

**Whoever Receives One Such Child in My Name; Mark 9:30-41**  
0498-0500

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They went on from there and passed through Galilee, and he did not want anyone to know, for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise. But they did not understand the saying and were afraid to ask him.

And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house, he asked them, What were you discussing on the way? But they kept silent. For on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. And he sat down and called the twelve, and he said to them, If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.

And he took a child and put him in the midst of them. And taking him in his arms, he said to them, Whoever receives one such child in my name, receives me. And whoever receives me, receives not me, but him who sent me. John said to him, Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us, or he was not following with us.

But Jesus said, do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name. We'll be able soon afterward to speak evil of me, for the one who is not against us is for us. For truly I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of cold water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.

So as we dive into the passage today, the first thing that I'd make note of is the fact that the tone of the passage just seems to be making an ominous shift. It seems to be shifting from just the recent brightness and upbeatness of the transfiguration, which of course was coming on the heels of so many healing miracles, casting out demon miracles.

Making the waters calm, miracles, multiplying food, miracles, just on the heels of that. Of course, we encountered the ugliness of the story of unbelief at the bottom, but beginning from the passage. Now, it seems as though just everything about the, the journey that Jesus is on just seems to make a dark shift, an ominous shift, a foreboding sort of mood comes over this as we read that they went on from there, meaning.

The place where they had this discussion with the scribes and the boy that the demon, that the disciples couldn't cast the demon out. From there they went on and passed through Galilee. Now that's the last time that Jesus will be in Galilee and it's the last time we will hear of Galilee in Mark's Gospel.

Which is to say, except of course in Jesus prediction as he says to the disciples, his instructions of meeting him in Galilee after his resurrection. But aside from that, Jesus will not be in Galilee again. And we will not hear of Galilee again. And that's even doubly ominous for us, seeing that Jesus was, of course, from Galilee.

So he's passing through his hometown and passing through his hometown. We're told that he did not want anyone to know that he was there. So as he passes through, not wanting anyone to know,

clearly this implies for us that at least the crowds are somewhat smaller for Jesus to pass through his hometown region.

And be able to pass through not being known seems to imply to us that the crowds are thinning. The disciples that are following him are fewer, but he wants to pass through his hometown, not even stopping, not even seeing anyone, not even saying hello or goodbye to any of his friends, but to pass through Galilee, not being seen or not being heard.

Furthermore, in verse 33, they're going to come to Capernaum and that will be the last time that we hear of Capernaum in Mark's gospel. Capernaum, of course, is the hometown. Peter and his brother Andrew. And in Capernaum they're going to go into what's called the house, the direct or the definite article the house, which implies to us that the house that's in question there will be Peter's house.

So perhaps they'll enter into Peter's house, perhaps verse 33 will take place in Peter's house, and perhaps this will be the last time that Peter sees his family, at least before that very terrible and awful night in which he will deny knowledge of his Savior in that awful night in which Jesus is arrested and tortured.

So Peter is there, perhaps he and Andrew are there, and perhaps that's the last time he'll see his wife. We would assume he has a wife. He has a mother in law. Does he have children? We don't know, but perhaps this will be the last time that he sees them. And so you just feel sort of the, the forebodingness coming over.

Jesus is on this journey, and we know where the journey is headed to because we know the story. But Mark's reader doesn't yet know where the journey is going to because Mark hasn't told us yet that he's on his way to Jerusalem and what will happen in Jerusalem. But we know that because we know the rest of the story, as Paul Harvey used to say.

We know the rest of the story, and so we know that this story is the story of a journey, of a trip. And the destination is Jerusalem, or more specifically, the destination is Golgotha and the cross on Golgotha. So he goes there, he passes through Galilee. In secret. He did not want anyone to know. Why did he not want anyone to know?

Verse 31. For he was teaching his disciples, saying to them. So, Mark tells us that the reason Jesus wanted to remain incognito is because of the subject matter that Jesus was busy teaching the disciples at this time. Now, because of this teaching, because of this sensitivity, because of the nature of this teaching, Jesus desires to remain incognito.

And the teaching is this, the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men and they will kill Him. And when He is killed, after three days He will rise. So there's the substance of the teaching. This is what Jesus is busy teaching His disciples. This is the second time. Remember, in this section here, there are these three instances.

In which Jesus will teach of His coming arrest and death and crucifixion and resurrection. And all three of these instances, if you remember, as we began this section, we made note of the fact that all three of these instances will take place in the distinct context of the disciples misunderstanding and sinful self-exaltation.

And so this one takes place in the context that's about to follow the context of the discussion over which disciple is the greatest. Nevertheless, this is the subject matter that Jesus is teaching them. The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. Now, if you're reading this morning in the NIV, The NIV has the unfortunate translation of betrayed.

The son of man is going to be betrayed in the hands of men. I think the New Living, if you also use that, also has the word betrayed. So this is translating a word that literally means to hand over or to give over. which in many contexts is a proper translation to be translated betrayed. However, betrayal carries with it the sense of, of deceit, deception, of, uh, of, of a, uh, a traitor betraying one of his own over.

And we know this will happen to Jesus. Jesus will be betrayed into the hands of men. by one of his own, by Judas. However, we should be careful to note that betrayed is not a proper translation at this point because Jesus is not being betrayed. Jesus is being handed over as the word literally means. So Jesus is teaching them he is going to be handed over.

Now we have unfortunately a poor translation of the verb tense there when we read He is going to be, in our English standard, He's going to be handed over. So the verb there, our translation implies a future tense, but it's not future tense. It's just simply present passage, present, passive, indicative. So literally, Jesus says, the Son of Man is turned over.

or is being turned over. So here's what Jesus is teaching them. Jesus is not teaching them of some future event when one of his own, Judas, will betray him into the hands of men. Jesus is not saying, one of you is a devil. One of you is going to betray me. That will happen, of course, but all four Gospels make it clear, or at least they clearly imply, that a change comes over Judas.

