

The Spiritual MRI

Pastor Jason Epperson on True Greatness, Selfish Ambition, Servanthood, and Representing Jesus

Program Summary

In this Monday edition of Mark & Friends, Pastor Jason Epperson continues through Mark 9 and invites listeners to undergo a 'spiritual MRI.' After Jesus tells His disciples that He will be rejected, killed, and rise again, they respond by arguing about which of them is greatest. Jason uses that painful contrast to expose the 'imposter' within - the selfish old self that wants to represent me rather than Jesus. Jesus then redefines greatness: whoever wants to be first must become last and servant of all. Through the image of an orchestra following its conductor, the humility of Jesus in Philippians 2, the child Jesus places among the disciples, and the simple act of giving a cup of water, the message asks whether my life is marked by status, recognition, control, and expected results or by loving and serving people because they matter to God. Repentance becomes beautiful coaching from the Great Physician: confess what is in my head so He can transform my heart, leaving less of the imposter and more of Jesus.

Key Takeaways

My created identity is to bear and represent Jesus; the selfish 'imposter' wants instead to make life about me. Like an orchestra watching its conductor, life becomes disordered when I take my eyes off Jesus and begin comparing myself with people around me. The disciples heard Jesus describe His coming suffering and death, yet quickly turned to the question of who among them was greatest. A spiritual MRI asks what my instinctive reactions reveal about selfish ambition, insecurity, status, and love. Repentance is not merely humiliation; it is God's gracious coaching that helps me become who I was created to be. Jesus measures greatness differently from the world: greatness is not how many people serve me but my willingness to serve. Philippians 2 shows Jesus repeatedly lowering Himself - becoming human, servant, sacrifice, and curse - before being exalted. Serving those who bring me no earthly benefit reveals whether my love is truly shaped by Jesus. Jealousy over another person's ministry or success can expose the same status-driven spirit Jesus was correcting in the disciples. The church should encourage other believers and churches that faithfully proclaim Jesus rather than treating kingdom work as competition. A cup of water matters to God; ordinary service offered in Jesus' name has kingdom value. If I stop serving vulnerable people because they do not respond the way I hoped, my service may have been partly about the result I wanted rather than love. Confessing selfish thoughts gives the Great Physician access to transform the heart. Because Jesus has patiently served, loved, and given grace to me, I can keep serving and loving others without demanding something in return.

Scripture References

Mark 9:30-41, Mark 9:35, John 3:16, Philippians 2:5-11, 2 Timothy 1:7, Matthew 20:26-28, Mark 10:45, Philippians 1:15-18, Matthew 10:42, Romans 12:2

Quote of the Day

"Greatness is not measured in how many people serve you. Greatness is measured in our willingness to serve."

Broadcast Notes

Mark opens with Mark 9:35: 'Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last and the servant of all.' Pastor Jason Epperson then introduces the idea of a spiritual MRI - an examination that exposes the 'imposter' or old self that wants to represent Jason rather than Jesus. He compares life with Jesus to an orchestra watching its conductor: when

musicians keep their eyes on the conductor, they represent his direction; when they detach and focus elsewhere, everyone suffers. In Mark 9, Jesus privately tells the disciples that He will be delivered into human hands, killed, and rise after three days. Yet on the road they argue about which of them is greatest. Jason asks listeners to examine their own reactions when someone else receives hard news, opportunity, success, or status: do I instinctively love and serve, or do I maneuver for myself? He describes repentance as beautiful - God's coaching that reveals selfishness so believers can become more like the people they were created to be. Jesus sits down as a rabbi and redefines greatness: the first must become last and servant of all. Jason connects this to Philippians 2, where Jesus lowers Himself from divine glory to humanity, servanthood, sacrifice, and the curse of the cross. Jason then speaks tenderly about his aging parents, his father's dementia and stroke, and the hope that suffering hurts but does not destroy because restoration is coming. Jesus' use of a child illustrates receiving and serving those with little status or earthly benefit. The disciples' attempt to stop someone ministering in Jesus' name exposes another form of selfish status and competition. Jason applies this to churches and Christian leaders, urging believers to encourage others who faithfully proclaim Jesus. Finally, the cup of water becomes the last MRI question: why do Christians sometimes stop serving vulnerable people? Jason says service can become distorted when the motivation is to make people become what we want. True service keeps loving because God is shaping the servant, not merely because the recipient responds as hoped. Mark closes by praying for less of the imposter, less selfish ambition, and more of Jesus.

