to the servant life and suffering death of the authoritative Son of Man. The disciples are to live lives of service *to* others, not prominence *over* others.

A final pericope follows this section before the arrival in Jerusalem: the second healing of a blind man (10.46-52), which forms an inclusio for this entire Act with the first healing of a blind man in 8.22-26. Mark 10.45, then, ends the teachings of Jesus in Act two by answering why Jesus must die and by preparing for the arrival in Jerusalem and the passion

fulfillment (France, 415). In this final verse of the passage at hand, the cross is clearly shown to be consistent with the teachings of Jesus and thus the plan of God.

Commentary on Mark 10.41-45

Response to the Request of the Brothers (10.41-42a)

The "other" 10 disciples get wind of the conversation between Jesus and James and John recorded in Mark 10.35-40 and are naturally quite upset with the two brothers. Jesus promptly intervenes to quell a potentially explosive situation.

Indignation from the Disciples (10.41)

The first word of v 41 (kai;, a connecting conjunction) as well as the content of this introductory verse indicate that vv 41-45 are intimately connected with what precedes them and are in fact a continuation of that story. The change in characters indicated by the new subject, however, indicates a transition. The author is now dealing with the effects of the ambitious request of the two brothers on the rest of the disciple group.

Two elements in v 41 point back to the previous verses. The aorist participle (ajkouvsanteV) is causal and thus gives the reason for the indignation of the ten: "when¹ they heard." The participle has no object and the reader must look for the content of their hearing elsewhere, presumably in the previous verses. If there were any doubt, the prepositional phrase that concludes v 41 dispels it. This phrase (periv jIakwvbou kai; jIwavnnou), defines the anger of the ten with regards to reference. They are angered by what they have heard and their anger is with reference to James and John. These two facts point unequivocally back to the previous

¹ The aorist participle is antecedent and thus indicates the sequence of the actions. The main function, however, is to express why the disciples are angry. In translation, the English key word "when" denotes both ideas, while the key word "because" seems a bit overdone.

conversation, and specifically it seems to be the request of the brothers rather than the response of Jesus, for their "beef" is only with the brothers.

Mark describes the disciples' anger with a favorite construction: a form of *ajrcomai* plus an infinitive (Donahue, 312). While *h[rxanto* is identified as an ingressive verb, the focus here, as elsewhere in Mark, is less on the beginning of an action and more to introduce a transition in the discourse.² Thus the English "they became angry" more appropriately conveys the meaning of the construction in Mark than the more literal translation "they began to be angry."

How might one characterize the indignation of the disciples in this instance? The verb *ajganaktevw* simply means to be indignant against what is assumed to be a wrong (BDAG, 5). Mark uses it twice more in his gospel. In 10.14 it describes the "righteous" anger of Jesus towards the disciples' poor treatment of the children. In 14.4, however it refers to the seemingly "unrighteous" anger of those who would reproach the woman for "wasting" the expensive ointment to anoint Jesus.

This is not the first time that the group has quarreled and competed over the idea of position and status (9.33-37). Jesus has spoken to the entire group quite recently in the narrative about the idea of servanthood, saying in 9.35b: "If any one wishes to be first, he should be last of all and servant of all" (author's translation). In 10.41, is the anger of the disciples to be seen as a righteous anger against the status-vying brothers who have not heeded the teachings of Jesus on this subject or does their anger in fact link them with the ambitions of the brothers? Two factors point to the latter. First, this section consistently criticizes all of the disciples; none are pictured

²See Wallace, 558. Other examples of this usage and sense in Mark are 1.45; 2.23; 4.1; 5.17, 20; 6.2, 7, 34, 55; 8.11, 31, 32; 10.28, 32, 47; 11.15; 12.1; 13.5; 14.19, 33, 65, 69, 71; 15.8, 18.

as possessing full understanding or in a better light than others (France, 418).³ Second, the rebuke and correction found in vv 42-45 is addressed to all of the disciples, not just James and John (France, 418). The ten, it seems are simply jealous of their own dignity and fearful that the brothers might gain an advantage over them (Lane, 382). They are angry at the favoritism assumed by James and John (Evans, 188), and having similar ambitions, fear the request excludes them from a position of power or authority (Edwards, 324). In fact, they are not indignant at the absurdity of the request, but a bit annoyed and jealous that they did not think to ask first. After the third and most detailed passion prediction in 10.32-34, their lingering self-concern links the ten with the power ambitions of James and John rather than distancing them from the brothers. After repeated teachings about this very subject, the universal lack of understanding among the disciples revealed by this episode shows the loneliness of Jesus on the brink of his journey to Jerusalem (Lane, 382).

Teaching from Jesus (10.42a)

Again *kaiv* begins the sentence, but in this instance it functions inferentially to indicate result and thus could be translated "so." The anger and jealousy among the disciples, and indeed their very mindset regarding status and position, threatened the harmony and spiritual life of the group and called for immediate correction from Jesus (Swete, 239). The lack of understanding revealed in both the request of the two brothers and the attendant jealousy of the ten results in the need for yet additional teaching from Jesus regarding the subject of status and position in the kingdom.

³The previous passion predictions at 8.31 and 9.31 are followed by negative pictures of all of the disciples: Peter (8.32-33); the nine, i.e. minus Peter, James and John (9:17-29); and all 12 (9.32-34; 10.13-16). The twelve as a whole are pictured as those who misunderstand the message of Jesus, especially with regards to status and power.

The aorist participle (proskalesavmenoV) is best translated as "summoned" and indicates a gathering together of the disciples for a decisive lesson (Edwards, 324).⁴ The use of this participle in conjunction with the historical present *levgei* emphasizes both the authority of Jesus and that of the following statements (Gundry, 579). Throughout Mark the participial form of *parakalevw* introduces what is usually a surprising and key announcement (France, 418).⁵ It is the entire group of twelve disciples that is called to hear Jesus' words, thus the pronouns serving as the direct object of Jesus' calling and the indirect object of his speaking include the two united "factions" of the twelve.

In v 35, the brothers had cornered Jesus and through v 40 the conversation went back and forth between the two and Jesus. In v 41, the other ten disciples appear on the scene with their reaction to the two brothers. Now, beginning in v 42, Jesus brings the group of twelve back together with a summons. At this point, the disciples' role is that of the audience; they no longer interact with one another or with Jesus. The language of 42a sets the tone for the rest of the passage, placing Jesus again in the place of authoritative teacher of kingdom values.