When in Jerusalem, in that last week of Jesus life, a change comes over Judas, and that's when his plans are made. At this point, Jesus is not teaching his disciples, you know, there's one of you that's starting to betray me. You are, you're starting to sense a disillusion, and the idea of betraying me is beginning.

That's not what Jesus is saying at all. Jesus instead is not speaking of his betrayal by one of his own. He's speaking of the work of the Father to turn him over. Jesus is saying, the Father's work of turning me over, of handing me over into the hands of sinful man, That work has begun. That is why we cannot stop here in Galilee.

That's why I don't have time for the hometown folks here in Galilee. That's why we won't be delayed right here because the Father's work of handing me over into the hands of sinful men has begun. And so you can see clearly there that betrayal is not an appropriate translation because the Father does not betray the Son.

The Father hands over the Son to the hands of men because that was the plan of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit from eternity past. The plan of the Triune Godhead was that the Son would be turned over to men, but in turning Him over, the Father's not betraying the Son. The Father's not deceiving the Son.

The Father's not acting Traitor towards the sun. It is the plan of the triune God for him to be turned over into the hands of men and to be killed. And after three days to rise. So the giving over

of Christ to men has begun. It is underway now, verse 33, what we begin to see at verse three, three, I've entitled this section The Jarring Juxtaposition.

The stunning, stunning contrast—verse three. And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house, he asked them, what were you discussing on the way? Or literally, what were you contending with one another on the way? What was the subject of your argument on the way? But they kept silent. For on the way, they had argued or contended with one another, with one another about who was the greatest.

So you see clearly this incredible juxtaposition, this stunning contrast, that as the Son of Man is literally On his way to be handed over, to be tortured, to be executed, to be hung upon a cross, humiliated and shamed. While he's on his way to do that, the disciples, who've been a study all along in misunderstanding, non-understanding, a study in spiritual dullness, the disciples are contending with one another among which one of them would be the greatest in the kingdom that is to come.

So you see this stunning contrast, and Mark wants us to see it that way. Mark wants us to see this and just be shocked at what a contrast we see on the road of here is the humility of the Son of Man and those who are following behind him are contending with one another over which of them would receive the greatest honor or the first place.

So an incredible juxtaposition as he goes on. So as they are traveling here, they go to the house, we might assume that might be Peter's house or maybe someone else's house. In the house, He asked them, asked them this question. What are we discussing? What are we arguing about? Now, Jesus, of course, knows what they were arguing about.

He doesn't need the information from them. And, once again, we're just shocked at the disciples, at their lack of perception, at their lack of insight. Because in my mind, I picture this scene of they're walking along the trail, along the road and here's Jesus sort of leading the way. And then maybe back at the end of the little entourage of disciples, maybe there's several of them way back in the back, and maybe they're talking in sort of hushed tones, having this discussion over who's the greatest.

Now, what sort of criteria were they using? How were they assessing who's going to be the greatest? that's completely unknown to us. Maybe they were discussing who would cast out the most demons or who was Jesus's favorite or who does Jesus always send into the village ahead of him or who knows.

Whatever it is, they're sort of having this discussion thinking, surprisingly, that they're having a discussion in private. They should know by this point. That their thoughts are not hidden from Jesus. They should know that no matter how quietly they speak or no matter how far they are back from Jesus, they should know that their thoughts are not secret from him, but they kept silent because now the shame comes upon them.

The shame, the embarrassment that comes upon them as they now think. He knows, he knows what we're talking about. He knows that. And so they have no answer to give him because they were arguing who was the greatest. So here we see really the, the nub of the passage and, and the center, the central issue that we deal with in this passage is the issue of human.

Pride. Now, human pride is that fundamental sin within the human heart. We could define it a lot of different ways, but especially for our purposes today, I think perhaps the most helpful way to think of human pride or the most helpful definition to give to human pride is this. Human pride, fallen human pride, is the human craving for undue exaltation.

The human craving. For undue or unjust or unrighteous exaltation. The human heart, the the fallen human heart craves, exaltation and pride is the craving for undue or unwarranted or wrongful exaltation. And so you can see here in the context of the passage how the disciples are craving. Undue or unrighteous or wrongful exaltation because they're arguing over which of us is the greatest.

Now, they desire this exaltation, and the exaltation that they're desiring is a wrongful exaltation. And this craving for wrongful or undue exaltation is the root, and we can think of it this way, is the root or the seedbed of all human sins. We could think back to the garden and we could think that well clearly that's what takes place in the garden as the tempter comes to the woman and tempts the woman with this temptation of exalting herself, you know, you don't need God, you can be like God, you can take of this fruit, and you can be like Him.

You see the self-exaltation, the undue exaltation. But it even goes back further than this. If you listen just for a moment, this is not in your notes, but if you listen just for a moment from the prophet Isaiah chapter 14. In Isaiah 14, Isaiah is proclaiming God's woe, or God's wrath, against the kingdom of Babylon.

But you remember there's this theme in scripture, and the theme is the theme of Babylon, the kingdom of Babylon, as being synonymous for the kingdom of evil. And so the king of Babylon, Isaiah, is proclaiming this wrath against him, or God's judgment against him. But in a larger way, God is proclaiming his wrath, or his judgment, against Babylon.

Satan, who is the ultimate king of Babylon. So this, listen to the words of the prophet. You, speaking to the king of Babylon, but by way of the king of Babylon, to Satan, the prophet says, you said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven above the stars of God, and I will set my throne on high. I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north.