Practical Applications

Ask the spiritual-MRI question when I react strongly: Am I representing Jesus or myself?

When comparison begins, deliberately put my eyes back on Jesus rather than on the person beside me.

When someone receives difficult news, resist making the moment about how it affects my position, convenience, or future.

When someone else succeeds, practice being as genuinely glad for them as I would be for someone in my own family.

Treat conviction as gracious coaching from God rather than an invitation to shame.

Choose one low-visibility act of service that brings me no recognition or advantage.

Ask whether my definition of greatness is shaped more by status and achievement or by Jesus' example of servanthood.

Encourage another church, ministry, or believer who is faithfully proclaiming Jesus rather than viewing them as competition.

Look for a person who is easy to overlook and offer practical care without expecting anything in return.

Give the 'cup of water' - do one simple, tangible act of kindness because the person matters to Jesus.

If I am frustrated that someone I served has not changed as I hoped, surrender my desired outcome and continue to love wisely.

Confess selfish thoughts honestly before they become actions: 'Jesus, this is what is in my head; transform my heart.'

Remember that pain can still coexist with joy and hope because Jesus promises restoration.

At day's end ask: Did the music of my life sound more like the imposter today, or more like Jesus?

Today's Challenge

For seven days, conduct one spiritual MRI each evening. Recall one moment of comparison, ambition, irritation, jealousy, service, or someone else's success. Ask: 'Was I representing Jesus or myself?' Name the selfish thought without hiding it, thank God for revealing it, confess it, and choose one servant-hearted response for the next day. End with: 'Less of the imposter. More of Jesus.'

Closing Prayer

Father, give me courage to let Your light search me. Show me where the imposter - my old selfish self - still wants attention, status, control, recognition, or advantage. Keep my eyes on Jesus, my true Conductor, so that the music of my life reflects His direction rather than my comparison with others. When someone else succeeds, help me rejoice. When someone suffers, help me love and come alongside them instead of making the moment about me. Thank You that conviction and repentance are gifts, not reasons to hide in shame. Coach me into becoming who You created me to be. Redefine greatness in my heart. Make me willing to be last, to serve, to notice the overlooked, and to give the cup of water without demanding a return. Free me from competition with other believers and ministries that faithfully proclaim Jesus. When service becomes difficult or people do not respond as I hoped, purify my motives and keep me loving wisely. I confess the selfish thoughts in my head and invite You to transform my heart. Thank You for patiently serving, loving, and giving grace to me. May there be less of the imposter and more of Jesus in me today. In His name, Amen.

About Today's Speaker

Pastor Jason Epperson serves at CU Church and regularly teaches God's Word with a conversational style, vivid illustrations, personal honesty, and direct application. His continuing messages through the Gospel of Mark challenge listeners to examine not only outward behavior but the motives and identities beneath it. In this study of Mark 9:30-41, Jason uses the picture of a spiritual MRI to contrast selfish ambition and worldly status with Jesus' definition of greatness: becoming a servant, loving people without demanding a return, and representing Jesus rather than self.

About Today's Host

Mark Burns is General Manager of the WLUJ Family of Stations and Great News Radio Network and host of Mark & Friends. For decades, Mark has been involved in Christian radio and ministry, with a heart for helping listeners know Jesus and grow deeper in God's Word. Through Mark & Friends, he brings pastors, ministry leaders, teachers, missionaries, authors, and everyday believers around the microphone for biblical teaching, testimony, conversation, and encouragement. His desire is that each program help listeners learn, grow, and faithfully live out their relationship with Jesus.