Christ-Like Others-Centered Service (42b-45b)

The teaching that Jesus offers his disciples can be examined in three sections. In the first section (v 42b-c), Jesus provides a description of status and authority in the Gentile political world. Section two (vv 43-44) contains a description of the radical service that should characterize the life of the disciples in direct contrast to that described in the previous section. In

⁴Here the aorist participle is simply functioning temporally reflecting an action antecedent to the main verb.

⁵For instances of the participle with *levgei* (with reference to Jesus) in Mark see 3.23, 7.14, 8.34, 10.42, 12.43. For two instances of the participle with a different verb see 3.13, 6.7. (An additional appearance in 15.44 is in reference to Pilate.) A review of these passages supports the statements of Gundry and France that this participle introduces authoritative statements which are often central to Jesus' teachings and surprising or shocking to the original (and present-day!) audience.

section three (v 45), Jesus presents his own life and death of ultimate service as the model and authority for his command to servanthood.

The Self-Centered Rule of the Gentiles (42b-c)

The remainder of v 42 (and in fact on through to the end of v 45) contains the discourse to the disciples and thus forms the direct object of *levgei* in 42a. This first section in Jesus' teaching includes a description of the standard manner of authority among Gentile rulers. The use of *oi[date* indicates that this is a matter of common knowledge and something that is very obvious (France, 418). A declarative *o{ti* clause forms the direct object of this verb and gives the content of this obvious knowledge in two parallel clauses.

Lording Over (42b)

The subject of the first clause is quite complicated as it is formed by a substantival participle modified by an infinitival phrase. To begin with, there is some confusion as regards the meaning of the participle *dokou'nteV*. Is the phrase pejorative or ironic, referring to rulers who only "seem" to rule? Or does the phrase simply refer to those "recognized" as rulers. BDAG lists this latter idea as the meaning here in v 42 and defines the verb in this case as "to be influential, be recognized as being something, have a reputation" (p 255). Several points can be made in favor of this choice. First, the same idea is found for the substantival participle in Gal 2.2, twice in 2.6, and again in 2.9. These constructions, however, are not exact parallels to the one in v 42 and thus this evidence alone is not conclusive.⁶ Second is the literary context. This

⁶The substantival participle of *dokevw* occurs in the New Testament eight times most often with an equative infinitive (1 Cor 10.12, 12.22; Gal 2.6a, 2.9). The participle has no complementary infinitive in Gal 2.2, 2.6b and Heb 12.10. The occurrence in Mark is the lone occurrence in all the gospels (it does not even appear in the parallel passage in Matthew 20.25; he uses *oiJ a[rxonteV*), and also the lone occurrence followed by an active transitive infinitive. Of these eight total occurrences, however, there does not seem to be a connection between the structure of the phrase and the meaning of the participle. The four in Galatians fit the meaning of "those who are

participial phrase stands parallel to oiJ megavloi in 42c, a term which is not pejorative but merely descriptive (Edwards, 325). The idea of recognition or reputation also fits well with the meaning of oi[date which implies public knowledge or understanding. Third is the historical context in that the reality was that these leaders actually did rule over their subjects (Edwards, 325). Fourth, there is evidence outside of the New Testament where this verb is used to describe a substantive reputation or recognition rather than an imaginary one (*TDNT*, 2:233).⁷ Finally, the participle was used in classical literature as a technical term for designated leaders who are visible and prominent, giving another piece of evidence that this idea is possible in the NT period (Edwards, 325). Taken all-together and with special emphasis on the arguments from the literary and historical context, these elements support the choice of BDAG for this occurrence of the participle. This phrase in 42b then is not questioning the reality of the rule, but rather drawing attention to the fact that these are rulers whose status is recognized publicly (France, 418).

Therefore the subject of this clause may be described as those who are regarded or recognized to rule.⁸ We have not, however, fully unpacked this subject clause until we understand who it is that is being ruled, i.e. the direct object of the infinitive, tw'n ejqnw'n. To whom does this noun refer? The definitional categories possible in Mk 10.42 include the more general idea of nation or people (BDAG, 276) or the more specific idea of non-Israelites (France, 418). The latter is preferred for two reasons. First, France contends that the plural form of e[qnw

recognized as..." or "those who are influential." The participles in 1 Cor and Heb point to a meaning of "those who think..." or "that which seems." The evidence then suggests that both meanings are possible and that context is integral to usage.

⁷*TDNT* lists as examples: Eur. Hec., 295; Epict. Ench., 33, 12; Jos. Ant. 19:307; and Bell. 4:141 and 4:159.

⁸The infinitive aj[rcein is complementary to the participle, completing the verbal idea. The active form of a[rcw means "to rule or govern with the implication of special status" and takes a genitive object (BDAG, 140).

in the New Testament more often denotes the idea of non-Israelite "Gentiles" rather than the general "nations" (France, 418) and this is true in Mark.⁹ Second, the occurrence in 10.42 echoes the appearance in 10.33. Since these two occurrences share a wider context, they most likely also share the same usage and sense of "Gentiles." Third is the immediate context. Jesus is in effect presenting a negative example and with the use of the term *oi*[date offering something of common knowledge. This makes the most sense if the description is of those local rulers of the Gentiles known and despised by most Jews rather than a broad, generic group of rulers of nations in general.¹⁰

Now that we have examined the various elements of the subject clause, what action are these recognized rulers of the Gentiles described as performing? The compound verb *katakuriouv* describes the action of mastery and ruling or lording over (BDAG, 519).¹¹ The *kata-* prefix is significant and the verb indicates the exercise of dominion "against someone to one's own advantage" (*TDNT*, 3:1098). The prefix here and in the parallel verb in 42c gives a sense of using lordship over people to their disadvantage and to the ruler's own advantage (Cranfield, 341). In Acts 19.16 the same verb indicates the oppressive, uncontrolled exploitation of power and in 1 Pet 5.3 it implies the flaunting of a position of authority rather than the benevolent exercise of it. The use in Mk 10.42 (and the parallel in Mt 20.25) are the only other occurrences of the verb in the New Testament and share this negative connotation. The actions

⁹The plural form appears in 10.33 and quite clearly refers to the local, Gentile rulers as opposed to the local Jewish rulers. The singular form appears in 13.8 and 13.10 and refers to the wider idea of nations. The exception occurs in 11.17 where the plural is used for nations, yet this is an Old Testament quotation which certainly affects its usage.