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will make myself like the Most High. Do you? Do you hear there? The craving for undue exaltation as Satan is craving in his created heart, in his angelic heart, he's craving an exaltation that was not due him or not rightfully his and his craving of that exaltation.

is the sin of pride and that's the very thing that he comes to the woman with and that is, like I say, in a very large sense. The root or the seed of all human sinfulness is a craving for a type of exaltation that is not due unto us. And so the ugliness of what we see here on the trail The ugliness of this, I think we can all agree, this is something that when we see in our own heart, or when we see in the others around us, it is one of the ugliest aspects of humanity.

This craving for undue exaltation or human pride. So now we see this jarring juxtaposition, but now the next thing that we see is this culturally repugnant. Message that Jesus now has, look at verse 35 and he sat down and so when he sat down, that's a clue for us that Jesus is now assuming a posture of authoritative teaching.

So in that culture, the standard or the recognized posture for authoritative teaching was to sit down, not so in our culture, because in our culture, it's just the opposite, like what I'm doing now, I'm standing before you because this is the recognized Posture of one who is teaching in such a way, but in Jesus' culture, when one was ready, when one, when the time came for the authority figure to then then begin giving this authoritative teaching.

The posture that was assumed was a posture of sitting. So Jesus sits down as if to say, okay. Let's just slow down. Let's talk about what's just happening. And I'm about to give you this teaching or this instruction that's authoritative. So He sat down and He called the twelve. So remember, as we've noticed before, that when we see that phrase, Jesus called the twelve, that's a clue for us, that's a signal for us, that those whom He's calling unto Himself are His called out people, His sheep.

So He called His sheep to Him, He called the twelve, and He said to them, If anyone will be first, He must be last of all and servant of all. So there's a paradox that we've seen before. It's not new to us. It is. In a sense, it is filled, Jesus teaching is filled with this type of paradox. The paradox of the first will be last, the last will be first, the, uh, the one who would save his life must lose it and on we could go.

This type of paradoxical teaching, this is Jesus one of his most favorite ways of teaching. So he gives this paradox, if anyone would be first. He must be last of all, and servant of all. So the disciples are contending with one another of who would have the premier position, the utmost position, the highest position, the exalted position.

And what they are betraying is a sense that they held within them. The sense that their culture taught them that that was what was the greatest. The greatest was to be the first or the most exalted. Now we live in a culture today in which this sin of the craving of undue exaltation is We could rightly say in hyper overdrive, couldn't we, the sin of craving exaltation or celebration or recognition, that sin in a way just seems to be in overdrive in our culture today.

And a big reason for that is just the modernness of our culture, the modernness of, of the internet, social media, the whole selfie culture, and which we just, we marinate. In this selfie culture that tells us if you do something, then take a picture of yourself doing it, post it up on social media so everyone can give you accolades about just what a great thing that you did, what a great person you are, how, how nice you look, how, uh, how fit you are, how successful you are, just accolades, accolades, accolades, and what that does is that taps into a, a what that does is that taps into a, a Portion, if you will, a section of the fallen human heart that we are particularly prone to.

So in a sense, we live in a time and in a culture in which the sin of pride or the craving of undue exaltation is in overdrive. However, we also recognize that that's just simply a mechanism of modern culture that's tapping into a sin that has always been in the human heart and has always been in the human heart in the same force, in the same proportion that it is today.

People have always had hearts that craved undue exaltation. So we think of the culture in which Jesus and the apostles lived and we look at, this is in your notes, if you look at the words of say for example Plato. Plato, living about 350 years or so before Christ. Here's what Plato wrote. He says, How can a man be happy when he has to serve someone?

Now, when Plato asked that question, he's not asking it as though he's looking for an answer. He's not saying, can somebody give me some suggestions? Does anybody have any suggestions about how you can be happy serving other people? That's not what he's saying. He's asking a rhetorical question in which the answer is assumed.

The answer is assumed to be, you can't. Nobody can be truly happy serving someone else. Now Plato, of course, a Greek philosopher, a Greek thinker. Jesus and the Apostles, they live in a world in which the Hellenistic way of thinking is beginning to become dominant. So this says something to us of the culture in which they lived, which was no different from any culture in any society, anywhere.

All cultures in which all people have always lived have in one way or another. celebrated the undue exaltation of the individual, of people. People have always, in some form or fashion, in every culture, sought after undue exaltation. So the same is true for the Jewish culture in which the disciples had lived their entire lives.

The Jewish culture was also one that really invited this Undue exaltation or the pursuit of undue exaltation. The way, one of the ways that we see this is the way in which Jesus will often use one of his analogies that was so very powerful and that's the analogy of coming to a banquet. Remember the times in which Jesus would say something like this, when you go to a banquet don't sit in the highest place, don't sit in the best seat.

Now the reason that analogy was so powerful and made sense to people is because they got it. Because they understood, well that's what everybody does. They want the best place. Or, as he speaks of the Pharisees, he will say to the Pharisees, you are the ones who seek the best seats in the synagogue. You want to have the best seat.

You want to have the exalted seat. And the reason Jesus could say that, and the reason his hearers immediately understood what he was saying, is because they lived in a culture just like ours. That was a culture that invited, that welcomed, in fact, Encouraged the undue seeking or craving of exaltation, or undue, unrighteous, wrongful exaltation.

So as Jesus is saying these words to them, He's saying He's getting right to the heart of their sinful, fallen heart, which is craving this undue exaltation. Now, as he says these words that are words that are, that are intended for the disciples to hear this and take this to heart, these are words that are intended to speak to the need for humility, for humbling oneself.

If you would be first, then you must be last. The one who would gain his life must lose it, or the one who will lose his life for my sake and the gospel, he's the one who would gain it. So these words are intended to be words that reach into the human heart with this message of humbling oneself. So, in a real sense, we can think of all of God's saving work and all of God's sanctifying work as work that is designed or focused upon the humbling of us, the humbling of the human, the humbling of our heart.