Proofread Broadcast Transcript

Reading from Mark chapter 9, verse 35.

Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last and the servant of all. That was Mark chapter 9, verse 35. O magnify the Lord with me, let us exalt His name together.

It's Monday, September 28th, 2026. Welcome to Mark & Friends. Today, Pastor Jason Epperson of CU Church asks us to undergo a little spiritual MRI.

Am I representing Jesus or myself? And what does Jesus say true greatness actually looks like? Here's Pastor Jason. Jesus is what we're searching for. So this MRI you're about to get today, this MRI I'm going to get today is this.

It's pointing out the imposter you call you. Did you hear that? In your life and in my life, we think our thoughts are who we are. But the reality is when this hand came off, who we are, who we're created to be is an image bearer of Jesus.

My opportunity in this world is to be the representative, the ambassador of who? Jesus. But there's something inside of me that wants to be the ambassador for Jason. That's the imposter.

The old man, you've heard me say it that way. The old man must die. The new man must live.

But today in this passage, I just want you to know this. I've also described it this way. Lacey talked about this morning when I was leaving the house.

She says it's like a conductor in a chorus. And I'm glad she gives me like musical things because I don't think that way. My wife does.

I just think about like hitting people and catching balls and shooting. And yeah, my mind's pretty simple. Jesus, sports, family, you, that's it.

But a conductor, when you when you have an orchestra in front of you and a conductor is conducting this orchestra, it's in his timing. When an orchestra, when a band is looking at the conductor, when their eyes are on the conductor, they're not concerned about who's sitting to the right to their left. They are.

They're literally representing what he is directing them to do. And the sound is, y'all, it's good. But the moment that you take your eyes off the conductor, the moment you detach is the moment that everyone around you suffers.

Including my ears that has to listen to it today. Let's be willing to recognize that maybe the things we're struggling with aren't someone else's fault. Maybe our hurts, our insecurities are because we're not attaching to him.

You with me? It starts this way in the passage. And so they've just come down off this hill and it starts here. It says they went from there and passed through Galilee.

And he did not want anyone to know for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them. So he tells his disciples, it's like, hey, fellas, it's just you. You got to hear me say this.

The son of man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him. And when he is killed after three days, he will rise.

But they didn't really understand him saying, and they were afraid to ask him. So Jesus says this simply, hey, I'm going to die. They're going to kill me.

Earlier, he said the word even reject. Do you remember? I'm going to be rejected by man. I'm going to die.

I'm going to suffer. But then three days later, I'm going to rise. This is the conversation.

Your closest friends. You're about to tell the hardest news you have. Jesus is telling them, hey, this is what's coming.

Hey, this is what's going to happen. Because he wants to prepare their hearts, prepare their minds. He wants to take away the fear.

See, fear happens. Like the way you remove fear is by continually trusting in the God that's greater than it. And that's what he's trying to do.

So how would you react to this news? That's the MRI part. How do we react to the news? So the illustration is this. Is you are brought in and a close friend tells you that they are going to die.

Or they are sick or whatever it is. But they get hard news. Or maybe it's this.

Is you find out a preacher who's preached in a church for 50 years. Or a CEO of a company who's worked there forever. Or someone has a job that you're in your world.

They've done it really well for a long time. And they're about to retire. They're about to leave.

Do you have this moment to celebrate their life? To encourage them in this moment? Or is it a positional moment where it's like, man, I'd sure like their job. Or I wonder how much I'm going to inherit. Or man, I hope I don't have to like, I hope this doesn't get drawn out and I have to like suffer through it.

But this is the reaction to what the disciples do. And when he came to Capernaum and when he was in the house, he asked them, hey guys, what were you talking about? Like after I told you that, what have you been discussing? But they kept silent for on the way, they argued with one another about who was the what greatest. Think about that.

I don't know about you, but it'd be kind of devastating to me. Like for me to sit down with my people and tell them, hey, this is what's about to happen. And this is going to be really hard.

