

## **“Jesus In The Everyday,”**

### **Mark 10:35-45**

[www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=mark+10:35-45](http://www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=mark+10:35-45)

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RG: You remember the late, legendary football coach, Vince Lombardi, the coach who turned around an outrageously-failing football team and made them champions, right? Well, it is said that Coach Lombardi was fond of saying, “The only difference between winners and losers is work!”

**JW: You could put that same sports-champion-making energy into applying theology to life. Sure, I believe stating it would sound like: “The only difference between people knowing Christ and not knowing Christ is applying your faith.” In the spirit of the Swink “Bear Hunt,” you know, “Can’t go under it; can’t go over it; can’t go around it; gotta go through it,” I submit to you that faith in Christ is not something that can be “handed” to you, like a birthday gift or a tax refund. To really *know* Christ, faith must be constantly learned, tired, failed, re-learned, practiced, and applied to life. To be honest-to-God disciples (that is, students) and apostles (workers) in faith, we must find Jesus in the everyday.**

RG: To know God in the everyday, and not just in church; you can do that? Okay, one could ask, “What equipment is necessary to learn and apply faith in Christ to life on this fallen planet? What is the developmental process we disciples use to know and speak our Lord?”

*Song: “Changin’ Channels,” originally by Jimmy Buffett  
Church of a thousand faces, From a long line of basket cases  
Children of moms and dads Oh, the lovely Chilson Hills  
But you’re changin’ channels, stayin’ on your toes  
You’re just changin’ channels as your grow*

*This church is full of Spirit sailors Of fisher-folk and an old retailer  
Simple lives are so deep-seated And history somehow gets repeated*

*Some folks have a bird’s-eye view Others haven’t got a clue  
Some may go and some may stay As it matters on their way  
They are changin’ channels, crazy girls and boys Changin’ channels, changin’ toys*

*Survivors of painful days Children of former ways  
Strange how we all behave Like it’s another world*

*There’s an island in life’s ocean Where the people stay in motion  
Somewhere on the Spirit’s stream Do they live when God dreams?*

*They’ll be changin’ channels, waitin’ for their sails to fill  
They’ll be changin’ channels, always will*

RG: It’s October and, if you’re like Jesse and Sue Ping, you’re planning a cold-weather vacation...a cruise. One brochure you’ve bent sent describes a “Caribbean Caper” that sounds exciting. Including a full schedule of classes and great speakers, the trip is educational, too! You read the description of one such class: *The Extensible Markup Language (XML) finally gives Java something to chew on. But, at root, an XML document is just a bog string of characters...and nothing munches character strings like Perl. While some examples in this two-day course will derive from high-minded, real-world uses of XML, most of them will come from the course leader’s own XML dialect: FlixML. You’ll come away with the ability to recognize on sight not only a XML fragment, but also a B movie.*

**JW:** You have in your hands a brochure from “GeekCruises.com.” Some marketing guru thinks you’re a geek. Don’t be embarrassed. You could be a freak; or a nerd. Or simply average; mired in the mundane.

The site explores this geek philosophy further. It’s for the tepid and the typical. Do click on the Web site if photos of plumbers plunging a toilet or guys grunting at a campsite get you excited; or if you’re in the market for absolutely average apparel: T-shirts, golf-shirts, hats, sweatshirts with the word “Average” proudly embroidered on them. Garments guaranteed to be “not all that interesting.”

**RG:** Besides cruises and Web sites, there’s also a magazine: *The Journal of Mundane Behavior*, that explores nothing but the ho-hum and hum-drum, nothing but those aspects of our everyday lives that typically go unnoticed. The publisher got the idea after reading a essay by a sociologist complaining that all the academic journals in the focus on deviant behavior...on “Jerry Springer” style issues such as transsexualism that are the rage for social scientists to study these days. It’s fair to say that sex and violence sell in our culture, but isn’t day-to-day life really more about the routine than the revolutionary? Aren’t most Americans more comfortable with sameness and predictability than spontaneity? Indeed, the very first article in our *Mundane Journal* explores the Japanese concept of public versus private space. In public venues, Japanese behavior is customarily limited to either reserved nods of recognition or restrained “good mornings” and “good afternoons.” But in an elevator, for example, one might politely adjust the crooked tie of a stranger.