¹⁰This is not meant to imply that the Jewish leadership could not be characterized in this way. The point is to show the nature of absolute power in the 1st century as it is expressed and practiced by those with seemingly unlimited power, i.e. those outside of politically subject Israel (France, 418).

¹¹The direct object of this verb is the genitive *aujtw'n*, which is common following a verb that connotes "ruling" (see Wallace, 131). The referent here is the Gentiles, *tw'n cjwnw'n*, mentioned earlier.

of these rulers are not simply described in a neutral way, but are presented in a very harmful and selfish light. In their ambitions for rank, precedence, and authority for the purpose of their own advantage, the disciples were imitating those which they most despised (Lane, 382).

Authority Over (42c)

The kai; indicates the connection between the parallel statements in 42b and 42c and is followed by yet another confusing, if not quite as complicated, subject. The adjective, megavloi, is functioning substantivally and can be translated as "the great ones." The basic meaning of the adjective in this case is "pertaining to being relatively superior in importance," and as a substantive it is used generically for rulers, great ones, and those in high positions (BDAG, 624).¹² These great ones of the Greco-Roman world could be officials or others in positions of authority or influence (Swete, 239). They were those who ruled over others and were honored with eulogies (Evans, 118). The substantive is modified by a third person personal pronoun which refers again to the Gentiles named explicitly in 42b.¹³

¹²In the New Testament, mevgaV appears 15 times functioning as a substantive; only this once in Mark's gospel. The singular uses have either a superlative flavor, i.e. "the greatest one" (Matt 18.4, 22.38; Lk 22.26) or a comparative idea as in Rom 9.12 (the older one) and Heb 6.16 (greater). In Rev, the singular substantive occurs 4 times (14.8, 16.19, 17.5, and 18.2). Here, however, it occurs in the phrase Babulw;n hj megavlh meaning "Babylon, the great city" and is thus parallel to the adjectival proper usage hj po;liV hj mega;lh that occurs in the same context (16.19; 17.18; 18.10, 16, 18, 19, 21).

The plural substantive occurs in Mk 10.42 and its parallel in Matt 20.25 and in Revelation (4 times). In Rev 11.18, 13.16, 19.5, and 20.12, it occurs in a set phrase parallel to the plural of mivkroV which can be translated "the small and the great" and is used to refer to the totality of all people, no matter of importance, who will experience one aspect of the judgement or another. Here we see a parallel to the usage in Mark and Matthew where the adjective is used to describe those people who are seen to be important or influential with some type of power or authority over others.

¹³This is a subordinate genitive with the idea being "the great ones *over* them (the Gentiles)." This parallels nicely with the subject clause in 42b where the referent tw'n ejqnw'n, while functioning as the direct object, is indicating those over which rule is exercised and thus identifying the subordinate party.

The verb that describes the actions of these influential and important ones is quite similar to the parallel in 42b and shares the prefix (kata-).¹⁴ Occurring only here and in the parallel verse in Matt 20.25, *katexousiavzw* describes the exercise of authority and perhaps goes so far as to refer to tyrannical rule over others (BDAG, 531). Combined with the more general term *oiJ megavloi* it implies a tendency toward compulsion or oppression immanent in all earthly power, and is not limited to merely political power (*TDNT*, 2:575). Because of their shared prefix and parallel positions, it is best to understand this verb as similar in meaning to *katakuriouv* and referring to the exercise of authority with the benefit of the ruler, rather than the subordinate, as the major concern and driving force.

In Mark, the authority of Jesus is a frequent theme (1.22, 27; 2.10 for example) (Donahue, 312). So, it is interesting that Jesus begins this teaching with a description of the well-known manner in which authority is manifest in the world surrounding his followers. The parallels between the two halves of the *o{ti* clause are obvious and serve to sharpen the mental picture Jesus is creating for his disciples. Both subject clauses, without denoting any specific office, refer in general terms to those influential Gentiles who are in a position to impose authority upon others (France, 418). The two verbs are synonyms that share a prefix and have identical direct objects (which share a referent). The picture is a clear one of those who are deemed more important and influential than others exercising rule and authority *over* those in subordinate positions, and doing so for their own personal benefit while ignoring the needs of others. In the eyes of the world, greatness and importance was defined as and exercised in coercive and self-beneficial power and authority (Evans, 118). This picture is clearly a negative one and the irony and sting of this description for the disciples is important to note. Here is a

¹⁴Again the direct object is the genitive *aujtw'n* referring to *tw'n ejqmw'n* in 42b.

picture of the sheer ambition, greed, and selfish nature of the quest for power and authority among the hated Gentile rulers of Palestine. Sadly, the struggle for status and position among the Lord's own inner circle of disciples is a strikingly similar scene. Were they not following the model of the ones whose authority they suffered under? Jesus begins by putting a bad taste in his disciples' mouths for this model of authority and in the following verses presents how Jesus and his followers are to manifest authority by serving others rather than ruling over them (Donahue, 312).

The Others-Centered Service of the Disciples (43a-44)

Jesus makes it clear that the examples described in v 42 are not the model his disciples are to follow. In his kingdom, things are different. Service is valued over power and prominence. Radical devotion to the needs of others is the ideal rather than selfish concern for one's own position and authority.

A New Pattern (43a)

Verse 43 begins with a clear contrastive comparison with its opening words *oujcw dev*. The conjunction *dev* indicates a contrast with the previous description; the adverb *oujcw* points to a comparison; and the particle *oujc* show that this comparison is a negative one, reinforcing the contrastive idea. The change in pronouns from the 3rd person in v 42 to the 2nd person (*ejn uJmi'n* appears 3 times in this section) in vv 43-44 indicates the transition from a description of others to a prescription for disciples. Jesus communicates in certain terms that the model of authority presented in v 42 is not the model disciples are to follow: "But it is *not* to be *that way* among you" (v 43a, author's translation). The natural expectations of society concerning leadership and authority are reversed for those who follow Jesus (France, 419). This

statement in v 43a is a categorical rejection of the assumptions and values of the world pictured in v 42 (Evans, 119) and begins the presentation of a genuinely alternate society (France, 415).