If you think about God's saving work, His work of saving the lost sinner is indeed a work that seeks to first Humble us when we read in the scriptures of how, for example, God shows us before the foundation of the world, and that says to us, you know, God, God chose me before I existed. The intention of that is to humble us.

The intention of that is for us to hear that and say, Well, there was nothing that I did that made me desirable to you because you chose me before I existed. So the effect is a humbling effect. Or, once we receive conversion, once we receive new life in Christ, and we're told, very specifically, that the killing of sin within our life, it's something that we don't do alone, it's something that the Spirit does in us.

That too is humbling. As if to say, now that you've received this new life in Christ, you can't even live for Him without Him doing that work in you. That's humbling for us. Or furthermore, when we think about our eternal state, about the eternity in which we will all spend praising another and exalting another, that's intended to humble us.

So God's work of humbling the human heart is in a sense, we could say it's His first work because our first sin, so to speak, is the sin of self-exaltation or undue exaltation. And so, God's first work is the work of humbling. So we read words in the scriptures. For example, from James chapter 4 and verse 6, God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble.

God is opposed to the proud. That is a verse that I would just commend to all of us to commit to memory and to meditate upon. God opposes the proud what more lamentable state could there possibly be what more? Unfortunate state of life could there be then for one to say that they are opposed? By the maker and creator and sustainer of all things is there a more lamentable?

status of life than to be opposed to By the sovereign God. Likewise, is there a more desirable state of life than to say God gives grace or God favors the humble? Is there a more desirable state? And so to flood our thoughts, to meditate our souls upon that truth, you know, the sin of pride is deeply rooted in all of your hearts.

Mine too. The sin of pride is deeply rooted and to uproot that sin requires constant meditation upon truths like this. God is opposed to the proud. In fact, Jesus will strongly imply in the next chapter that God's work of salvation cannot even be done in us until that sin of pride has at least been loosened in our heart.

So we know that Jesus will oftentimes use a child. as an object lesson. In fact, he's going to do it in our passage today. Later on in chapter 10, he's going to use a child once again as another object lesson. And we're familiar with that. When the people were bringing the children to Jesus and the disciples said, no, no, no.

Jesus doesn't have time for all this. And Jesus will say, no, no, no. Listen, I tell you that whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it. So, in a real way, Jesus is saying, that in order for God to save us, He has to, by the power of His Spirit, attack the very pride in our heart that resists His saving work.

And so this is, in a real way, God's work in the human heart to attack our pride and to humble us. Because God is opposed to the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. So He says to these disciples, listen, I know that you're arguing about who's the greatest. But if you want to be great, you must be servant of all.

If you want to be first, you must be last. And so as we see this very clear picture of these disciples on the road, what we see in living color, in sharp, vivid living color, is we see an example of those



who are seeking undue exaltation. And then Jesus's reaction to that. So let's now think carefully through what Jesus says to them.

You must be last. If you would be first, you must be last. So here's what Jesus is not saying to them. And here's what scripture is not saying to us. Scripture is not saying to us, if you would be God's child, then you must expunge from your heart all desire to be exalted. You must kill it. You must put it to death.

Your desire to be exalted is over. Because the child of God does not wish to be exalted. That's not what Scripture says. That's not what Jesus is saying. That's not where Scripture says, Scripture doesn't say that anywhere. Instead, Scripture is not teaching us that in order to be a child of God, you must magically expunge from your heart this desire for exaltation.

Rather, the Scriptures say to us, We must redeem it because what the scriptures say to us is that the human heart is full of desires that are corrupted or Contaminated or a good word to use is disordered Because the scriptures teach us that God has created us in His image. And a big part of being created in His image, is that the human heart has been created with desires that are holy and good and like our Father.

And yet we have corrupted or disordered those desires because in a real way, you can think of all sin as a good desire that has been disordered or a good desire that has been corrupted. Look with me in Ephesians 4, verses 22 24. In this passage, this is one of the most direct and powerful passages that teach us how it is, or the process, by which we kill sin in our life and become more like Christ.

Here's what Paul says, Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life. And, and here's the part that's important, is corrupt. How is it corrupt? It's corrupt through, not desires. Deceitful desires, perverted desires, tainted desires, disordered desires. So, put that off, the corrupt evil desires, be renewed in the spirit of your minds, put on the new self, and what is the new self?

The new self is created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. In other words, the process of sanctification is the process in which God recreates ordered desires, or holy desires, or good desires. Because our hearts are made in the image of God with all kinds of desires that were created good, but our fallen state has corrupted those and twisted those.

And in the corruption of our desires, The world comes along and marries up with that and just teams up with that and says together We will corrupt this person So our good and holy desires that God created are fallen and they become corrupted and then the world comes along and latches on to that and tells us all the sinful ways, all the fallen ways that we can fulfill the desires that were originally good but have now been corrupted and that is a description of the sinful fallen life.

So here are the disciples and in their heart, you can hear in their heart, they have this craving to be celebrated, this craving to be exalted, this craving to be recognized. Their fallen hearts have twisted that or perverted that in such a way that they now see the gratification of that desire as something earthly.

And along comes the world to say, yep, and here's how you do that. And that is what creates the sinful context in which they're found, okay? So these disciples, they have this desire for exaltation and celebration. The scriptures teach us, listen carefully to this part, the scriptures teach us that that is a good thing.

It is a good thing to desire exaltation as long as the desire is for the right exaltation at the right time. By the right exalter. And that's the key. Because the scriptures teach us, for example, Peter himself will teach us in 1 Peter 4, 5-6, Peter says, humble yourself, humble yourself, therefore, under the mighty hand of God.

Why? So at the proper time, he may exalt you. See that? There is a time in which it is proper for us to be exalted. And there is one who is the proper one to exalt us. And Peter is saying that is a good desire. Everything that will happen to the Christian in the eternal state is good. And everything that will happen to the Christian in the eternal state is something that God has put a good desire in our hearts to realize.

