

This little group of Jesus and His Twelve disciples had been in Capernaum in chapter 9, and in chapter 10, verse 1, he had left there, and went to the region of Judea. Now they were going up to Jerusalem.

The timestamp of this passage is when Passover was drawing near. Perhaps it was sometime in early March?

But the going up of Jesus to Jerusalem, which is featured prominently in our passage, was for a purpose deeper than simply to celebrate the religious feast of Passover. Jesus was actually going to Jerusalem at Passover to BECOME the Passover Lamb!

If you knew you were going up the road to die there, would you be the first of your group, leading them up the hill, or would you hold back and linger and be reluctant? What was it that caused Jesus to be “walking ahead of them”?

Answer: a willing commitment. That bring us to our main point.

The commitment of Jesus to pay the cost required to save us, calls for commitment from us to live for Him.

1. The impact of Jesus on His disciples already. (v.32)

What have the disciples learned about Jesus so far?

They knew that Jesus was serious about going to Jerusalem.

Psalms 122 was one of the songs of ascent, that is, one of the songs that worshippers would sing on the way up to worship in Jerusalem, ever since King David wrote the Psalm. Listen to the words, *“I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of The LORD!’ Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem!”* Psalm 122:1-2

What the disciples had learned about Jesus so far was that Jesus was serious about going to Jerusalem.

But that is more than just physically – to geographically get there and be able to literally say that their feet are standing within the gates of the city of Jerusalem. It would be like saying, our feet have made it to the worship service. We are here in the worship of God physically. Is that enough? No. Our presence here does not itself constitute true worship. Well, what does worship entail then?

It takes also going to Jerusalem with their hearts. Psalm 84:5, *“Blessed are those whose strength is in You, in whose heart are the highways to Zion.”*

Are we in worship with our hearts?

Was Jesus going up to Jerusalem with all of His heart? Yes!

Look carefully at verse 32. *“And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid...”*

Jesus was walking ahead of the 12. The 12 were amazed. Amazed is a frequent word in the Gospel of Mark. We read on to discover that the other followers were afraid. Afraid like a teacher being intensely upset with His students, or the students being amazed to the point of being freaked out by their rabbi's intensity.

There is tension here. Jesus seems to be leading not just physically but figuratively. Jesus was bringing the disciples to Jerusalem with an intensity that amazed them.

The rabbi is intensely leading. His students are amazed.

The crowds are observing this difference, and the tension is palpable. How was the crowd reacting? Our author reports to us that the crowds were afraid.

How did this tension get broken? Jesus took action.

What action? End of verse 32 tells us what Jesus did. *"...And taking the Twelve again, He began to tell them what was going to happen to Him..."*

Jesus stopped the forward progress. Jesus pulled only His Twelve disciples away from the rest of the following crowd.

Once Jesus did that, then and only then privately did Jesus speak to the issue of why he was so intently and so energetically making His way to Jerusalem.

Jesus started out in verse 33, by *"...saying, 'See, we are going up to Jerusalem..."*

Yes. Yes. Right. We know that part. We know the direction of this road leads to Jerusalem.

That does not yet explain why we have such a pace, such a gait, such a resoluteness. That brings us to our second point.

2. The awareness of Jesus about His coming suffering. (v.33)

Jesus was going to Jerusalem to bring an offering – it was Himself! He was the worshipper bringing the offering, He was also the priest presenting the offering, and He Himself was also to become the sacrifice being offered. He was not just going through the motions reluctantly. Jesus was eagerly going to Jerusalem.

They were amazed at the genuineness of Jesus. They were already impacted by the eager steps of Jesus, heading eagerly toward His own suffering.

Jesus was the Good Shepherd, taking the lead of His sheep of how to go to God in worship, how to go to God.

The steady progress toward Jerusalem is something that is studied and repeated, and emphasized.

It is not a setback for Jesus to go to the cross.

It is not an afterthought for Jesus to go to Jerusalem.

It is the mission of Jesus to go to Jerusalem and to Jerusalem's cross.

It is why Jesus came. Consider how Jesus put it so clearly inverse 45, “...even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

This is what Jesus came for. It is why Jesus came to earth in the first place, to go to Jerusalem, and to Jerusalem’s cross.

This is the third time Jesus has said this. Mark has presented us all 3 times that Jesus has said this.

All 3 times, Jesus has made clear that what will happen to Jesus will have its implications for those who follow Jesus. Mark 8:31, The Son of Man must suffer, was followed by Mark 8:34, to come after Jesus, required taking up one’s cross, and to lose your life for His sake and for the gospel’s sake was to save it.