Verse 43a certainly has a cohortative sense about it. Thus it seems odd to find the present indicative *ejstin*, which may explain why some scribes substituted the future indicative for the present tense verb.¹⁵ While the verb does in some sense carry the force of a command (Donahue, 312), the present tense indicates that this is more of a description of the way things actually are in the kingdom (Edwards, 325). It is not so much an admonition to behave a certain way, as it is a statement that failing to follow this pattern is to stand outside the kingdom (Edwards, 325).

Selfless, Radical Service (43b-44)

Here we have another example of parallelism: two statements that mirror one another in both structure and language. A review of the structure of each sentence makes the parallelism obvious. Both vv 43b and 44 have an indefinite relative clause functioning substantivally as the subject clause. The indefinite subject and subjunctive verb of each relative clause are identical

¹⁵The future indicative in the NT is sometimes used for a command and thus would make sense here (see Wallace, 452 for this category for the indicative). The same textual issue appears in the parallel in Matthew 20.26 where the NA²⁷ considers the future tense to be original and the present tense a later change by scribes. The witnesses for the two readings in Mk 10.43 are as follows:

ejstin: \aleph , B, C*, D, L, W, D, Q, Y, 700, 2427, *lat, co, vg, slav*

e[stai]: A, C³, 0233, 28, 157, 180, 205, 565, 579, and the Majority text

The reading of the text is more likely based on external evidence, since it is witnessed to in early primary Alexandrian MSS (\aleph , B) as well as primary Western MSS (D, W), primary Byzantine MSS (W, D), and other important MSS (Q, Y).

Internal evidence also points to the present tense as the most probable reading. It is by far the most difficult reading: it is difficult to reconcile with the cohortative idea of the statement and it is difficult to understand and explain its force in the context. The reading of the text also explains the rise of the future tense reading for, as Metzger explains, the future tense would "soften the peremptory tone of the present tense" (*Textual Commentary*, 91). It is then highly unlikely that a scribe would have changed the easier to understand future tense to the more difficult present tense. It is also quite possible that the future tense could arise from assimilation to the following clause (Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 91). Another possibility is that a scribe was familiar with the future tense reading in Matthew and unwittingly used it here also (France, 414). Thus the present tense of the text is the most likely candidate for the original with a grade of A.

while the content clauses functioning as the direct object are similar.¹⁶ The verb in each main clause is identical (e[stai) while the predicate nominatives are similar.¹⁷ In reference to word order, the only difference is in the subject clause where in v 44 the prepositional phrase and predicate adjective exchange places in comparison to 43b. The presence of such synonymous parallelism here and in v 42 corresponds to the technique in Hebrew poetry and thus strongly suggests that vv 42-44 are authentic sayings of Jesus (Brooks, 170).¹⁸ The statements contained in vv 43b-44 are what France calls "the most powerful statement of the alternative value scale of the kingdom of God" (p 419). This, however unfortunate, is not the first time that the disciples have heard or had need to hear this message about servanthood. The terms found here echo previous teachings, especially in 9.33-37 and 10.31.¹⁹

Like a Servant (43b) Verse 43b begins with the contrastive conjunction ajllav which indicates that the values now presented are in direct contrast to the ideas described in v 42. What is presented is a decisive reversal of values in which greatness is presented in terms of service rather than power, prestige, and authority (Edwards, 325). The subject clause is indefinite, indicated by the relative pronoun and the particle of uncertainty (a[n) plus the subjunctive verb. This clause identifies the ones addressed as any who might have a desire to be great among the disciples (ejn uJmi'n). The predicate adjective, mevgaV, is superlative

¹⁶Both consist of an equative infinitive with a predicate adjective and both are modified by the phrase ejn uJmi'n.

¹⁷See appendix for a grammatical diagram which shows in visual form the parallelism of this and other sections of the passage.

¹⁸This is likely true for verse 45 also, but it is a bit more troublesome. See the following sections on verse 45.

¹⁹The linguistic parallels with 9.34-37 are numerous. Consider the similarities between mevgaV in 10.43 and meivzwn in 9.34; the identical words in 10.44 and 9.35 (qevlei, prw'toV, ci'nai); and the similar phrases in 10.44 and 9.35 (pavntwn dou'loV and pavntwn diavkonoV). In Mk 10.31 the term prw'toV appears twice.

(Cranfield, 341) and here has the same definition as in 42c: it is "pertaining to being relatively superior in importance" (BDAG, 624). Thus if there is anyone who wants to be important, influential, or prominent among the disciples, this message applies. Their recent behavior would indicate that all twelve disciples would identify with this desire for importance and status.

The surprising nature of Jesus' teachings comes in the main clause where he equates greatness and importance with the idea of a being a servant.²⁰ A *diavkonoV* is a servant who works at the behest of a superior or as an assistant to someone (BDAG, 230). It is a subservient position to which the world's great ones would never aspire (Evans, 119), yet Jesus identifies it as the core of greatness in the kingdom. The usage here is even more radical than the many appearances in Pauline literature which refer to those who are servants of Christ or the gospel, for here Jesus commands his followers not to service to God, but to one another (*uJmw'n diavkonoV*).²¹ The word *diavkonoV* calls to the disciples' minds a paid worker who attends to the needs of a superior while putting his own needs and desires aside. This idea of meeting the needs of others at the sacrifice of self is the model they are to follow. Rather than struggling and strategizing for personal positions of status and importance, they should be looking for ways to meet one another's needs. Sacrifice and selfless giving for the benefit of others is what is important and valued in the kingdom—not status and position.

²⁰The future indicative *e[stai* here and in *v* 44 also have an imperatival nature that could again reflect the Semitic background of the passage as a whole.