But sin comes along and takes that good desire and perverts it. And the world comes along and piles on and that's where the Christian sins. So Peter says plainly, God has a plan to exalt you. And the exaltation will come at the right time, in the right way, by the right exalter. Therefore, humble yourself now, so that the proper exaltation will one day come.

Same thing we see in James 4 and verse 10. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you. You see, the human heart's craving for celebration and exaltation will one day come. is not in and of itself wicked. In and of itself, it is evidence of the image of God within us. But the perversion, the sinfulness comes when we say, I will achieve that by my own way, in my own time.

That's where the sinfulness comes in. And so that's what the disciples are doing. We will achieve this exaltation by our own way, in our own time. We will be our own gods. Does that sound familiar? You don't need God, Eve. You don't need God, Adam. You can be like Him, just like the disciples. We don't need God to exalt us, we can exalt ourselves.

You see? And so the, the basic underlying desire is one that God put into every human heart. And His intention was to perfectly fill, fulfill that desire in Himself. So that the child of God looks within their heart and sees that desire and says, He is my fulfillment of that. He will exalt me in the perfect way, in the perfect time, and that's what I look for.

So scripture says that to us about this desire, this human desire for exaltation. But what's really interesting is that scripture says this to us in so many ways. And so many areas, you know, scripture says a lot to us about the felt needs of the human heart. What's a felt need? A felt need is just a need that you feel.

It's a, it's a need that is an emotional need. We all have needs. We need food. We need shelter. We need safety protection. We have lots of needs, but we also have many needs that are emotional in nature. And God created us that way, but each of the needs, the emotional or the felt needs that we have, all of those are good and God like in the original state, in the original design.

But they've all been corrupted through corrupted desires or disordered desires. In such a way that all of those emotional needs, we now automatically look not to God, But we automatically now

look to ourselves and we look to the creation to fulfill those. Instead of the God who intended all along to be the fulfillment for us.

So in your notes There's a chart because we love charts and in your notes This chart is one that I put together in which I just sort of thought through this is not comprehensive or exhaustive but I really do think that I've I really do think this contains all of the most fundamental and most universal felt needs of the human heart.

Or emotional needs of the human heart. You can, uh, we can look through this and you can see if you agree with me. But I feel like That one of the most fundamental needs of the human heart is to feel joy or happiness. I feel like that all people understand that the human heart really has this deep craving for happiness and joy.

Now that happiness and joy is not something that God comes along and says to us, Listen, if you're going to be my child, then you got to put to death this desire for happiness. You've got to put together, you've got to put to death this desire for joy. Or even in the next life. God doesn't come along and say to us, listen, if you're going to be my child, then forget being happy in this life.

There's lots of happiness to come in the next life, but forget about it now. That's not what God says to us. Instead, what God says to us is, I've created your heart. To long for happiness and joy and to find it in me. To find it in me, not just to find it in me, but to find it in abundant proportions in me.

And so this is what the scriptures will say to us in many ways. We know how the scriptures will talk about the joy of the Lord. How Nehemiah calls this, our strength, or the psalmist in Psalm 51 says restore to me the joy of your salvation. And so God says to the human heart, there is a deep emotional need for happiness and joy and contentment.

Not just in the next life, but in this one, and that desire is not evil. What's evil is to seek to fulfill it outside of me. What's evil is to seek to fulfill it without me, because that need was designed to be fulfilled by me. So think about that. Think also of the deep human need to feel a sense of life purpose.

Would you agree that, that all people just have a need? to feel like their life matters? Have you ever known anyone who could honestly say I don't want my life to matter for anything. I just want to get done and have some fun and I don't want, I don't want my life to matter for squat. Has there ever been a person who honestly felt that way?

Now there may be a lot of people For whom life or life here on this fallen world is sort of beaten out of them, the desire for purpose or the expectation for purpose. But that's a different thing than saying that there is someone who did not want purpose. I think to be human in the image of God is to desire that your life means something, that your life matters, that your life has purpose.

And so God says to us, listen, to be my child doesn't mean that you just Forget purpose. Instead, to be my child is to find that need to be met in me, in my purpose for you. We could look at Psalm 57 verse 2, or we could look at Jeremiah 29 and verse 11, one of the most often taken out of context verses in the Bible, but nevertheless, it does speak to us of the character of God who has good purpose for his people.

And so God says, you're, you're craving for purpose. It's not wrong. It's not something you've got to put to death within you. It's something that you need to find fulfillment in me for. Or, we could think about the need to feel love. Or to feel loved, I should say. Isn't it true that every human has that need?

Is there a person, is there a man or woman, who does not have a need to feel as though they are loved? Now, again, there's probably lots of people that have given up on the hope of being loved. Perhaps their life is such a sad story that they have just lost the hope or, or lost the, the goal of ever wanting that or the expectation.

But that's another thing altogether. To be human in the image of God is to desire and to desire deeply to feel like you are loved. And this is one of those things that our fallen heart has corrupted, and the world just comes and clamps down upon this. This is one of the ways in which the world is most successful in saying to us, you can fulfill that need in some other way other than God.

And so the world comes along with great success to say, you can fulfill the need to feel loved in all these other kinds of ways. When all along God says to us, that's not a wicked desire, that's not an evil desire. What's wicked is to try to fulfill that outside of me. Because I put that in your heart and only I can fulfill it.

And your sinfulness is trying to replace me with counterfeits. With worldly counterfeits of me. So God created us in such a way that we are to feel loved ultimately by Him. Romans 5 and verse 8, God shows His love for us. And that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Who doesn't feel the need to, to feel secure or safe?

Isn't that a fundamental human need of the heart? To feel a sense of security, a sense of safety. Now that can take a whole lot of different, uh, outlooks. That can take a whole lot of different forms. People can feel the need to, to have security or safety. And that can evidence itself in the desire for physical safety.

