

Unleashed

September 2-3, 2017

Welcome to Crossroads. I'm Christy Gibas, the Weirton Campus Pastor and we are thrilled you're worshipping with us this Labor Day weekend. Today we are going to be in the gospel of Mark, chapter 10. You can go ahead and turn there using your Bible or smart device. If you would like a Bible, raise your hand and someone will gladly bring you one.

The last couple of weeks our messages were about Awakening, meaning we come to life again in our faith. Awakening means we have a new awareness that we did not have before. A couple weeks ago we said, if we become "awakened" in our faith [We Live Differently](#). And last week was the very essence of different at Crossroads. We stretched ourselves and practiced prayer with one another and for one another. I hope you were able to do that over the past week. That's really living differently. Walking in our faith in a new way is not just telling someone, "I'll pray for you," but doing it right then and there.

Today we are going to connect these ideas by talking about living life *Unleashed* outside these walls and in our workplace. In our household we have a certain philosophy surrounding the Labor Day Holiday and that is, "always celebrate Labor Day with labor." We always have some outdoor home project we're trying to complete by the end of summer. This photo shows the "summer of the pergola." My husband always says, "you are management and I'm labor." I have vision and he has backbone. We make a great team that way, but it appears as if he is slipping over into management in this photo.

It is important to connect our faith to what we do apart from our lives at church. A study cited in an article in Psychology Today said, "the average person will spend 90,000 hours at work." <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/thrive/201102/finding-happiness-work> Think about that. In our day, we get up, spend an hour or so getting ready to go to work, then we drive 30 minutes or more to get there, then we spend 8-12 hours at work, drive home another 30 minutes, eat dinner, get something accomplished at home, go to sleep, then do it all over again. Most of our time is spent outside the home earning a living. If we spend most of our time there, let's talk about connecting our faith to our work!

Let's look together at Mark 10:32. Mark wasn't an apostle himself, but he was a friend of the apostle Peter. The gospel of Mark comes from conversations that Peter has with his friend Mark, telling him of his eyewitness accounts of his time spent with Jesus. Start in verse 32 with me. ³² ***They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again, he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him.*** ³³ ***"We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son***

of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles,³⁴ who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.”

Verse 32 states, Jesus was leading the way. Jesus and His followers were on their way to Jerusalem. At this point, Jesus takes His disciples aside and tells them what is about to happen to Him. The scripture says, “again”....meaning these guys really aren’t getting it. Jesus has told them before what is going to happen. But they aren’t understanding. Jesus said, Guys, I’m about to be handed over to the Gentiles (or the Romans.) Not only am I going to be executed, but it’s going to be ugly. I will be mocked, humiliated, spit on, flogged and then killed. Jesus knew exactly where He was going, He knew exactly what was ahead and He was leading the way.

This was a moment to be marked with his disciples. This was a special moment. He was trying to connect with them and teach them something that they didn’t fully grasp. Jesus knew where He was headed. He was headed to Jerusalem to give His very life. He was headed there to pay the price for us. He was about to do something incredibly radical. The radical actions of Jesus require a radical faith lived outside these walls of our church.

And here’s what they said, get ready for verse 35: ***³⁵ Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.”*** Never mind what you just said, Jesus. We need something. We need a favor. Will you do whatever we ask...They were like... “yeah, yeah, yeah flogging, spitting, but Jesus, we need something.”

I know some of you know what this is like. I just poured my heart out to you. We just had this special moment where I’m sharing my very soul with you and you didn’t hear one word I just said. All you married people say, “Amen.”

If you are a parent, you are likely to have had this discussion. You can be deep in a teaching moment with your child. Because their little faces are looking at you and leaning in, you think they hear the important wisdom you are imparting to them and in the silent moment they respond, “Are we done with this yet?”

Jesus had to be more than a little frustrated. He knows what they want. He knows where their hearts are. But Jesus makes them say it. Jesus makes them come out with it in plain language. In verse 36 he asks, ***³⁶ “What do you want me to do for you?”*** ***³⁷ They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.”*** They believed that at some point Jesus was going to overthrow their government. They believed He would be king. They still didn’t understand what Jesus was saying. They knew somehow glory was ahead for Jesus. And if this was the case, they wanted to be right beside Him. They wanted some of the power Jesus was going to have.

Jesus responds to them: ***³⁸ “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?”*** ***³⁹ “We can,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I***

drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with,⁴⁰ but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.”⁴¹ When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John.