²¹In Pauline literature, the most common use of *diavkonoV* is to describe believers as servants of God, Christ, the gospel, the church, or a similar idea (Rom 13.4 x2, 16.1; 1 Cor 3.5; 2Cor 3.6, 6.4, 11.15, 11.23; Eph 3.7, 6.21; Phil 1.1; Col 1.7, 1.23, 1.25, 4.7; 1 Tim 4.6; see also Jn 12.26) or to describe another type of servanthood (Rom 15.8, 2 Cor 11.15a, and Gal 2.17). In 1 Tim 3.8 and 12 it is used in a more technical sense to describe an office or specific position in the church. Three times in the gospels *diavkonoV* has a more "secular" sense in that it describes a household servant or attendant (Matt 22.13, Jn 2.5, and 2.9). The remaining occurrences in the gospels appear in teachings of Jesus as he admonishes his followers to be servants to one another (Matt 20.26, 23.11; Mk 9.35, 10.43). In each case the root idea is a person who attends to the needs of another, rather than self.

The clash of ethics between the world and the kingdom of God is always most prominent in matters of power and service (Edwards, 325). The radical departure with the Gentile rulers can be noted by the different functions of the genitive modifiers in each section. In v 42 the genitive *aujtw'n* functions as the recipient of the ruling action of the verbs and as a subordinate genitive to the "great ones" representing those who exist for the benefits of those rulers. In v 43 the genitive *uJmw'n* is a possessive genitive representing those who benefit from the service of the *diavkonoV*. For the disciples of Jesus, leadership is to be characterized by attending to the needs of others; by being under the authority of others rather than in a place of authority over others (France, 419). This same idea is repeated in 1 Pet 5.2 where elders are instructed to "exercise oversight...not for shameful profit but eagerly" (NET translation). Leadership in the kingdom is for the benefit of others not for the benefit, gain, or ego of the one appointed to lead.

Like a Slave (44) This second line of the couplet is connected to the previous one with *kai*; and serves to intensify the image with stronger words and ideas (Evans, 119). In the subject clause, there are subtle changes and differences to note: the prepositional phrase has moved in front of the infinitive, the infinitive has changed from *genevsqai* in 43 to *ei\nai*, and the predicate adjective has moved behind the verb and changed to *prw'toV*. The change in word order is most likely stylistic, however, the new forward position of the prepositional phrase may indicate an emphasis on the disciples as those who need to hear and understand this teaching. More notable is the appearance of *prw'toV* which is similar to *mevgaV*, but has an even more superlative sense. If *mevgaV* referred to someone with relative importance, *prw'toV* refers to the most important and pertains to prominence, describing the first or foremost in a group

(BDAG, 893).²² The subjects of this phrase may be described as those who want to be more than just *an* important member of a group, but who want to be *the* important member of a group.

The trend continues in the main clause where the difference is in the use of the stronger phrase, *pavntwn dou'loV* as the predicate nominative. A *dou'loV* is one who is solely committed to another (BDAG, 260), totally owned by another, and possesses no rights except those given by the master (Brooks, 170). This imagery is a further extension of the idea of subjection presented in v 43; it involves even less self-determination (France, 419). Whereas a servant received some personal benefit in that he received wages and had some ability to care for his own needs, a slave is completely and utterly at the service of his master. The idea of equating the lowest and most dependent class of society with the most prominent is "absurdly paradoxical" (Edwards, 326). But Christ is saying here that the greatest virtue for his followers is not power or even freedom, but service (Edwards, 326). The possessive genitive *pavntwn* makes the statement all the more radical in that it requires this slave-like devotion be shown to everyone, not just those considered to be of a higher status (France, 419). The phrase itself is deliberately paradoxical, for a slave usually had only one master, and thus serves to emphasize this ideal of universal service towards others (Donahue, 313).

There is no precedence in either the Old Testament or the Jewish tradition for the radical ideas and values found in Mk 10.43-44 (Edwards, 325). Presented here is a decisive reversal of values that turns the natural expectations of society on their head (France, 419).

These statements are not meant to provide a protocol or map to follow for those who wish to

²²Moulton and Milligan list a comparative usage of *prw'toV* outside the New Testament in P Leid W^{xii} (ii-iii AD) where it means roughly "I am first of you" i.e. more important than you (p 557). It is also used superlatively in Syll 523 to describe the highest class (M/M, 557). The majority of Markan occurrences of this word are in reference to time (3.27; 4.28; 7.27; 9.11, 12; 12.20; 13.10; 14.12; 16.9), but six times it is used of prominence (the leaders of Galilee in 6.21; the greatest commandment in 12.28 and 29; and similar statements about servanthood in 9.35; 10.31, and here in 10.44).

become important and prominent, but to rearrange their thinking on the subject. These verses do not describe the way to achieve greatness, for greatness is only described as something wanted (qevlh/) (Gundry, 581). The idea of becoming a servant and slave to others is not a new definition of greatness or a new avenue to status, but it denies the idea of power, prestige, and prominence as valuable ideals. The desire for power, authority, and dominance focuses on self and kills love, which is by nature focused on others (Edwards, 326). The purpose of the disciples in the 1st century and of followers of Christ through all centuries is not to own and preside over the Christian community, but to be a part of it and be "owned" by it for the benefit of others.

Jesus' Life as Model and Authority (45)

Mark 10.45 has been called "the most remarkable and possibly most disputed saying in Mark" (Evans, 119). A quick review of commentators will reveal this as a fair statement since the comments on v 45 generally receive more space than any other verse in this section (vv 35-45). It is certainly true that many elements in this verse are at the same time quite complicated and extremely significant for the understanding of this passage and the Christology of the gospel in general. In the passage at hand, the opening conjunctions and the theme of service closely link v 45 with what precedes it (France, 419) and thus it presents the service and sacrifice of Jesus' own life as a pattern that is authoritative and transferable to disciples (Edwards, 326). With regards to the Christology of Mark, v 45 addresses such important themes as the purpose of Jesus' coming, his role as Son of Man, and the meaning and purpose of his death.

Two issues are best addressed before dealing with the specifics of the verse itself. First is the issue of authenticity and thus the relation of v 45 to the pericope as a whole. Are the words in v 45 those of Jesus, are they due to the creation or redaction of the gospel's author, or are they an even later addition to the gospel? If v 45 is not an authentic saying of Jesus, was it

originally connected to the pericope or added to it from a different tradition? The Jewish Palestinian themes and phrases in 45 point to its authenticity,²³ and its content connects it to the pericope as a whole.²⁴ The following commentary, then, assumes that v 45 is in fact an authentic statement of Jesus rather than a later author, redactor, or tradition, and that the entire pericope from vv 35-45 forms a single unit.