And instantly their conversation when they walked away was not, man, how can we encourage him? How can we love him? How can we come alongside him? How can we help him find joy in a hard moment? You with me? You can nod your heads like that's what we want, right? Versus, okay, well, if that's the case, then like, who's the boss? Who's going to be at the right hand? Who's the greatest? Y'all just imagine that. Imagine you sitting down with your kids and there's a road in front of you. That's really hard.

You know, in this moment in time, you've got somewhere between nine months, probably before the death of Jesus is where we're at in the book of Mark. Six to nine months away from this moment. Jesus tells you about this moment.

And instead of like, hey, how can we do this? How can we love you? How can we encourage you? Hey, even disagreeing with him is better than like looking at him and saying, he walks away, everyone stops. Okay, so like, he usually sleeps there. Can I, I think I want that spot.

Like, I can't imagine. You with me? Am I the only one who thinks this? But here's my question. In my own life, this is what Jesus has said to me.

This is what he said to you. Just a couple verses you can look at and know just by looking at a television screen on a weekend. For God's love, the world that he gave is one and only what? That whoever believes in him should not perish, but have what? So in this world, the key to this world living eternally, the key to this world of experiencing God on this earth, the key to this world of experiencing love, like, like really love, like unfailing love.

Not that the kind of love that breaks down, not the kind of love that cheats, not the kind of love that quits, like the kind of love to restore who you're what? Created to be that kind of love is offered in the character, the nature and the spirit of the creator of the universe. And his name is Jesus. I know that.

And lots of us in this room, guess what? We know that. But do we live our lives thinking, man, how do I love people and show them that news? How can I prepare them for their hard moments? How can I prepare them for their diagnosis? How can I love them, encourage them, serve them, prepare them for these hard things that are in front of them? How can I help them get ready for all of each? Like, how can I live out the character, the nature of Jesus? Instead, it's like, man, how am I going to maneuver to get this role in the job? What do I need to say to that person so they like me? Like, that's convicting for me. Maybe I'm the only one.

But it's like, is our lives marked by the greatest passion, the why behind everything we do to restore, to like, really love someone in a way that shows them who he is? That's the MRI. You see it now, y'all? I can literally think in my life of moments, my thoughts went to selfishness versus Jesus. And I have two choices in the moment when you find out something's wrong.

You can just skip past it and whistle a tune. Or, that was Andy Griffith's show, by the way. Just hit me.

That's not in my notes. You're welcome. But that's like, I just like, let's just talk straight with each other for a second.

That's what we do. Or, man, God, I don't want to be a selfish dude. God, I want to love my, I want to be as happy for them for their successes as I am for my own family or my successes.

I don't want to see them fail so I can, like, Lord, help me not be an imposter. Because being an imposter leads us to hurt and pain and people around us to feel the same way. Like, if you think listening to the imposter is greater than listening to Jesus, y'all, you don't believe what you say you believe.

But that's the MRI. That's the scan all week long. I don't want you to, like, listen to me.

Repentance isn't a hard, like, repentance is beautiful. Repentance is God coaching you up so that you can become who you're created to be. It's like, oh, I'm so bad.

Yes, you're bad. So am I. Get over it. Let's, let's say sorry.

Let's figure this out so we can become who we're created to be. Not, oh, I'm, my, come on, y'all. Like, all of us have selfish thoughts.

But I want to have less selfish thoughts tomorrow than I have today. I want to be more restored tomorrow than I am today. I want people around me to listen to the music of my life and hear less individual missed notes.

It goes on and says this. And this greatest is this. Like, we think greatest, like, they want to be the, in some ways, some of you might not want to be the best, but you want to be happy.

But that greatest is kind of the same thing. It goes on and says this. And he sat down and called the 12.

And he said to them, if anyone would be first, he must be last of all the servant of all. When Jesus sits down here, this is what a rabbi is doing. He's having a conversation.

Jesus is having conversation. And as soon as he pulls up a chair and sits down, it's like the moment in the service. And I don't do this all the time, but I do it every once in a while.

And I do it with my kids all the time. And this is what I say. Give me your eyes.