**JW:** Another article complains about having to shave every day (this one’s nearer to my heart). It proceeds to uncover “the cultural significance of male facial grooming, the art of shaving, clipping and trimming and the meanings of full-beard growth.” The reading here includes “the radical politicization of facial hair [that] has been effected by both the gay and feminist movements, so that the figures of the ‘goateed club bunny,’ and the ‘drag king’ are not restricted to their assigned subcultures, but bleed through mass-media into dominant culture.” *Right...* In any case, I, for one, believe the time has come to recapture the extraordinary essence of our ordinary lives. To rediscover that the everyday and the earthly do indeed represent what is sacred in human existence. It is said the Jesus came to us “in the fullness of time;” it is time to recognize Christ in the everyday.

**RG:** Do you think Jesus would give this approach a thumbs-up?...absolutely. According to Mark’s Gospel, a couple of the disciples are squabbling about who will be the greatest in the coming kingdom. The “coming kingdom” indeed; like a lot of us, these guys are focusing more of themselves on what they could get rather than on all they have. One of these ambitious, impatient, life-un-appreciating yahoos wants to sit at Jesus’ right hand while the other insists on the left hand seat. As these guys see it, these are the most important places one could be with Christ. Jesus silences both these kingdom-climbers along with their fellow disciples by comparing their behavior to the graceless actions of folks Jesus refers to as “the Gentiles.”

**JW:** The Gentiles are the people of the world whose “great ones are tyrants over them” (10:42)...rude, crude and unfaithful folks who are un-educated about and unaware of the ways of God and, therefore, don’t speak or apply any faith in life. They could care less about finding Jesus in the everyday. Ouch! Here Jesus shames his followers into understanding the folly of their ways. “You are acting like Gentiles,” Jesus jabs... wanting these guys to zip it, can it, cut it out! Then Christ really gets to the point: “Whoever wishes to become great among you,” Jesus continues, “must be your servant...” “And,” the master explains, “whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.” Jesus strikes a blow for the Average Person, instructing, indeed insisting, that the greatest among us are the servants, and the most extraordinary of leaders are the most ordinary of disciples.

The path to true greatness is not special seating in the kingdom; it is a willingness to be ‘slave of all’ in the rough-and-tumble everyday world. That is, to recognize Jesus, and when needed, be Jesus in the everyday.

*Song: “It’s My Job,” by Mac McNally*

*In the middle of late last night I was sittin’ on a curb.*

*I didn’t know what about, but I was fellin’ quite disturbed.*

*A street sweeper came whistlin’ by he was bouncin’ every step.*

*It seemed strange how good he felt.*

*So I asked him why he swept.*

*He said, "It's my job to be cleaning up this mess And that's enough reason to go for me.  
It's my job to be better than the best And that makes the day for me."*

*I got an uncle who owns a bank; he's a self-made millionaire.  
He never had anyone to love, never had no one to care.  
He always seemed kind of sad to me, and I asked him why that was.  
And he told, "It's because, in my contract there's this clause  
That says it's my job to be worried half to death And that's the thing people respect in me.  
It's my job, but without it be less than what I expect from me."*

*Now, I've been lazy most all my life, sing' songs and sleepin' late.  
And any manual labor I've done was purely by mistake.  
If street sweepers can smile, then I've got no right to be upset.  
But sometimes I still forget.*

*'Till the sun comes up and the day is set And the song hits home and you feel that sweat  
It's my job to be different than the rest And that's enough reason to go for me.  
It's my job to be better than the best And that's a tough break for me.  
It's my job to be cleaning up this mess And that's enough reason to go for me.  
It's my job to be better than the best And that makes the day for me.*

RG: Let me illustrate by looking at two of my favorite historical examples. These examples are not going to be (again) Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King, Jr., or Gandhi. Instead, let's look at Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and David Loxterkamp. How do you explain the behavior of former NBA star Kareem Abdul-Jabbar? Almost a decade after leaving professional basketball, Mr. Abdul-Jabbar, a most religious man, decided to return to the sport he loved by accepting a coaching position with the Alchey Falcon...a high-school team of mostly White Mountain Apaches. As an African-American among Native Americans, Kareem had to learn a great deal about his athletes and the tribe. He discovered surprising cultural traditions that made it difficult to coach the team; such as Indian discomfort at being singled out for criticism. Coach Abdul-Jabbar grew in sensitivity to the special challenges faced by young Native Americans. By working with his students and coaching them, the new coach moved from an historical appreciation for the Apaches as a people to a new understanding of them as individuals.