The second issue is related to the first: Does Mk 10.45 recall the Suffering Servant of Yahweh motif in Isaiah 53 and thus delineate Jesus as that Servant? Because an allusion to Isaiah is an argument for the authenticity of the statement, it is important to establish that such a suggestion exists in the teaching of v 45. An examination of the linguistic and thematic echoes

²³The argument that this statement in v 45 cannot be considered as an authentic saying of Jesus revolves around the idea that the Christology presented reflects influence by Pauline, Hellenistic ideas which developed well after the death and resurrection of Jesus. Specific arguments against authenticity are outlined in Cranfield (p 343, though he finds them unconvincing): 1) The verse is out of harmony with the context of service. The Son of Man statement and the ransom idea do not fit well with the exhortations to service in vv 42-44. 2) The aorist ἠλqen implies a time after Jesus' life and ministry. 3) λuvtron is found only here and in the parallel Mt passage in the New Testament. Neither the actual word nor the idea appears elsewhere in the teachings of Jesus. 4) The statement seems to be a recasting under Pauline influence of the idea in Lk 22.27. This would point to an origin beyond even the original gospel writer. Lane describes one theory (though he doesn't agree) that v 45a comes from Luke 22.27 and 45b from 1 Tim 2.6 (p 293).

Strong arguments exist, however, which point to a Palestinian/Semitic origin for Mk 10.45 and therefore to understanding it as a saying derived from Jesus. Elements which reflect this Palestinian origin are two Jewish themes (the Son of Man theme and its connection to Dan 7.3 and the allusion to Isaiah 53) and two Semitic phrases (the Hebraic use of pollw'n to refer to "all" and the phrase dou'nai thvn yuch;n) (Moulder, 120). The idea of Jesus as the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 was quite an early one and is not found in the writings of Paul, Matthew, Luke, or John (Evans, 124). The Son of Man motif is also primitive and was dropped in Greco-Roman Gentile settings (Evans, 124). These two Jewish themes are best explained as originating with Jesus. Old Testament and Jewish ideas provide adequate background for this verse and make it unnecessary to propose a Pauline or Hellenistic influence (Moulder, 124).

As for the arguments against authenticity mentioned above, the following commentary sections will show that v 45 is an integral part of Jesus' teachings here and will explain the aorist ἠλqen in terms of Jesus' appearance into human existence. While it is true that the word for ransom is unique here and in Mt 20.28, there are other ideas which parallel this theme (Cranfield, 343; the cup in Mark 14.36 for instance). Finally, when comparing the three, Luke 22.27 and 1 Tim 2.6 reflect the later, more Hellenized statement of these ideas and show an influence from Gentile Christianity (Evans, 124). First Timothy 2.6 replaces the more Semitic ajnti; pollw'n of Mark with the more common Greek phrase for this idea, uJpe;r pavntwn. Luke 22.27 shares with Mark 10.45 the theme of Jesus as a servant, but the absence of any of the Semitic themes or phrases found in Mark indicates that it is the Lukan statement which is the later, more "Hellenized" one.

²⁴Three arguments are convincing: 1)the ransom saying connects to the theme of suffering in vv 37-38; 2)the service of the Son of Man connects to the service exhorted in 43-44; and 3)the diakonevw infinitives link back to its cognate in v 43 and its synonym in v 44 (Evans, 120).

from Isaiah 53 found in Mk 10.45 reveals that v 45 is an adequate summary of the task and concepts of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah and thus connects Jesus to the concept of the Suffering Servant of the LORD (France, 420; Evans, 121).²⁵

Not the Object of Acts of Service (45a)

The explanatory conjunction *ga;r* indicates that his verse provides the reason and basis for the radical exhortations to service found in vv 42-44. The remainder of the verse shows that it is the unique life of Jesus that provides the purpose of the disciples' service to others (Edwards, 326). In the main clause, Jesus refers to himself as *oJ uijovV tou' ajvqrwv pou*. In Mark, Jesus uses this term for himself in two contexts: either in reference to his authority and future glory (2.10, 28; 8.38; 13.26; 14.62) or in reference to his betrayal, suffering, and death (8.31; 9.9, 12, 31; 10.33, 45; 14.21, 41). It appears in all three passion predictions and here in v 45 refers to his death. This usage in Mark is consistent with the other gospels where it is also

²⁵The linguistic and thematic echoes between Mk 10.45 and Is 53.10-12 are notable. 1) *pollw'n* in Mk 10.45 recalls the adjectives *polloi'V* and *pollw'n* in Is 53.11 and 12 and the idea that many will benefit from the Servant's self offering (France, 420). 2) The phrase in Mark, "to give his life" closely approximates the phrases in Is 53: "make his life a guilt offering" (v 10) and "he poured out his life to death" (v 12) (Evans, 121). Thus the idea of one who voluntarily gives his life is present in both Mk and Is (France, 420). 3) While *luvtron*, does not appear in the LXX, it does approximate the Hebrew verb *asam* (Evans, 121). In Isaiah 53, the purpose for the giving of life is as a sin offering—an offering in the place of a guilty person to remove guilt (France, 420). 4) While *diakonevw* does not appear in the LXX of Is 53, its synonym does (*doulouvein*) and the two roots have quite a bit of overlap in this Markan pericope (Witherington, 289).

Barrett argues that Mk 10.45 is NOT directly based on the Suffering Servant of Is 53 (his main argument is found in pp 2-7 of his article, ""The Background of Mark 10:45"). First, *luvtron* is nowhere used in the LXX as a translation of *asam* and he argues for a real difference between the root meanings of the two words (Barrett, 6). The Hebrew *asam* at its core refers to guilt, while *luvtron* refers to equivalence (Barrett, 6). Second, *povlloi* and its Hebrew equivalent is a common word in both the Greek and Hebrew testaments and thus it is difficult to say that Mk 10.45 points to the uses in Isaiah over any other part of Old Testament literature (Barrett, 7). Third, neither *diakonevw* nor any of its cognates appear in Is 53 and additionally the Servant of Is 53 serves the LORD and not others (Barrett, 5).

