

INTRODUCTION

Two weeks ago, we had the Black Friday, which is the busiest shopping day of the year. Some of you may know that the past Monday was called the Cyber Monday because merchants urged people to shop online. Do you know what the last Tuesday was? It was the “Giving Tuesday.” It is a movement that began in 2012 to encourage charitable donation. From the U.S., today the campaign is extended to over 150 countries. During the year-end holiday season, the Giving Tuesday motivates people to offer money to the charities and to help their communities. Let me share some examples with you. A few correction facility officers in California gave their colleague a gift of colors. Deputy Dishmon was born color-blinded. He received a pair of specialized glasses to enable him to see colors for the first time. An 82-year-old veteran in Colorado put Christmas decorations in his front yard along with signs thanking military personnel who served in previous battles. The home of seven-year-old Sophia was burned down in the recent California wildfire. She worried that some kids in her city might have lost their toys. Therefore, she started a toy drive for them. These people and many others find ways to serve others. Our Lord Jesus gave us the biggest and best gift ever. Jesus gave Himself to us. In Mark 10 Jesus taught His disciples about serving. While some people in the world crave for their own glory, Jesus told the disciples that the more glorious thing is to serve others. Glory does not come from people’s recognition. Rather, Jesus told us that the road to glory is through humility.

EXPLANATION

1. 情願為首 Aspire to Be the First

In the passage James and John, two brothers and two disciples of Christ aspired to be first. They came to Jesus with a personal request. Look at **verse 37**: ...“Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.” What kind of glory did the two disciples expected Jesus to receive? Jesus’ twelve disciples understood that He was the Christ, the Savior prophesied in the Old Testament. However, they did not know what kind of Savior Jesus came to be. They were hoping that Jesus would release the Jews from the bondage of the Roman government. However, Jesus arrived to release people from the bondage of the dark domain. The disciples believed that when Jesus ascended to His throne, they would become His royal officials. The two disciples were looking for the wrong glory. Jesus corrected them by saying in **verses 38**: “You don't know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?” The true glory the disciples would receive had to go through suffering. Both the cup and the baptism refer to the hardship Jesus and His disciples would experience. In the Bible, a “cup” can represent God’s judgment for sin. For example, **Jeremiah 25:27** says: “Then tell them, ‘This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Drink, get drunk and vomit, and fall to rise no more because of the sword I will send among you.’” God was declaring an upcoming judgment to the nations. They had to swallow God’s cup of wrath. As for baptism, it has nothing to do with testifying one’s faith in Christ. The water symbolizes sinking to the bottom. Look at **Psalms 69:2** - I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold. I have come into the deep waters; the floods engulf me. Similar to Jesus, the disciples would suffer for the

sake of the gospel like getting drunk and getting drowned. By now, Jesus had already told the disciples three times about the adversity in front of Him. The third time happened in **verses 33 and 34**: 33 “We are going up to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, 34 who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.” Pay attention to all the verbs in these two verses: betrayed, condemn, hand over, mock, spit, flog and kill. But Jesus would rise on the third day after His death. Before Jesus’ resurrection the disciples did not know why their Master had to suffer. Later, the apostle Peter wrote in his letter in **1 Peter 2:21** - To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. The church leaders of the first century dealt with many hardships. There were false teachings from within. Christians were oppressed by the Jewish religious leaders and the Romans. They were betrayed, falsely accused, beaten, imprisoned and killed. We should be grateful that we can enjoy the so-called religious freedom. We can talk about our faith just about anywhere. We can meet freely in the church without any fear that the police will come in to arrest us. Religious persecution is a foreign idea to us. After all, your ancestors, family and even yourself came to this country to look for a peaceful life. Who wants to go through suffering? Don’t be fooled by this world! Jesus called us to follow His example. True glory comes after suffering. It is correct that we may not be beaten up because of what we believe. What if you are being ridiculed by your classmates, professors, colleagues or bosses because you are a Christian? How would you react if they give you unfair treatments because they do not like the truth? How would you stand when people bring up issues like same-sex marriage or abortion? What kind of glory are you seeking after? What if no one is aware of your effort, or when someone even steals your credit? Will you still be diligent in your church ministry when nobody appreciates your effort? Will you call it quit when a brother or sister criticizes your work? When we follow Christ, we will suffer in some ways. The choice is whether we seek after external or eternal glory.