Jesus was asking if they could take part in what He was headed to Jerusalem for. He was asking if they had the stomach to endure what He was leading them to, and they answered, Yes! We got this! They didn't understand the magnitude of what He was asking. All they knew, was if Jesus was King of all, they wanted to be right there with Him. They wanted a taste of the glory and power that a King would have. They wanted what all of us want from time to time. They wanted more.

And when the other ten guys heard this they were more than a little miffed. It was probably because they wanted more, too. They wanted to have power and glory when Jesus overtook the government as King with the highest honor. It's easy to read this passage and think James and John were acting like jerks. But in an honest evaluation, I can identify with them. Their ambition was high. And really, I think they longed for what we all long for...something better, something changed.

We want better. Especially when we think of the workplace. We can come and spend time at church and feel pretty good. We can connect with people in small group and get into our "Holy Huddles" and feel pretty good. See, these guys were in Jesus' presence, and it probably felt pretty good.

If Jesus was about to overthrow the government, it would be natural to want to have a great position with Him. And James and John, though they seem like jerks asking Jesus to sit beside Him in his kingdom, were not entirely wrong. Think about this with me; if we truly want better and different outside these doors we must recognize we need Jesus for that!

If you want to live your life unleashed, you have to be close to the King! What we long for at work and in life is transformation. Transformation does not begin by the people at work changing. Transformation begins with change in us. Change in us does not begin with life at Jesus' side; it begins with life at His feet. If we want something amazing to happen in our work, our homes, our neighborhoods, being in the presence of the King is a necessity. We can identify with the disciples. We can mistakenly think that following Jesus will give us some perks or benefits. But we still live in this broken world. James and John were looking for glory. And one thing they had right was that they wanted to be near the king. An unleashed faith requires us to draw near to the King.

If we want to have a workplace that's transformed, we must show up transformed. Radical change at work begins with us. ***⁴² Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ⁴³ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.***

Jesus sets them straight. He says this is how culture leads; people with power are tyrants looking out for themselves. It's a me culture. It's all about the guy at the top.

He responds, "Not so with you." A simple statement, yet so powerful. "Not so with you." He says we are different. Jesus gives the most counter culture advice He could possibly give.

If you want to be great, you must be a servant. This was very counter-intuitive then and it's still counter intuitive now. Yet, this amazing principle will unleash the power of God in our lives if we would apply this simple teaching of Jesus: "You first." I know what you're thinking, "I won't get anything done if it's not somewhat about me." Stick with me here, this is not a passive posture. Jesus was not a passive guy. This is not a nonproductive mind set; Jesus got a lot done!

This teaching is powerful and can help you live an unleashed life at work and beyond. Day in and day out, you go to work and try to eke out a living doing the best you can. Some of you are frustrated. Some of you are hoping and praying God will get you out of your work place and into your next job. Some of you are wishing you had some Christian friends at work. Some of you wish you could make a greater impact at work. Some of you are sitting here thinking, "Sure Christy, my workplace would be great if I went to work at church like you."

I'm with you. I spent the first part of my career in the secular workplace. Then in 2003, I quit to do ministry and had some overlap. I worked in church, and worked running a consultant business. Overlap of church and world so I know about working in the world too. My career began in Financial Sales in the banking industry. I was one of those people every day, trying to get ahead to the next place. I worked hard to get business, and I worked hard building our brand. After a measure of success, I was promoted to plan and open a new location in a new market in the Youngstown Region. The model was to hire sales people and train them to become bankers. And that's exactly what I did. I used to teach our sales people a technique called WIIFM. (pronounced wif-em) It stands for, "What's in it for me?"

That was pretty much how I lived my life in those days. We garnered success and built our brand. Soon, I was promoted to head a second location, then a third. Living for me and my glory just produced emptiness. I was like these guys that were following Jesus in the scripture we read. I wanted more money, more power, more glory, more success, more employees, more responsibility, more branches, more me, me, me. The job of everyone under me was to make me look good. The job of everyone there was to get across the finish line so I could have a "W" in the win column. Now hear me, winning isn't wrong. Working hard isn't wrong. But everything I did produced emptiness, and I made very little impact other than for myself.

Jesus, the greatest Leader of all time told His disciples the model they were looking for in leadership was the model of the world. It's the model of Self. It's the model where the guys at the top of the org chart run everyone at the middle and bottom of the org chart. It is the model that says, "I am on top, therefore, you serve me. I am the greatest, I have the most power, and everything you do must be for me." And the greatest leader of all time says, "Not so with you." Jesus said if you want to become great, become a servant. If you want to be first, become a slave.