And so some people worship physical safety. And they have all sorts of things to keep them physically safe in all kinds of different ways. Others will manifest that same sort of thing in financial safety. And so there are those who have 401k accounts that I could never hope to have anything like what the financial security is that they have.

Because they need to feel secure. And that evidences itself. In the desire for financial security, others want to fulfill this need in emotional security. In emotional safety. And so they will display this by being those types of people that have a wall built around them. That you can never really get to know them.

They're not going to be hurt because they're never going to open themselves up to anyone. And that's just the desire to find security and safety through emotional safety. And it's their way of replacing God because God is intended to be their rock. That's what the scriptures tell us. Over and over, I am your fortress, I am your stronghold, I am your rock, I am your shelter.

And so we are intended to find that security in Him, and that desire, that deep, universal human desire for security and safety is pointing us. What about the need to achieve rest or to feel rest or a sense of peace or a sense of conclusion? Isn't that a deep, fundamental need of the human heart? And of course, isn't that what God says to us, I am intended to be the one that fulfills that for you?

Or what about our deep need? That all humans have to feel a sense of belonging or a sense of genuine community. This is another way in which the world comes along and just capitalizes on this need that our hearts have because all of our hearts have a deep need to feel like we belong to something to feel like there's genuine community.

And so this is one of the reasons. For the great success of social media today, because social media comes along and offers you some kind of counterfeit false belonging to some sort of group. This is why human history has always, every society, every culture that you look at has always had systems of groups, or clubs, or when you talk about the workplace environment, of guilds.

All sorts of mechanisms that humans have created in order to offer a sense of belonging, or a sense of community, which is trying to answer, in human ways, what God has put into our heart, which is to say, we long for the genuine community. Because nothing is community like the supernatural community of God's people.

And God created His people to have a deep need for the community that only comes through the supernatural community of the family of God. What about the deep human need to feel a sense of worth or a sense of value? Is that not true? That every human has this deep need to feel like you are worth. You are valuable.

That you have value. This is another way in which the world just comes along and makes a lot of headway. Just capitalizes on the need that we all have. To feel worth. Now, we need to be careful with this one, even within Christian teachings. Because this is something that has been quite often perverted, even within Christian circles.

To take the teaching of the Scripture and to somehow twist it into saying, you know, you have so much intrinsic worth, so much intrinsic value that Jesus died for you. Well, did Jesus die for His people? Yes, He did. But the scriptures don't say He died for us because we are so worthy or so valuable. In fact, it says just the opposite, that we're not worthy of that.

But what the scriptures do tell us is that we were created with infinite worth because we are created in the image of God. In the image of God, He created them male and female. So being created in His image, we have this intrinsic worth or this intrinsic value and we are to find our value there.

Furthermore, the scriptures teach us to think of the redeemed people of God in ways like Peter will describe when he says, you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a people for his own pleasure. And so the scriptures will say to us, God created you with a need to feel like you have worth, like you have value.

And you do because He gives it to you because He gives you more value than this world could ever give. But the world comes along and says, listen, let me offer you a counterfeit worth. Let me offer you a counterfeit value. And we and our sinfulness just fall for it hook, line and sinker. What about the need to feel a deep sense of identity?

Don't all people need to feel like you know who you are, that you have this identity that you can describe? All of us will say that. I know myself. I know who I am because we need to feel like we

have this identity. So this is another way. In which the world comes along and just makes a lot of progress in the sinful heart by offering to the sinful heart all kinds of identity.

By saying, you know, you need to find out who you are. You need to find your own identity. And then the world comes along to celebrate all the counterfeit identities that are supposed to replace the identity that we are to find in Christ. in Christ alone. Paul says, here's my identity. I have been crucified with Christ.

It's no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So God created us to find a deep sense of identity in Christ. And the world comes along, sees that need, and latches upon it. Ever hear of identity politics? You ever hear of the, the powerful pull that things like the, uh, the homosexual agenda have by offering identity to people?

And they say, here's an identity that you can embrace. Here's an identity that can be yours. And that's powerful for the human heart because we crave that. When all along God says that was what was intended to come from me. What about the need, the deep need to feel wanted? Now, there's a lot of overlap in so many of these, but the need to feel as though you are desired, that you are wanted, is there ever a human that doesn't have the need to feel like you're wanted, that you are desired?

And once again, here comes the world right along to capitalize on such a, such a thing as that. We all know or have heard of the stories of those who have, well, maybe gotten involved in street gangs. And that's, that's the pull. That's the attraction. Is that here is an organization that wants you, that desires you.

You're wanted. So come along with us and join in with us in our sinfulness. And that's powerful for the human heart because the human heart deeply wants to feel wanted, to feel desired. Now, this is one of the most staggering truths of the scriptures. When, if you remember back in Ephesians chapter one, when we were working through that incredibly dense, Ephesians chapter 1, and one of the truths that came to us in that section was the truth that God desires us before the foundation of the world.

He chose us in Christ. So that we may be holy and blameless before him in love. He predestined us unto adoption as sons. That says a lot to us. But at the very least, it says this. God desired his people. God wants his people. God has a desire in his heart. for his people and that is the fulfillment that is intended to fill to overflowing the human heart that so desperately wants to feel wanted, to feel desired.

What about the need to feel accepted or welcomed? Again, so much overlap here, but don't we all have a need to feel like we are accepted? To feel like we're welcomed? Nobody wants to feel rejected. Rejection is one of the worst emotions for humans to feel. Because it just grates. It's like fingernails on the chalkboard against the human heart that so desperately wants to feel accepted, and received, and welcomed.

