

Imagine starting a new job at a company with an incredibly strong culture. You arrive first day with your resume and your habits and your assumptions about how success works, and you've got a checklist.

Impress the boss, protect your position, climb the ladder, look good in meetings. On your first day, you're watching closely who speaks first, who gets the credit, who has the power. Then something strange happens.

The most senior leader cleans up after meetings, knows everyone's name, takes responsibility when things go wrong, gives credit away publicly, listens more than they speak.

At first, you assume it's a performance, but week after week, it's consistent. And someone explains it to you. This is just how things are around here.

And slowly you realize, if you act selfishly, it feels out of place at this company. If you hoard credit, it doesn't work. If you step over people, you don't belong.

You're not just learning new tasks, you're being reformed by a culture. Success at this company looks nothing like success where you came from.

Apparently, people who join Pixar, the animation company, often say the biggest shock isn't the creativity, it's the humility. Ideas at Pixar matter more than titles. Feedback flows upward.

Ego kills the work. The culture changes the people through example. Jim Collins, in his classic book on leadership, *Good to Great*, studied top tier companies around the world over 20 years ago and wrote this best selling book out of the research.

And what he found was that the best companies in the world had a culture where servant leadership was appreciated. Mark's Gospel is Mark's attempt to explain how crazy things were when God walked among us.

The kingdom Jesus introduced people to, the kingdom of God was completely different to anything anyone had ever seen before. The culture of the kingdom is absolutely unique because it's God's dream of how people should actually live.

The Son of Man, which is a title of absolute supreme authority, Mark 10, 45 says, 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 is our verse for today.

It sums up the whole Gospel of Mark. 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.

We're in a series we have entitled Christ in Scripture, and we're working through, Lord willing, the whole Bible in two years, picking one passage from each of 66 books and using that passage to prove that every book of the Bible is as Jesus says it

is in Luke's Gospel on the Road to Emmaus. He said, the whole of the Old Testament speaks about me. It testifies about me.

And we want to see that in this series over two years, over a hundred weeks, we want to see how every book of the Bible points to Jesus as the great one who is worthy to be praised for all that he has done and all that was promised he would do.

So that's our task today to find Christ in Mark. And let's face it, that's not hard. We're in the Gospels at the moment.

We're not looking for subtle types and patterns. It's all about Jesus. The Gospel of Mark is what Christ did when he walked amongst us.

Mark is known for immediacy, isn't it? If you've studied Mark before, you'll know that it's very much one thing after the other. Boom, crash, immediacy.

It's the shortest and the punchiest of the Gospels. It's certainly known to be one of the earliest accounts of the life of Jesus. And it's said to be scribed by a man named John Mark, a co-worker with Paul and a close partner to Peter.

Mark designed the story of Jesus as a drama with three acts. The first act is set in Galilee. The second act is Jesus traveling.

And the third act takes place in Jerusalem. Each act focuses on a repeated theme in Acts 1, Chapter 1-8. In Act 1, Chapter 1-8, everyone is amazed and is wondering who is this Jesus?

It's one thing after the other that's just extraordinary. And there's a lot of, I guess, confusion and bewilderment. Who is this Jesus?

In Act 2, which is a shorter act, Chapter 8-10, the disciples are really struggling to understand what it means for Jesus to be the Messiah. And then in Act 3, Chapters 11-16, we see the paradoxical way Jesus becomes the messianic king.

So we're going to spend a little bit of time doing an overview, a flyover, a summary of the book. And then we're going to focus in on that verse in Chapter 10, Verse 45. Act 1, Chapters 1-8.

Mark begins his Gospel by quoting the ancient prophets Isaiah and Malachi, who said that God would send a messenger to prepare his people for God's arrival and rescue of Jerusalem. Mark, Chapter 1, 2-15. Let me just read the first part.

The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way.

A voice of one calling in the wilderness, prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Mark introduces John the Baptist as that messenger. And then the next thing Mark introduces is Jesus himself in Chapter 1, Versus 9.

At that time, Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the spirit descending on him like a dove.

And a voice came from heaven, you are my son, whom I love, with you I am well pleased. Mark then having introduced the messenger, and then the star of the story, the Lord Jesus, he includes a summary immediately of Jesus' core message.

He tells us that Jesus went around Galilee, the lake, announcing the good news that God's kingdom has come. Jesus is carrying forward the story of the Old Testament Scriptures about God's rescue operation for his world.

And through Jesus, Mark wants us to know that God is restoring his reign over the world by confronting and defeating evil. Jesus then invites all to live under his reign by following him as a disciple.

After his introduction to Jesus and his message, Mark places a block of stories which share the power that Jesus brings as God's kingdom comes into reality.