The issues brought to light by Barrett are notable, yet do not necessarily prove that the allusion is absent. Witherington states that the absence of clear linguistic parallels in OT allusions is actually a common characteristic of explanatory statements in the gospel of Mark (p 289). In addition, the non-Septuagintal phrases in Mark point to a Palestinian origin for the saying and a familiarity with the Hebrew text of Isaiah, thus suggesting again an authentic saying of Jesus (Moulder, 121). An allusion to Isaiah and the Suffering Servant does not require linguistic precision, but rather the overlap of themes and concepts accompanied by some linguistic overlap as was outlined above. The evidence then points to Mk 10.45 as a summary and recollection of Is 53 and thus an identification of Jesus with this suffering servant.

used by Jesus to refer to himself and suggest both his authority and suffering.²⁶ In this context, the phrase recalls the figure in Dan 7.13 to whom dominion and authority were to be given (Evans, 123). The destiny of the Son of Man was to be served by all peoples as the Head of Humanity according to Dan 7.14 (Gould, 202; France, 419). It is as this authoritative, yet destined to suffer, figure that Jesus provides the supreme model of the status reversal apparent in his selfless, service-oriented life and death (France, 419). His position as the glorious Son of Man provides the authority for the commands in 42-44, while the identification of this position with suffering provides the ultimate embodiment of this teaching (Gundry, 581).

The main clause of the sentence continues with the aorist verb ἦλθεν to describe the purpose and mission of Jesus on earth (France, 421).²⁷ This phrase, "the Son of Man came" is a formulaic expression used in the context of Jesus' messianic mission (Lane, 383) and is a reference to his entrance into earthly human existence (Swete, 240). The verb is followed by three infinitive clauses which describe the purpose of Jesus' coming.²⁸ The first in v 45a provides a negative example (modified by the negative particle, οὐκ), while 45b and c provide positive examples. The infinitive in 45a is the aorist passive of διακονεῖν, contrasting the inference from Dan 7.14 that as the Son of Man Jesus should be served by all peoples. The ascensive καί; modifying this subject "Son of Man" emphasizes the contrast set up here between the expectations of service accompanying the Son of Man imagery and the reality of suffering and service that is the purpose of the Son of Man. The worldly ideas of rank and privilege are out of order in the kingdom of God because they are inconsistent with the mission of the Son of

²⁶The phrase "Son of Man" is a byname of Jesus and used in an exclusive sense as "The Human One" and is nowhere found as an address *to* him. He is intimately linked with humanity in the primary aspect of fragility, yet is transcendent. The two components of the phrase are thus the fragility of human existence and the high status suggested by its appearance in Dan 7.13 (BDAG, 1026).

²⁷See Mk 1.9, 14, 39; 2.17

²⁸It is common for εἰς to take a purpose infinitive

Man (Cranfield, 341). The "Head of Humanity" came to carry out a mission that was not to benefit himself but humanity (BDAG, 229). Here we see the allusion to the Suffering Servant of Isaiah informing and defining the mission and destiny of the Daniel 7 Son of Man (Evans, 123). The implication is clear: if the glorious Son of Man did not come to be served by others, why should that be the ambition of his followers?

The Subject of Acts of Service (45b)

The conjunction *ajlla*; sets up a contrast between the two parallel infinitive clauses in v 45b and 45c on the one hand, to the negative example of v 45a on the other. If the Son of Man *did not* come to be served, he *did* come to serve and to give his life. The first positive example is the exact verbal form from v 45a except for the change to the active voice. This serves to highlight the contrast between 1) the expected purpose, rejected by Jesus, as the object who receives the service of others and 2) the unexpected purpose, embraced by Jesus and described in v 45b, as the subject who actively pursues and performs acts of service

His Life for Others (45c)

The parallel infinitive clause in 45c goes beyond the idea of its parallel in v 45b, expanding and adding to the thought (as we have seen in the other examples of parallelism in this passage and as is common in Hebrew poetry). This last phrase of the pericope adds a further and more shocking example of the self-sacrificing attitude that is to characterize the disciples and leaves no doubt as to the ultimate and radical nature of the command (France, 419).

The infinitive *dou'nai* is followed by a double accusative, object-complement construction. The phrase *dou'nai th;n yuch;n* was characteristically used by Greeks for a soldier's death and by Jews for a martyr's death (Cranfield, 342), so the idea that this phrase referred to the death of one to somehow benefit another would have been understood by the

original audience.²⁹ In the context of the passion prediction of 10.32-4, this phrase refers to the coming crucifixion and death of Jesus.

The complement in the double accusative construction is the intriguing word *luvtron* which occurs in the New Testament only here and in the Mt 20.28 parallel.³⁰ Its basic meaning is "the price of release" or "ransom" (BDAG, 605), and in the papyri it is used to describe the price paid to free a slave or captive.³¹ The essential meaning is deliverance by the payment of an equivalent (France, 420) and thus it implies substitution (*TDNT*, 4:343).³² The background of Is 53.10-11 provides an atoning and liberating aspect to the word in that it describes an act that brings freedom from guilt, death, and judgment (*NIDNTT*, 3:196).

The complement *luvtron* is modified by the prepositional phrase *ajntiv pollw'n*. The preposition here conveys the idea of substitution or exchange/equivalence (Wallace, 367; contra BDAG, 88).³³ Thus the sacrifice of Jesus' life is a substitution payment in exchange for "the

²⁹Here *didw;mi* is defined as an action in which one dedicates oneself for some purpose or cause and may carry the connotation of "give up" or "sacrifice" (BDAG, 242), and *yuvch* refers to the condition of being alive or life on earth (BDAG, 1098).

³⁰A related word *ajntiluvtron* occurs in 1 Tim 2.6.

³¹See the list of uses in Moulton and Milligan, pp 382; esp. P. Oxy I. 48⁶ and 49⁸ from 86 and 100 AD respectively.

³²Collins presents evidence of confessional inscriptions and related texts which demonstrate that in the Hellenistic Roman world, the word group *luvw* served to speak of transactions between human beings and pagan gods in which sins are forgiven and offenses expiated ("The Signification of Mark 10:45 among Gentile Christians," 371-382). These findings are constructive for studies of Mk 10.45 because they reveal that the idea of ransom in relation to release from sin and its consequences may have been present among the 1st century world, especially those familiar with pagan religious practices (which does not necessarily exclude Palestinian Jews). The use of this word and the idea of ransom may have been limited in the New Testament by the common Jewish idea that innocent suffering was on account of one's own sin and the sin of others (Schweizer, 222). In this context, the ransom idea might not adequately express the uniqueness of the suffering and death of Jesus (Schweizer, 222). The may explain the rarity of the word and its concept in NT teachings about Jesus' death.