I say it to you every once in a while, don't I? It's not because I think you're all children, but it's a way that I can make a point to be like, hey, I need you to listen to this right now. It's like when I was disciplining my boys at a young age and they would put their heads down, I'd say, son, put your head up, meet my eyes. And they stand away from me and they put their head down.

No, no, no, stand right here. You're going to stand right here. You're going to look me in the eyes and we're about to have a conversation because I love you.

This is what Jesus is doing right now. He is sitting down. And as he sits down, their eyes do this.

It's like, oh, rabbi sat down. He's about to talk business. And this is his answer.

Here's the answer to the MRI. Here's the answer to whatever the problem is when it comes to selfishness. Here it is.

It's a different measure of greatness. Did you hear me say that? Like when you measure greatness based on achievement or you measure greatness based on filling what the imposter wants, that's not greatness. That's a philosophy of the world.

That's not a philosophy of God. The philosophy of God, the measure greatness is found right here. And this is what it says.

I'm going to read it again. And he sat down, he called the 12 and he said to them, if anyone would be first, he must be last of all and a servant of all. He says these words, if you want to experience greatness, if you want to experience life, if you want to experience fulfillment, what you have to do is be an ambassador of me.

He describes himself here. Did you hear that? In Philippians chapter two, it says it this way, the creator of the universe became a dude. So he starts at the creator of the universe, right? The apple or the most precious thing in all creation

was what? A man and a woman.

So God, he became a what? A human. He lowered his status. Did you hear me say that? He became less.

And then it tells us in Philippians chapter two, that he not only became a dude, he also became a servant of a dude. Dropped his status again. And then it tells us he not only was a servant, he became a sacrifice.

Dropped it again, like lowered his status. And at the very end, it tells us he not only was a sacrifice, he also became the curse. Boom.

And because of that, he is lifted to the highest place. Greatness is not measured in how many people serve you. Greatness is measured in our willingness to serve.

So let me just draw this out really clearly. The way we can discover our, like all the time, Jason, I just like, I want to figure out how to do this, like how to love Jesus more. Listen, I'm telling you like this is, give me your eyes.

The MRI is the question. In life, when the selfish ambitions, when the selfish thoughts come, when you're happy for a loss, for someone like you're with me. When that happens, the beauty of that moment, the beauty of your selfish desire is it points out the weakness.

So tell him, thank you, Lord. Then you can confess that and recognize my job is to serve and to love that person. And then all of a sudden, you become more like who you're created to be.

And then next week, when we talk about this same thing, it's like, oh, I feel more peace and joy this week than I did last week. No matter what my circumstances are on the outside, I can have peace this week. I was talking to my mom and dad on the phone and it's like a really hard conversation.

You know, as your mom and dad are aging and my dad with dementia and he's had a stroke and he's forgetting things and little things like being able to watch your kids do something or whatever or not even be able to talk on the phone anymore because he doesn't really remember things. And my mom is suffering because of it too. And in those moments, it's like I got a little emotional on my back deck and I came walking in the house and my wife gave me a hug.

And as she gives me a hug, I look at her, I said these words, I don't know how people deal with this without the joy and the hope that my family and my dad's mind will be restored and my mom's body will be restored. And I just like, as I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I'm not walking through the valley of the shadow of death, but my mom and dad are. And it's a shadow now.

Like getting older ain't easy. Ask them. Amen.

That's right. But this is what I want to tell you. I have joy in it.

I do. Like I am not discouraged by it. It still hurts.

But it doesn't destroy because he lives. I can face tomorrow. It goes on and then Jesus gives an illustration in verse 36.

He says, 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. Basically, when you receive a child, you receive God. Why would he have chosen a child in our culture? It's a little bit different.

Sometimes we can almost worship them. That's not the sermon today. But in this time in culture, Jesus has got just the 12 disciples.

It's just the fellows. And it's just the fellows sitting in a circle. And they were obviously in a place where there was families around.

And my guess is, this is a guess. I'm guessing here, guessing here. I think I'm guessing.