2. 甘願為末 Desire to Be the Last

Jesus told us that the road to glory is through humility. James and John aspired to be the first among the twelve disciples. Jesus corrected their ambition. Rather, they should desire to be the last. Jesus explained in **verses 42-44**: 42 ...“You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 43 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.” Many people want to be a director to order others to serve them. But Jesus told His disciples: “Not so with you.” They should be willing to become servants and slaves for others. The word “servant” means an attendant. When you eat at a restaurant, you ask a waiter to refill your drink. By serving you, he expects a generous tip in return. Servants earned wages and were free to go home after work. In comparison, slaves lived in their owners’ home. They did not earn a salary, but were on call 24-7. Jesus demonstrated the heart of a servant and slave by His life. Look at the **next verse**: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” This Mighty King of kings showed the disciples how He served people. Jesus reached out to people like lepers, tax collectors and the Gentiles who were despised by the society. Jesus also washed the feet of His disciples including Judas’, even when He knew that Judas would betray Him. Jesus humbled Himself to the degree that He sacrificed His life as a ransom for many. The word “ransom” is a

terminology used in the slave trade. A slave could only be set free if someone paid a ransom to his master. We sin and fall short of the glory of God. Jesus paid for our sin debt. Jesus came into the world as a humble servant. Paul said in [Philippians 2:6-8](#) – 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped; 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross! Jesus was like stepping down a staircase: He forsook the glory as God, and became a man. He chose to become the lowest of a man as a slave. He died in obedience to the Father, but He chose to die in the most gruesome way on a cross. But Jesus rose from the dead! From the lowest point a human could get, Jesus was exalted to the highest place. Jesus received all the glory He deserved after He humbled Himself. We are called to follow this example of sacrifice. [1 John 3:16-17](#) says – 16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. 17 If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? John challenged us to lay down our lives for others by meeting their needs. Our compassion should drive us to action. A husband says to his wife: “I’m ready to die for you. However, don’t ask me to wash dishes or change diapers, and please don’t bother me when I’m watching sports.” What kind of sacrifice is that? Are we willing to humble ourselves and serve even the least in our society? They may not have the capability to return your favor. You may not even hear a word of thanks from them. In our church there are many needs too. Some of you are supervisors in your secular job. People call you boss. Are you willing to humble yourselves and serve as baby-sitters or clean the bathrooms? Let me give our ministry leaders a challenge. Please do not ask your coworkers to do anything that you are unwilling to do. Recently, my family helped prepare food in our church kitchen. I love to cook. I had so much fun chopping the ingredients, washing and helping our cooks. From that experience I had a greater appreciation of our kitchen crew who prepares food and wash dishes on a weekly basis. I welcome you to roll up your sleeves and jump in to help.

CONCLUSION

Jesus told us that the road to glory is through humility. True glory is not earned, it is given by the Heavenly Father. Jesus sacrificed Himself because He saw our souls as precious. Recently I watched a movie titled “The Monuments Men.” When the Nazi German retreated from Europe in 1943, they looted many artworks from homes and cathedrals. According to historical fact, the masterpiece Mona Lisa was also stolen. In the movie, a guy named Frank persuaded President Roosevelt to support a mission to find the lost treasures and return them to the rightful owners. Frank was concerned that a part of the Western civilization would be lost forever. Thus, a team of seven soldiers was formed. They were not army officers, but experts in arts. In their endeavor two of the teammates were killed by the Germans. The movie has a happy ending. One operation after another the crew recovered artworks hidden in mines. At the end of the war, Frank reported the success to President Truman. The President asked Frank if his effort was worth the lost of his two teammates. The answer was a “yes.” Truman went on and asked if 30 years down the road anyone would remember those men who died for a piece of artwork. In the final scene, Frank took his grandson to see a sculpture made by Michelangelo. Again, the answer was a “yes.” This group of noble men saw the lost artworks as something worth dying for. 2000 years ago, our Lord also made a noble choice. He willingly died for us unworthy sinners. We make many decisions in life. Are we willing to follow Jesus’ footsteps and humble ourselves for others?