Jesus goes around healing people whose bodies are sick and broken and under the oppression of dark spiritual powers. He even has the power, Mark says, to forgive sins.

Many people become his disciples and follow him while others don't know what to think. As I mentioned last week in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus is not surprised by this.

In fact, he gives parables that talk about seed being sown and landing on hard places and soft places of good soil and bad soil.

Act one, even among Jesus' circle of disciples, there are many occasions in these first chapters where people are just bewildered. They are confused. They're struggling to grasp who is this Jesus.

What he is doing is just so extraordinary. I wonder, I find it a real blessing to engage, as many of us are doing, in reading large slabs of Scripture.

Because when you read large slabs of Scripture, like the whole Book of Mark in a week, you're actually uniquely drawn into the immediacy and the overwhelming sense you have of this man, Jesus.

What he did, I find I have a lovely connection with the disciples as I'm struggling to work out myself. Wow, who is he? This is just extraordinary.

So that's the first act, the first eight chapters. The second act is shorter, Mark 827 to chapter 10. It begins with a crucial conversation.

Jesus takes his disciples aside and asks, who do you say that I am? Peter answers this question quickly. He says, you are the Messiah.

But it becomes clear from the text that Peter is expecting a certain type of Messiah. The typical Messiah that everyone's looking for. He will be victorious, a military king in the line of David.

He will rescue Israel from the Roman overlords. For Jesus, in this section, we start to pick up that his idea of himself as Messiah is the suffering servant king of Isaiah 53, who is going to establish God's rule by giving up his life in Jerusalem.

Acts 2 is Jesus travelling and the struggle to understand what it means for Jesus to be the Messiah.

Act 3 is the rest of the Gospel, Chapter 11 to 16, where we have Jesus making his public royal entry into Jerusalem for Passover on the foal of a donkey in a strange way.

He's hailed as Messiah, and then he enters the temple courtyards and cleans it out with the people who are scamming a prophet for the worshipers in the sacrificial system.

This kicks off a whole week of Jesus having intense debate and confronting the religious leaders, exposing their hypocrisy. In response, it begins in motion a plan to have him killed.

This all leads up to the final night in Chapter 14, where Jesus shares the Passover meal which is a Jewish tradition.

A symbolic meal that tells the story of God rescuing the people of Israel from slavery and the death of the Passover lamb in that process. And Jesus takes these symbols and gives them an incredible new meaning.

They point to him and the liberation from sin and death that will take place through his death as the suffering servant Messiah.

From here, the story really sort of rushes along to Jesus' arrest and the trial before Israel's priests and the Roman governor Pilate, resulting in Jesus' crucifixion.

Jesus' body is placed in a tomb and on the first day of the week, Mark tells us that two women from among Jesus' disciples discover that the tombstone had been rolled away and the women are really, they just sort of freak out.

And Mark says, they fled from the tomb in terror, telling no one for they were afraid. Mark 16, 8. And most reliable early manuscripts don't have the last section.

So it's quite strange, the end of Mark's Gospel, it's literally left by saying the women were afraid. And it would seem that Mark is challenging the reader to ask the question, are you afraid?

What will you make of Jesus throughout the whole story of Mark's Gospel? Will you believe what he has taught and what he promised? Well, that's a very quick overview of the Gospel of Mark.

And clearly, Christ is in the Gospel of Mark. It's not hard to find him. We said that we would pick one verse to sum up Christ in Mark.

And so the verse we've chosen is Mark 10, 45. 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. The disciples repeatedly assume that following Jesus will lead to status and power.

And even quite sadly, after Jesus predicts his own death in Chapter 10, 32, the disciples immediately get into an odd discussion about who is the greatest. And they are asking him for positions of power and honour.

It's worth hearing the words they spoke from the text, Mark 10, 35, James and John, the sons of Zebedee come to Jesus and they say, Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask. What do you want me to do for you? He asked.

They replied, let one of us sit at your right hand and the other at your left in your glory. In response, Jesus redefines greatness and outlines what marks the culture of his kingdom. And it's beautifully articulated in the text we read, Mark 10.

Let me read it again. Even the son of man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. The text is immense in its pithy brilliance and clarity.

The son of man serves, sacrifices and satisfies. That's what he does. He serves, sacrifices and satisfies.

It's very important, I think, to notice that Mark uses the title son of man to introduce who Jesus claims to be.

The title son of man comes from Daniel chapter seven, where Daniel sees a vision of a human-like figure who approaches God himself, unlike earthly kings who gain power through violence. This figure is given authority by God.

Daniel says the son of man is given dominion, glory and a kingdom, granted authority over all nations and peoples, ruling with a kingdom that will never end.