You with me? But in the midst of me thinking and guessing, I think that there's probably kids that are making noise outside or kids that are there. And they're having a real serious talk here. Like this is real serious talk.

Jesus is sitting down. And I promise you, Peter's like, tell that kid to shut his mouth. That's what's happening.

I'm imagining. Because in this time in culture, a child was the least servant. That's how they were described.

So the youngest child in the house was not the one that was the most spoiled. Sorry, young ones. That's not how it used to be.

They were the ones that washed your feet when you walked in the house. They were the lowest servant in the house was the youngest child in the house. And so when Jesus took this child, it'd be like you or I taking someone in culture that people would really not even see and for sure not hear, putting them in the midst and Jesus holding them in His arms and saying, if you will care for Him.

If you will care for this one that you walk by on the streets. If you will care for this one that disagrees with every thought or philosophy or idea you've ever had. If you will care for this one that brings you no earthly benefit.

If you will care for this one, you care for me. See the gospel, the good news of Jesus is this. We don't love those who benefit us.

We just love those. All of those. 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.

They're in this conversation. Jesus says these things. They're like, okay, we need to be nicer to kids or whatever.

And then John raises his hand. He's the youngest of the disciples. He's like, hey, Jesus, we saw this guy casting out demons or gal casting out demons in your name and we tried to stop him because he was not following us.

He's not one of us. And so honestly, why do you think John's talking about this? Those of you here the last couple weeks. What happened last week in the passage? What happened in this moment hours before was a group of disciples not able to do what? Cast out a demon.

And so then they can't cast out a demon. Then they see someone else casting out a demon. And in that moment, what's the MRI say? Oh, maybe I have a little bit of selfishness.

You're like, if this guy's doing this, he's not one of us. We got to stop him. And this is Jesus's answer.

By the way, like historically, wondering where this person come from. He could have been one of the 70. So Jesus sent out the 12 disciples and gave them power in Mark 4. And then after that, he sent out what? The 70.

Take someone with you. So these dudes, these gals, these people that left when they went out, they were casting out demons. They were healing people.

They're walking around. Well, they still believed in the power of Jesus. They were a part of that moment, but they weren't the 12.

Also, it could have been one of John the Baptist's disciples. So this is someone that believed Jesus was the savior of the world. But at the same time, they weren't following Jesus day in, day out.

They were doing kind of their own thing. And this is what he says in this moment. Time out.

I got to point this out. Why was Jesus so concerned about this question? This is why in your life and in my life, the reason we have a messed up view of greatness is because we view like the goat conversation is based on wins, right? It is like I have it all the time. LeBron or Jordan, we can have the conversation later.

I don't want you to have to be wrong in front of everybody. But the reality is, is like we measure greatness and a worldly standard that's different. The way I like to say it's like statuses.

You with me? And so in this time in history, it's the same for us. It's like in church leadership, we look at someone who stands on a stage sometimes is greater than someone that sits on the floor and does sign language at 1045. But in God's kingdom, no, that's not true.

We're all the same. We're all the same at the foot of the cross. And that mindset bleeds into the church.

So why was Jesus so worried about the disciples and John saying, hey, someone's casting out a demon, not with us. We got to stop him. Why would he stop him? Well, the leaders, he'd looked at his whole life for the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the religious leaders and the religious leaders.

Who did they want to stop? Jesus. I think one of Jesus's greatest like things he thought about. I don't even know if concern is probably too strong a word.

But as I'm training up these men, as I'm training up these women to lead, they've got to be servants. They can't be like the religious leaders of the day that just were served. It's like in this world today with my kids, like I want my kids to know that the characteristics of Jesus in our house are of the greatest importance.

When I see my son, my daughters, my sons and my daughter representing the characteristics of Jesus, I'm going to pour gas on that. When they do something well, I'll say, hey, good job. Because the truth is, in the end, them

representing Jesus is what they're created for.

Those other things are just fun. And that's what he's doing here. It's like, you know, like the easiest way for you to understand this moment is politics.