And once again, here comes the world to say, we'll accept you. We'll receive you. Come on into our sinful lifestyle. Come on into our Sinfulness, and we'll welcome you and that pulls on us strongly because God created our heart to need acceptance and welcoming but the scriptures teach us that as Christ has welcomed you, as Christ has welcomed us in no other way, in a way that no one else can.

John 6 and verse 37, All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. And then lastly, back to the beginning, the need for the human heart to feel exalted and celebrated. Don't we all need that? Doesn't your heart need to feel celebrated? God made you that way. So we couldn't leave this section without returning to Zephaniah 3 and verse 17.

The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save. He will rejoice over you with gladness. He will quiet you by His love. He will exult over you with loud singing. So there you have it all together right there. He will rejoice over you. God will feel joy over you. He will quiet you by His love.

We need to feel loved and He will quiet our anxious heart with His love and He will exalt over you with loud singing. Now I know there's a nuance of a difference between exalt and exult. But oftentimes the scriptures and the scriptures, they overlap. He will exult over you. He will celebrate over you with loud singing.

Our hearts need that. The hearts of the disciples needed that. They were trying to fulfill that in earthly ways. And this is what that passage is all about. So now Jesus says this to them, but now he wants to really bring this point home, and so he's going to use this object lesson of verse 36. And he took a child and put him in the midst of them.

And taking him up in his arms, he said to them, whoever receives one such child in my name receives me. And whoever receives me receives not me, but him who sent me. So, here we have one of the instances in which Jesus uses a child as an object lesson. That's a very easy thing for us to confuse. So, let's just understand that Jesus is not saying to us in this or in any instance in which He took a child as an object lesson and in some way said, you need to be like this child, Jesus is not saying to us That there is virtue in the child that you need to emulate.

Jesus is not saying that the child has a virtue that you need. Jesus is saying the child has a status that you need. So don't confuse the virtue that Jesus is pointing to with the status. Jesus is pointing to the child's status. Here's how we can say that definitively. So the object lesson here As the other instances in which Jesus takes a child, ultimately what Jesus is getting at is humility.

Now, biblical humility is, let's understand that carefully, biblical humility is not, what sometimes people think it is, thinking lowly of yourself. Humility is not thinking, Oh, woe is me. Oh, I'm such a low down person. That's not biblical humility. Biblical humility is not thinking lowly of yourself.

Biblical humility is not thinking of yourself. See the difference? Biblical humility is thinking of others and just not thinking of yourself. That's biblical humility. In no way, in no time, in no period of history, in no culture, have children ever been an example of that. Children have never been an example of those who don't think of themselves.

Because every child most naturally thinks of who? Themselves. Sometimes that can be outgrown. And sometimes there are adults who think of others. But no child automatically thinks of others before self. So Jesus cannot be pointing to children as an example of the virtue of humility. Instead, what Jesus is pointing to is the status of the child.

This is another instance in which we must be very careful to understand the text in the culture in which it was given. Because as modern people, we live in a time in which we view children In a way

that children have never been viewed ever in history in no culture. Because in the modern age in which we live, children are viewed fundamentally differently than children have ever been viewed in the past, and the reason is a good one.

The reason is that child mortality has dropped through the floor. And that's only happened in the very, very, very recent past. For most of human history, child mortality was shockingly high. For most of human history, for children to live, most of the time, it was around age 5. Up to age 5, the mortality rate was always shockingly high.

Tragically high. When children passed the age of 5 or so, that was when the mortality rates began to drop. And so for every culture, There has always been this sense of small children before the age of five, will they live or will they not live? Now that's not in any way saying that children weren't loved.

Of course children have always been loved. Parents have always loved their children. But it is to say that society has always had this ingrained way of viewing small children as there's a really good chance they won't live. And The more we get attached to them, the more difficult this is going to be, if they don't.

And with the mortality rate being what it's being, children in Jesus culture occupied a social status, and here's the takeaway. They occupied a social status that was very, very low. That doesn't mean that they weren't loved. They were loved. They were appreciated. They were cared for. But if, if we can extricate ourselves from our modern world and put ourselves into the ancient world of Jesus, we would recognize that there came this preconceived notion that children, especially children under five, occupied a position that's quite different.

Children were never fawned over. Like modern people fawn over children. That's not all bad. But children in history, in antiquity, were never fawned over in the way that they are now. Instead, they were viewed as those who, if I could put it this way, had not yet really received a full standing in society.

Because there was so much instance of childhood death. And so when Jesus takes this child, What he's taking is one who occupies a status within society that is very, very low, not because they're hated or disdained, but because they occupy a station in life. In which people were very much accustomed to seeing them not survive.

And so as a result, Jesus is taking as an object lesson, one who occupies not a hated status like a leper, or a feared status like a demon possessed person, or a disdained status like a prostitute, but one who naturally occupies just a very low status in society. And he's saying, notice what he says, He who receives this such child.

See, that's what Jesus focus is, the receiving of this child. And so what are the, what are the disciples arguing about? They're arguing about who's going to be first, who's going to be the leader. Jesus then turns it around to say, Listen, those who receive the lowliest ones, Those are the ones to whom the Kingdom of God belongs.

So, in Jesus society, just like in ours, the ones who had great importance They were not the ones to receive the lowliest ones of society. And so that's Jesus point. The one who thinks that they



occupy this status that is so high and lifted up that you cannot have time for these lowly ones, that is what's contrary to the Kingdom of God.

The one who receives one such child in my name Receives me. Now, the Apostles are the ones who have to learn this lesson and learn it well. They have to learn this lesson well because they will be the ones who are the foundation of the Church. It is the Apostles teaching, as Paul will tell us, it is the Apostles teaching that will become the foundation of the Church.

And so these Apostles must learn this lesson well. They must learn the lesson well that it is not their place. to pursue society, or pursue position and status. It is their position to receive the lowliest. And now what happens next in verse 38, I believe, is a light begins to dawn. They begin to get it.