Again in Mark 9:31 the Son of Man would be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, but we are told that His disciples did not understand.

Again here in Mark 10:32, the scene is of a group going up to Jerusalem. Who is it? It is Jesus going ahead of His disciples. This focuses the theme that Mark has been presenting for 3 chapters. What will happen in verse 37? James and John will make a misguided request that reveals how different is their mindset from the mindset of Jesus.

Look at the end of verse 33. What will be the action of the chief priests and the scribes? They will do two things. 1) “...condemn Him to death” and 2) “...deliver Him over to the Gentiles.”

The Jews had words, but they did not have swords and spears and a cross.

It was not going to be simply a Jewish ending to the story.

Whatever happens to the Son of Man was going to take place on the world stage.

The Gentiles to whom He would be delivered, had to be the Romans.

The Roman empire had swords. The Roman empire had spears. The Roman empire had the authority to put Him to death on a cross.

Again, the point of verse 33 is to tell us the knowledge of Jesus about all of this. “...saying, ‘See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him over to the Gentiles.’”

Jesus already knew that he would suffer. Knowing this, Jesus did not back out. Rather, Jesus remained committed. That brings us to the third point.

3. The unwavering commitment of Jesus to the will of His Father. (v.34)

Now we learn why Jesus was leading the way, and why the disciples were amazed, and why Jesus was so committed. It was the will of His Father that Jesus was intent on fulfilling.

In Isaiah 50:7, we read about the suffering servant, who says, “...I have set my face like a flint...” Jesus set His face like a flint, going to Jerusalem.

Flint is a very hard rock. His unwavering determination will not be broken, like the flint rock cannot be broken. He was determined to complete the mission.

The plan of God the Father was the mission of God the Son.

Jesus went into it all, knowing how it would end. Listen to the rest of the verse from Isaiah, Isaiah 50:7, “I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame.” What does that mean? It means that Jesus knows that God the Father will not allow the sacrifice of Jesus to be meaningless.

That is why Jesus could say here in Mark 10:34, “*after three days He will rise*” referring to Himself, and to His own resurrection! Jesus knew of His suffering, yes, and Jesus also knew of His resurrection! Listen to verse 34, after being turned over to the Gentiles, Jesus knew all that would happen, “*And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise.*” Jesus knew that He would rise from the grave, and in doing so, He would fulfill the Father’s plan and purpose. Jesus knew that in rising from the dead, He would bring many other sons of God and daughters of God the Father to glory. Jesus had unwavering commitment to the will of His heavenly Father, because Jesus knew about both the suffering and the victory. Jesus was in full agreement with God the Father on the plan for redemption, from start to finish.

Jesus understood that the Son of Man from Daniel was the same as the Suffering Servant from Isaiah. Jesus knew that he is both! How can He be both? Because there is both a death and a resurrection. What is the suffering servant? One who suffers and dies for the people. What is the Son of Man? One who ushers in the kingdom in victory, authority, and divine power!

Consider the words about the Son of Man from Daniel 7:13-14, “*13 “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. 14 And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.”*”

Now do you understand the just prior teaching of Jesus in verse 31 - the last shall be first. Those who want to enter the kingdom of God must follow the path of the King. We must become last. We must take up our cross and suffer, but then be glorified.

The commitment of Jesus to suffer is a call for us to suffer.

The commitment of Jesus to the plan of the Father for ultimate victory is a call for us to live according to the future and ultimate plan of God.

We live according to the final outcome – according to the eschatological future!

Jesus was heading toward the earthly Jerusalem, but at the very same moment, Jesus was heading toward the heavenly Jerusalem.

That is key for us. We are committed to the heavenly Jerusalem of glory, and so we must also be committed to the earthly Jerusalem of suffering. We are called to suffer now, glory later.

Conclusion: Commitment is willingness. To remaining willing.

Life-changing commitment to a person is a willing substitutionary sacrifice for that person. The key word is willing. Either you opt out, or you remain willing.

You have to go through pain in order to remain committed to that person.

If you are committed to a person whose life is all put together and has no major needs, it costs you nothing. It is delightful to do so. We all have about 4 people we have ever met, who are like that.

But if you are committed to a person who has needs, a person who is in trouble, a person who is being mistreated, or a person who is emotionally wounded, it is going to cost you something to remain committed to that person.