³³BDAG identifies the preposition in this instance as one of representation, indicating a process of intervention on behalf of someone (p 88) rather than substitution or exchange. However, most occurrences of this preposition in the New Testament have the idea of substitution or exchange (Mt 2.22, 5.38, 20.28; Lk 11.11; Jn 1.16; Rom 12.17; 1 Cor 11.15; 1 Thess 5.15; Heb 12.2, 12.16; Jas 4.15; and 1 Pet 3.9), while it is used only once with the idea of representation on behalf of someone (Mt 17.27). (A causal idea may appear in the phrase *ajnq' w'n* in Lk 1.20, 12.3, 19.44; Acts 12.23; and 2 Thess 2.10 as well as in the OT quotation in Eph 5.31.) This data along with the

many." The object of the preposition, *pollw'n*, can denote an indefinite multitude following the Semitic usage and thus means the totality of those in question and is equivalent to *pavnteV* (*TDNT*, 4:342). In Koine Greek, *povluV* (many) is distinct from *pavnteV* (all), but in Hebrew and Aramaic there is no word meaning "all" and thus *rabbim* in Hebrew can have the inclusive sense and mean "all" (*TDNT*, 6:536). The force of the adjective in v 45 is intended to indicate the vast multitude of humanity in contrast to the individual, without proposing that some are excluded (Schweizer, 222).³⁴

In v 45, Jesus embodies and models the new kingdom values he has presented in vv 42-44. His disciples are to reproduce the spirit of service and self-sacrifice that is evident in Jesus, giving priority to the needs of others (France, 421). Because of his authority as the Son of Man, his life is the authoritative pattern for his followers and his death is not a shameful event, but the means of a God-given end: the redemption of all mankind.

Conclusion and Application

Mark 10.41-45 subverts the worldly notion of prominence, authority, and power that is used only for the personal benefit of important rulers and elite members of society. Instead Jesus elevates selfless service that places the needs of others as the highest priority and value for those who would follow in his ways. He himself is the ultimate and authoritative example for

connection to the idea of substitution/exchange inherent in *luvtron* strongly supports the substitution idea for *ajnti*; in Mk 10.45.

³⁴Since the age of the tradition found in Mk 10.45 points to Palestinian origins (as evidenced by the Semitic linguistics and Jewish themes discussed above), Semitic usage must be the starting point in fixing the original sense of *pollw'n* (*TDNT*: 6:544). Additionally, *poluvV* is often used in the NT inclusively and in Rom 5.15 and 5.19, *oiJ povlloi* is used interchangeably with *pavnteV ajnqwvpoi* (*TDNT*, 6:542). Some evidence at Qumran suggests *poluvV* was used there as a technical term for the elect and thus should have an exclusive sense, but this idea is unlikely in Mark's gospel since it is doubtful that the audience was familiar with Qumranite theology (Witherington, 290). If this statement is an authentic statement of Jesus as I have argued above, it is even less likely that Qumran material should inform the sense of *pollw'n* here.

this idea, for his very purpose was to serve others and give the supreme sacrifice of his life for the redemptive freedom of mankind.

The principles recorded in Mark 10:41-45 transfer quite nicely from their 1st century context to the 21st century world of today. Those who follow Jesus must understand that his is a way of sacrifice and service to others and leaves no room for ideas of personal prominence and importance. Disciples of Christ must intentionally pursue the benefit of all others in every arena of life. The life and purpose of the Church is identical to our Head. The Church does not exist to be served by society but to serve. Likewise, individual believers do not exist to be served by the Church but to serve the Body of Christ.

The radical life of servitude commanded here by our Lord requires careful and consistent examination of corporate and individual use of resources, including the money, time, positions, and power that are ours only by the gracious gift of God and only for the benefit of others. American churches and believers in particular should consider the gifts of freedom, position, and resources we possess by nature of our citizenship and political and economic environment and in turn make sure that we are using such God-given gifts to serve the global Church and community rather than ourselves alone. The founder of ServLife International writes:

"The 'American Dream' is what has captivated Christians in America. We are more occupied with our own safety than God's glory among all nations and justice to the poor. We are more consumed with financial security than doing the will of God by caring for the orphan and widow (Jam 1:27). The Great Commission cannot be taken seriously [while] millions of Christians bathe in the pool of luxury and safety [and] billions die without Christ and live in poverty without the basic necessities of life."³⁵

If American Christians take seriously the message of Mark 10:41-45 and are diligent in its application both personally and corporately, this statement might cease to be such an indictment.

³⁵Joel Vestal, "The American Dream: Friend or Foe," ServLife International Monthly Newsletter (September 2004): 1.

Structural Layout of Mark 10:41-45

⁴¹Kai; **ajkouvsanteV** oiJ devka h[rxanto ajganaktei'n peri; jIakwvbou kai;
jIwavnnou

⁴²kai; **proskalesavmenoV** aujtu;V oJ jIhsou'V levgei aujtoi'V:
oi[date

o{ti **oiJ dokou'nteV** **a[rcein** tw'n ejqnw'n katakurievousin aujtw'n
kai;

oiJ megavloi aujtw'n katexousiavzousin aujtw'n

⁴³ oujc ou{twV dev ejstin ejn uJmi'n,
ajll'

o}V a]n **qevlh/** mevgaV **genevsqai** ejn uJmi'n e[stai uJmw'n diavkonoV
⁴⁴ kai;

o}V a]n **qevlh/** ejn uJmi'n **ei\nai** prow'toV e[stai pavntwn dou'loV:

⁴⁵ kai; ga;r oJ uiJo;V tou' ajnqrwypou oujk h\lqen **diakonhqh'nai**
ajlla;

* **diakonh'sai**

kai;

dou'nai th;n yuch;n aujtu' luvtron ajnti; pollw'n.

Key:

Blue: indicative verbs

Orange: subjunctive verbs

Green: infinitives

Red: participles

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