So he is human, like a son of man, yet he receives divine authority and he shares in God's rule over creation. In the first century, this figure was understood as the ultimate ruler, the one who would defeat evil and reign forever.

So when Jesus himself refers to himself as the son of man, he is not choosing a humble title. He's claiming supreme God-given authority, which is precisely what makes Mark 10.45 so shocking. The one with ultimate authority chooses to serve.

The one destined to rule gives his life away in sacrifice to satisfy God's justice. Jesus is often depicted throughout history as a pale, insipid white man with soft skin and dainty hands and really quite effeminate in character.

Now we know that for much of his teenage life and adult life, he worked as a carpenter, so it's not that likely that he would really be soft and dainty.

That caricature is certainly nothing like the picture we see here of the son of man, a figure of complete and absolute authority.

I wonder, maybe the only way that we could truly comprehend the authority that Jesus has would be to stand with him and see him talk to a storm, like a proper big storm, and to have that storm stop in its tracks like an unruly dog and obey the

master's voice when he says, be still. I wonder if you have ever seen the authority of Jesus, the name of Jesus in your experience.

For me, when I have seen, both in Australia and overseas, people suffering from demonization, and they are going wild in a manifestation, a demonic expression of suffering.

And I've seen others and myself use the name of Jesus, the sheriff's badge that we've been given, the authority of Christ, and we can tell the powers of darkness to be still.

And that reminds me of this immense and complete power that we have in being ministers and ambassadors of the Son of Man, of Jesus. But he is the one with the authority. The Son of Man, with absolute and complete authority, did not come to be served.

I find it fascinating about human beings. That we have really different views of our own importance, don't we? Some people have low self-esteem, and they're really quite self-deprecating, but others think they are it and a bit.

They really do. I think it's sometimes cultural, it's family of origin, it's sometimes evident from a person's nationality. They're not gonna serve others.

In fact, deep within their psyche, they are above serving. That's what happens. Human beings have very different opinions about their own worth.

Of course, at the heart of racism is a deep belief that one race is better than another, intrinsically worth more. Well, Jesus is worth the most, right?

His worth is ultimate, and yet in the economy of God, in the reality of the Gospel, he doesn't come looking to be served, but to serve, it's shocking.

It doesn't even really make sense because he's the Lord and we should serve him, and he should expect us to serve him, but the text says God, God's son, at their core, they are servant-hearted.

John 13 is that incredible story where the upper room has been prepared, that last meal that Jesus had with his disciples, and they enter the upper room, and culturally, you would sit on the ground, and someone, a servant, will come and wash your

feet because they're often wearing sandals, their feet are exposed to the dirt of the road, and someone would come and wash someone else's feet. A servant would do it, and of course, they're all waiting for a servant to come and wash their feet.

And the text says, the Lord of Glory, the Son of Man, the one with the most authority in the universe, puts a towel around his waist and goes, stoops down and washes the disciples' feet, and he says, if I do this for you, you should do it for each

other. He did it because his destiny, his calling, his reason for being is and was to serve, not to be served. Wow. Wow.

Isn't that just the most complete summary of the Gospel in a few words? To serve, that's why we're here, to serve. Who are you serving?

Let me ask you an application question. How are you serving? How can you reimagine your days, your time, your tasks to see yourself serving as unto the Lord?

That's what Colossians 3 tells us. Paul writes, whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.

It's the Lord Christ you are serving. Jesus came on mission to serve, sacrifice and satisfy. The Son of Man came to sacrifice, the text says, to give his life away.

It reminds me of Ben's great message that he preached on the last week of 2025, and he had these points, get your life together, give your life away, and give your death away. Those truths I think come from the life of Jesus, don't they?

He gave his life away. Jesus came to sacrifice, to give his life away. Jesus lived to voluntarily, purposefully, give away his life.

The Son of Man didn't come to lose his life, to have his life taken, to die tragically. He came to give his life. In Scripture, sacrifice is not something that happens to you, it's something you offer.

Jesus' death is not the result of some sort of political failure or mob violence getting out of hand. It's the intentional offering of himself. Echoing the Old Testament, sacrificial system.

The animal is presented, the blood is poured out, the life is given. Jesus is saying, I'm not merely the victim here, I am the offering. The son of man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Jesus gave his whole life. This is the culture of the kingdom. The word life here is more than physical breath.

It means his will, his desires, his obedience, his whole self. The work of Christ is not a momentary act at the cross, is it? The cross is the culmination of a lifetime of self-giving.

In Mark's Gospel, Jesus gives himself to the crowds. He gives himself to the sick. He gives himself to the rejected, touching lepers.

He gives himself to the disciples. The cross is where Jesus finishes what he has been doing for a lifetime. Amen.