Notice this. John said to him, now this is the only instance in all the Synoptic Gospels, Of course, there's John wrote a gospel, but outside of John's gospel, the three synoptic gospels, this is the only instance in which John ever says something by himself. There's one other instance where James and John said something.

This is the only time John said anything by himself, and notice what he said. Teacher, or in the Aramaic, master, synonymous, same word, master or teacher. We saw someone casting out demons in your name and we tried to stop him because he was not following us or he was not following with us. Do you hear what John's saying?

I think he's beginning to get it. I think he's beginning to see what Jesus is saying and his conscience pricks him. His conscience begins bothering him and he begins to say, Wait a minute. There was this instance. Jesus, we saw someone casting out demons. He wasn't one of us. We told him to stop, as though John is saying, Master, I see how wrong I was.

I see how I was viewing him as that child that you just picked up, as one who is beneath my status. I see the wrongness of my action and I'm wanting to confess that to you. You see that the John is saying, he's not saying as though he wants Jesus to praise him for this. He's saying it as though I get it now.

Master. I was wrong in doing that. I was wrong in saying that. It's as though John wanted to be the one to define the parameters of the kingdom of God. And this one who's casting out demons was outside that and John wanted to be one the one who says no, no You're not part of this Now the day will come When the Apostles are the ones who define the parameters of the kingdom of God.

That's what Jesus means in Matthew 16 To you I'll give the kingdom, the keys to the kingdom, but that time has not yet come. And so John is realizing the error of what he said, but Jesus then said to him, Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will soon be able afterward to speak evil of me.

For, verse 40, the one who is not against us is for us. So here's what Jesus is saying is there. There are two kingdoms and only two kingdoms. We think of. Somewhat of a parallel instance in Matthew 12 verse 30 where Jesus says it the other way around. Whoever is not against me is for me. Or here he says, whoever is not with me is against me and whoever is not gathered with me scatters.

Here in Mark he says whoever is not against us is with us. So you put those two things together and here's what Jesus is saying. There are two kingdoms. There's not three. There is the kingdom of light and there's the kingdom of darkness. And everyone is either in the kingdom of light or the kingdom of darkness.

There is not a third kingdom. You are not in a process of moving over from one kingdom to another. You don't have one foot in the kingdom of light and one foot in the kingdom of darkness. Jesus says there's two kingdoms and all people are in one or the other. All of your loved ones, all of your family, all of those whom you know in your life, all those whom you encounter, are in one kingdom or the other.

There's the kingdom of light or the kingdom of darkness. And John is beginning to get this, is beginning to dawn on him that of his wrongness and how he treated this one who was casting out demons. But then we find in the final verse. Just the last thing for us to see this astounding graciousness. The astounding graciousness of the rewards.

Look at verse 41. For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward. So I think that Jesus senses, he hears in John the repentance, the confession, and he wants to encourage John, as John is saying, listen, I, I was wrong in telling this, this person to stop, and he confesses this and Jesus wants to offer him this encouragement.

And the encouragement is, listen. Whoever gives a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ. You'll never lose that reward. Don't you, don't you hear sort of an echo there of Philippians 1 where Paul says, There's these others here in Rome preaching the gospel, but, but they really are very unkind to me.

But it's okay. I'm just glad that they're preaching the gospel. You hear sort of echoes of that here. And Jesus says, Even giving a cup of water in my name. Say, for example, what if John had, instead of telling that man to stop, what if he'd gone and given him a cup of water? And says, Let me encourage you, brother.

Jesus's encouragement is to say. That's a reward that will never be lost. Now look very quickly at Matthew 10 verse 40 and 42. Because here's the fuller thing, the fuller teaching that Jesus gives. Whoever receives you, receives me. And whoever receives me, receives him who sent me. The one who receives a prophet, because he is a prophet, will receive a prophet's reward.

And the one who receives a righteous person, because he is a righteous person, will receive a righteous person's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water, because he is a disciple, truly I say to you, He will by no means lose his reward. Jesus just said some astounding things.

He said, if you give a cup of water to one who is proclaiming the gospel, the same reward comes to you. That's what he says. Whoever receives a prophet because he's a prophet receives a lesser reward. He says receives the prophet's reward, the same reward as the prophet. Whoever gives someone this cup of cold water because he's a disciple, you receive the same reward.

In other words, Jesus says to John, John, the man that you saw laboring for my kingdom, to come along and encourage him, I will give you the same reward that he receives. No lesser. That's, that's

stunningly gracious, is it not? And that's a reward that is guaranteed and you'll never lose it. Jesus says you will not lose that reward.

So the final thing, we spent some time earlier talking about the human heart and how the human heart has these needs. And all those needs were meant to be met in God. Don't we also have a need in our heart to be rewarded? Isn't that a fact of the human heart? That you just need to look to God. to a reward that's coming.

Many of us have learned the lesson of rewards. Many of us have learned just the power of doing some unpleasant task. Something that you've got to do that needs to be done. You don't really want to do it. And you do it by promising yourself a small reward later. Anybody ever do that? Something that you've got to do and you say, well, okay.

When I'm done with this, I'll reward myself in that way. And that works, doesn't it? Because the human heart is built that way. The human heart is built to respond to rewards, which is why the scriptures tell us over and over of the rewards that are coming. Here Jesus says to John, John, there's a reward coming.

Had you had the heart at that moment to rejoice with Him, to rejoice with Him in His work and encourage Him? Then there's a reward coming that is equal to his that will never be lost. What an astoundingly gracious promise, because he knows us, because he knows our heart. Hebrews 4 verse 12 tells us we don't have a Savior that doesn't know us.

We have one who, like us in every way, knows our heart and understands the human heart because he created it and because he shares in it now. Knowing us as he does. This is his message to us. I meet every need of yours perfectly, infinitely, eternally in me.