**JW: Did he lord over them as a once great NBA star?... not at all. He served them. He was first among them by acting as their coach, their teacher, their helper and their servant. In the end, he may have learned more than he actually taught during his time as Kareem the Coach.**

RG: Or take David Loxterkamp, a family practitioner in Belfast, Maine. He once wrote a book: *The Journal of a Country Doctor*; which is an account of one year in his life and the lives of those he serves. It is clear from Dr. Loxterkamp's chronicle that one need not look to big city emergency rooms for medical drama; since the dramatic, the tragic and the transcendent moments of medicine are all to be found in a small-town doctor's life.

Such intense moments are interspersed with the more mundane matters of breakfast with his family, Easter Sunday service at church, and supermarket shopping. The extraordinary, it seems, rises out of the ordinary. In the pages of Dr. Loxterkamp's journal you can meet churchgoers and millworkers and lobster fishermen, backsliders, young and old, the just-born and the soon-to-die.

**JW: At the heart of the book are relationships...relationships between the doctor and his friends, his neighbors, and his patients. And it is out of these relationships that the greater issues arise; issues of life and death, faith and meaning.**

RG: Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, a Hall-of-Famer considered great by the sporting world, discovers true greatness is found in an unexpected place...a place of service. Dr. David Loxterkamp found that topnotch

medicine doesn't automatically require high-tech hospitals...it dose require quality relationships with people who happen to be patients.

**JW: Kareem and David are both doing great things, but you won't see them getting into arguments about who is the greatest basketball player or the best physician. They have something else on their minds.**

RG: Don't make the mistake that this is a call to be average; to be satisfied with mediocrity. There is no virtue in underachieving. On the other hand, this is not a rant against greatness. The point Josh and I are making is that Jesus ramps up the meaning.

**JW: Real greatness moves beyond what we are able to achieve for ourselves. True greatness moves to what we are able to do for others.**

RG: Such achievement is called person-centered discipleship. Neither greatness nor being mundane are virtues in and of themselves. Being mundane without service is shallow; greatness without service is arrogance. Jesus calls upon those upon whom greatness has neither been thrust nor achieved. Jesus calls upon these folks to take on the mantle of greatness by moving beyond their average attempts at living life to *helping him create life through service.*

**JW: Be a geek? Be a nerd? Be a wimp? Do you have some self-doubts, decided long ago to move your wardrobe off the fashion bus? Be gay, be straight, be been-married-more-than- once? Be a Cubs fan...be a Yankees fan? Be a republican, a libertarian, a democrat, a socialist? Well, so be it...we are who we can be.**

**But if you're person-centered, not self-centered, you are certainly a cut above the crowd. Any crowd! You will discover Jesus is the everyday.**

Song: "Celebrate," by Rare Earth

*I just want to celebrate another day of livin'  
I just want to celebrate another day of life*

*Put my faith in the people, but the people let me down  
So, I turned the other way and I carry on anyhow*

*Put my hand on a dollar bill, but the dollar bill flew away  
But the sun is shinin' down on me anyway*

*Don't let it all get you down, no,  
no Don't let it turn you around*

*Well, I can't be bothered with sorrow,  
and I can't be bothered with pain*

*I'm usin' up my time feelin' fine everyday  
I just want to celebrate another day of livin'*

*I just want to celebrate another day of life  
I just want to celebrate!*

## LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

For Sunday, October 23, 2011's Sermon

Foundational Scripture: Mark 10:35-45

<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=186041218>

**Featured Scripture Reflection:** <sup>42</sup>So Jesus called them and said to them, 'You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. <sup>43</sup>But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup>and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. <sup>45</sup>For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.' – **Mark 10:42-45** <http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=186041247>

**Opening Questions:** Share about a time when you read or heard a Scripture passage that inspired you. Share about a time when you read or heard a Scripture passage that convicted you.

### Scripture Questions

#### What is the scripture saying?

- Read **Mark 10:13-16**. <http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=186041324> What stands out to you about this story? What questions does it raise? What do you like about this story? What do you dislike about this story?
- Read **Mark 10:35-45**. <http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=186041218> What words or phrases stand out to you when you read this passage? How does it compliment the previous passage?
- Read **Philippians 2:1-11**. <http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=186041286> Think about what you've just read. What do we learn about Jesus in this passage?

#### How is God speaking through Scripture?

- What is the "Good News" in these passages of Scripture?
- After discussing and pondering these passages, how do these passages affect me?

#### God's word

- What is God's invitation to you?

#### A prayer

God, your son Jesus told us to serve others and then showed us how to love others. Help us to follow the example of Christ by living a life of loving service.