Our son Josiah is a doctor and he is a passionate blood donor. We were chatting about it the other day, and I was really struck by why he is so committed.

We were talking about it and he said, every day at work, he said, I prescribe bloods for sick kids and adults. But since he's a pediatric registrar, it's normally kids that he's working with. He said, if these kids can't get blood, they will die.

So when you are a blood donor, you help save people's lives. What a simple picture it really is of giving your life away. Someone gives blood so that blood, their blood could literally be given to someone else to give them life.

Sacrifice. One gives blood that that blood might give life to another. I made a funny mistake last week.

Ben pointed it out to me, quite rightly. I had said last week, a sort of a funny story that years ago, when I was very young as a pastor, I had publicly from the pulpit said, Jesus was half God, half man.

And a fellow student of mine, we'd just gone through Bible College together, came up to me and said, what you just said is heresy. Jesus was fully God, fully man. And I thought, yep, I'll never forget that.

Last week on the fly, as I was going, talking about the virgin birth, I said, it was the immaculate conception. And what my point was, that Jesus was born of the Spirit. And he was born sinless.

But the immaculate conception is a Catholic idea that as Protestants, we would actually say was heresy. Because the immaculate conception is to say that Mary herself was the sinless one. We don't believe that as evangelicals, as Protestants.

So I recant the statement I said that it was the immaculate conception. And what I meant was Jesus was born of the Virgin and he was sinless. Because he was sinless, he was able to offer perfect blood.

We can offer sinful blood that can give life, but not eternal life. Jesus was able to give his perfect blood on the cross.

Jesus came to serve and to sacrifice, to give his blood that we might be cleansed and set free from sin and give an eternal life. He gives away his life and he came to satisfy.

Even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. Jesus' sacrifice is substitutionary. The text says for many.

Give his life for many means in place of, on behalf of. Jesus' sacrifice fulfills the whole story of Scripture. Every major thread converges together.

You've got the Passover lamb, whose blood shields from judgment. The sacrificial system that requires life for atonement. Isaiah's suffering servant who pours out his life unto death.

The day of atonement, where one life stands in for the many. Mark 10:45 is Jesus saying, all of that, the Old Testament patterns. They were all pointing to me.

They were pointing to him. He is the one who pays the ransom. His sacrifice is enough to satisfy the righteous and just needs of God the Father.

Recently, there was a story on the news about a caravan company that went bust. And it was really sad. There were many, many dozens of people who had paid quite expensive caravans, hundreds of thousands of dollars, and they'd paid their last payment.

And they came to pick up the caravan and the doors are locked, the gates are locked because the administrator has come in, because the company has gone bust. When the administrators come into a business in debt, it can be brutal, incredibly brutal.

So imagine you're in debt, deeply in debt and you can't get out of it. You're trapped, interest is compounding, payments are impossible, the numbers don't care how sorry you are.

And then into that environment, a friend steps in and says, I'll cover it. They don't write a heartfelt note, they don't express empathy, they just transfer the full amount. And when the transaction clears, something changes.

There are no more letters from the debt collectors, there are no more threats, there's no more fear. Why? Because the debt has been satisfied, not reduced, satisfied.

The son of man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. Jesus came to serve, sacrifice, and satisfy. As followers of Jesus, we have been cleansed of our sin through repentance and faith.

We've been filled with the Spirit of God, empowered from the inside out so that we can always be ready to serve. We serve because our Master served. And the Spirit makes us always ready to sacrifice because that's what Romans says.

Therefore, Romans 12 verse 1, I urge you brothers and sisters in view of God's mercy to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. This is your true and proper worship. We serve in Jesus' name.

We sacrifice in Jesus' name. But we don't satisfy because hallelujah, Christ has done all the satisfying. It could be said because Christ has satisfied the Father, we can offer a pleasing sacrifice of service unto the Lord.

Amen. Because Christ has satisfied the Father, we can offer a pleasing sacrifice of service unto the Lord. So what's the culture of Northern Life?

When a person enters this community, what culture do they find? By God's grace. May it be one where Jesus is proud to see his servant-hearted people always ready to give their lives away in doing the good, prepared in advance for us to do.

Because we just want to do what our Master did. Amen. Serve.

Sacrifice. Because Jesus. Satisfied.

Serve. Sacrifice. Because Jesus.

Satisfied. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we give you all the glory for the Gospel of Mark and its grand narrative that tells us all about you.

We praise you as we hear publicly of what you did in your life and your death and your resurrection. It literally just blows our mind the thought that the Son of Man would come to serve. But it's who you are.

And we pray that you would help us follow in your footsteps. In your name we pray, Amen.