Jesus gives a key ingredient to become unleashed. There is only so far we can go in the work place running on self. There is only so much impact we can have for ourselves. But, if we apply this principle at work, everything changes. Some of you are sitting here thinking, That's nice Christy, but I'm not a leader at work. I don't lead anything there. Or, I'm retired, or I'm at home with my kids. I'm speaking to you today too. You can unleash your faith using this principle at work, in your neighborhood, with your friendships, where you volunteer.

You do not have to be a boss at your work place to lead. You do not have to be president of your neighborhood association to lead your neighbors. You do not have to be on city council to lead your city. People are starving for leadership, and we must unleash our faith and live each day as Christ taught to stir up awakening around us. For us to have high impact faith, it must be lived out not just at church, not just in small group, but in our Monday-Friday lives as well. God is calling us to lead like Jesus. If we are going to win our workplace, we should be "the real deal."

To connect people to Jesus at work, we must be authentic in our faith. If people get the idea that we are people that go to church on Sunday, you know what they will say about you? They will say, "Don't swear around so and so, she's religious, he's religious." It's not enough for people to watch their mouths around us at work because they know we are Christians. It's not enough that they watch the swearing because we go to church. Someone controlling swearing around you doesn't produce life change. Life change happens through surrendering to Jesus. We aren't looking for people to be good in our presence. We want people to experience Jesus.

Genuine faith loves people in a genuine way. The world will serve people who seemingly deserve it somehow. An authentic faith serves the one who is annoying. An authentic faith meets people where they are and offers themselves in service where they are able. Authentic faith offers Christ rather than self. Some of you are thinking, "Christy, you don't know who I work with." Hear me; Jesus connected with people that were undesirable. Broken people liked Jesus. Sinners liked Jesus. So how do we connect like Jesus did? We follow His lead.

This one simple principle of putting others first can change everything. Jesus is basically saying, lets flip the org chart around. "You first." It's a powerful thing to serve the needs of others.

Several years ago, my husband's job was downsized. He ended up taking a job for the city as a garbage man. He shined in serving others. He was not a leader of anything at the time, just a guy slinging trash on a garbage route. But he led through serving. He assisted older people with their trash from time to time when it didn't make it to the curb. He humbly served those he worked with, and became a leader impacting co-workers. This heart of service allowed him to have faith conversations that he normally wouldn't have had. His faith was unleashed through service. My respect level swelled for him. Frank wasn't leading anything through his position at work, but through humble service, he was the leader making an impact in his workplace. When we live in a place of authentic faith, life change can happen in those around us. We will have more opportunities to share and serve.

My authentic faith change began in the late 90's. I surrendered to Christ and my life began to change. People saw a difference in me. The things I once did, I no longer did. I wasn't perfect, and people saw that too but I wasn't afraid to say I was sorry. I led differently. And authentic faith produced life change. I prayed for a co-worker of mine who was a good friend. I realized my life was changing because of Jesus and she was still stuck in the same mess. That was over fifteen years ago. I had the opportunity to pray with her a couple of years ago and had the opportunity to meet her and her husband at the hospital during a significant medical crisis. A year ago, I served communion to her at our campus in Weirton.

As we conclude, I want to tell you why all this matters. What we do today impacts tomorrow. It may be years down the road. I discovered living for me just wasn't enough. And, respectfully, you living for you just isn't enough. If you want to live your life unleashed, you must live your life surrendered to Jesus.

A life unleashed is a life surrendered to Jesus. 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.*** We spend most our time at work, building our little empires, paying our bills, doing what we need to do to take care of our families, but it just isn't enough. We spend hour upon hour at our jobs, and it's still temporary. If I were to die tomorrow, Crossroads will continue. If your life is over tomorrow, someone else will pick up and do your job. After a few weeks, months, years, we will be forgotten. We work so hard to gain some glory in this life, but our own glory is just not worth living for. Our work is not worth giving our entire life.

But the Glory of Jesus, that is something worth living for. That is something worth giving our life for. Our work, our hobbies, our homes, our stuff, that's all temporary. But a surrendered life to Jesus is what lasts. It matters how we live out our lives at work. A truly unleashed life is a surrendered life. Our lives no longer reflect culture, but the greatest one who ever lived. And when we live differently, we will impact others for Christ's glory. Let me pray for you.