You cannot love a broken person without feeling the hurt yourself. A transfer of some kind will be required. Energy from you will go to the other person. Their troubles become your troubles.

If you have a friend who is hurting, they need you to listen. Your fullness will go to them during that time. You will be emptied to some degree.

If you are a parent of a young child, when you wake up in the morning, your children need a lot from you to get from wake-up to bedtime. It is not just one day. You have to abandon your own independence for 20 years. You have diapers and baths, then a zillion kid books that are not entertaining to you, then zoo trips repeatedly, the same songs again and again and again and again, and the same kid movies. A zillion meals. You cannot have good macaroni and cheese with crumble on top, you have to have the Kraft macaroni and cheese. For the teen years, you become an uber driver. Then they drive on their own and you give them your car.

Do you know why there are bad parents? Because they won't commit that much. They won't allow their own lives to be disrupted that much. They won't pour themselves into their children. And the result is their children end up needy, vulnerable, and dependent on others.

This is true of the coach to player relationship, the teacher to student relationship, the supervisor to employee relationship, the friend to friend relationship, and the spouse to spouse relationship.

Commitment calls for commitment, even on the horizontal scale.

What about the vertical scale? From Savior to sinner?

What did it cost Jesus to remain committed to us?

Jesus remained committed to 12 disciples who were not all put together.

Jesus came to take the ultimate evil and make the once-for-all substitutionary sacrifice. Sin needed to be paid for. It needed to be absorbed with a very high cost. A mother wakes up and she knows what her day needs to be like to love her children well, and it makes her tired just thinking about it. Then she multiplies that day by the many days from now until her youngest child is 20.

Jesus looked across his life, and knew what it would take to save God's people. Knowing the price, Jesus was willing to pay it. Here is the thing to know – it was self-substitution of God for you.

God could say let there be light, and God could say let there be sun and moon and stars, but God could not simply say let there be forgiveness. It required commitment from Jesus to take our death in our place.

No one who saw Jesus heading to Jerusalem had ever seen anyone more committed to anything.

In The Chronicles of Narnia series, in the Book the Lion, the witch, and the Wardrobe, this willingness of Jesus is expressed this way in the story "...when a willing victim who had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor's stead, the Table would crack and Death itself would start working backwards."

We only needed one Savior. One perfect man who would remain willing to save us, when it came down to it. That is what we find in our passage tonight.

God, by His Word, and the teaching of Jesus reported by Mark here, is showing us the willing commitment of Jesus to us. The suffering of Jesus was a result of the deliberate choice of Jesus to finish the mission. Jesus was a willing sufferer. Whatever the assignment from the Father, that is the assignment Jesus took up with zeal.

We cannot study this passage without realizing some conviction that our own commitment needs to rise. Our Christianity is not some hobby, like working on building a kit car on Saturdays. Our following of Jesus is not like knitting, that we can leave it for weeks and weeks, and later pick it up whenever we have a few moments. Our faith in God is not like walking a dog on a leash, so that we can keep it contained on the sidewalk with all suburban propriety.

To follow an intense Jesus who leads us with intensity, requires that we be intense about our following.

Jesus came to give His life for others, and so we cannot simply domesticate and tame the expectations of commitment. He is our Master. He demands our all.

The Great shema from Deuteronomy 6 is Hear, Listen, obey. Love God with all your heart, soul, and strength. Jesus Himself will pick this up and repeat it in two chapters, in Mark 12:29-31, Jesus will say that of all the commandments of the Bible, "*the most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'* 31 The second is this: 'You

shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

The commitment of Jesus is not matched if we go through all the proper motions, without our hearts. Even if we attend all the worship services and Bible teaching times, and if we serve on many committees, and give out coats, hats, scarves, meals and rides, it is not enough, if we do not give Him our hearts.

The commitment of Jesus is only matched if we commit our very selves to Jesus. Jesus did nothing less for us. Jesus will accept nothing less from us.

Oh. And it will be worth it. Whatever it costs you to follow Jesus with heart commitment will be worth it. Look back two verses to Mark 10:28, where Jesus said, *"there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for My sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life."*

There are few promises in the Word of God that are wider than this one. It is an expression of the commitment of Jesus to you. And it calls for a commitment from you. Follow Jesus with all your heart, no matter the cost.

Last line of our closing hymn is our answer of yes, fully expressed this way, "All to Jesus I surrender, Lord, I give MYSELF to Thee; fill me with Thy love and power, let Thy blessing fall on me.....All to Thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender all."