Like every four years and two years, well, this person is going to change it. This person is going to drain it. This person is going to do this, or it's just going to stay pretty dirty.

And it's going to be the same thing over and over again. And we're going to get excited every four years for change. And nothing's really good.

Like we're going to be fighting about the same things all the time because they like us fighting. Like, let's just like that doesn't mean I don't love politicians. That doesn't mean we want Christians in politics.

Like I want you to vote. Yes, yes, yes. And yes.

But sometimes when you get into this world and you just look at someone else and do the same things they do, you think that's what it's supposed to be. How much change happens? It goes on and says this, but Jesus said, do not stop him from no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon after to speak evil of me for the one who is not against us is for us. Paul says it this way is like if they're preaching the good news of Jesus, even if their motives are wrong, God will deal with their motives.

I'm just glad they're teaching Jesus. There is people in our culture today get on social media. There's pastors of churches.

There's listen, my motives aren't 100 percent always pure either. I'm a dude. I'm a human.

Like, let's just be honest. Your motives aren't always pure either, right? Like we can go, well, we see you church. We got it together.

No, we're not perfect. We have to love and encourage people around us and other churches around us that are preaching the good news of Jesus that are preaching the fact that sin is real, the preaching, the fact that evil is real, preaching the fact that goodness and godliness and holiness and Jesus and grace is a trump card to all of it. And let's talk about it.

That's real. It says this, for I truly say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will be by no means lose his reward. He literally just gives an illustration.

Y'all, if you just will give a cup of water to like, you know, that ain't rocket science there. Are you with me? If you can just give a cup of water to someone who's thirsty, you'll be blessed. Here's my final MRI question.

Why is it in culture today? Why is it in church today that we stop giving water to people? It's because they don't react the way to the water that we want them to. The reason we stop serving vulnerable people is because vulnerable people don't do what we want after we serve them. And what that tells me, my MRI tells me, listen to me, I'm being honest.

There's been times in the last nine years when you're serving a community of people and you're serving an addiction community or a homeless community or people that address community or you're serving a rural community or an urban community or like you're serving communities and in your heart, you want them so badly to discover the goodness of Jesus. You want them so badly to wake up in the morning and be like, yes, let's do what God wants them to do. Like, like, yes, let's do this.

Yes, I would love to go to work or I would love to serve this person. Like you want that, like you want them to do that. That's what your heart is in your heart.

I'm not saying is evil in it, but the reality is if the motivation of me serving them is for them to become who I want them to be, then that's the wrong motivation of service. And the reason why we have to keep serving and keep loving is because it's not always about what they do. It's about who God's making us to be.

Why doesn't every church serve the vulnerable and the poor? Because they don't do what the church wants them to do. So the church gets tired of it. They don't do it anymore because it's really hard.

Why does church have such an easy job serving the people that like are like them and do what they want is because they're like, it's easier. Who are we going to give water to? You with me? Don't listen to me. When you're getting coached up, it's like when my kid gets in the car after after a practice and when they're younger, like they don't do it now because they know what I'm going to say.

But when they're in junior high elementary school, the coach said this and it really hurt my feelings. OK, well, was it true? Well, maybe. Well, we have two choices.

We can just have our feelings heard or we can make change and we can see the fruits of change. Listen to me, y'all. If you're not convicted by something that's been read in this passage today, you ain't breathing.

You ain't breathing. But don't like. No, God's not giving you a spirit of timidity, not of a quitter.

He's giving you one of power and of love and of discipline. Like, let's do this together. Like, it's a beautiful thing, but it's OK for us to say, man, I'm messed up here.

Like even if it doesn't come out of your mouth, confess what's in your head so God can transform your heart so we can give water and be excited about the fact that we get to give water. Do you know why? Because I am so glad the creator of the universe has been patient with me, because I promise you he's been serving and loving and giving grace to me. And I am not the product that he designed.

But boy, he keeps giving me that living water. Hey, family. Today, my prayer is we allow the great physician access so he can bring the healing.

Oh, listening friend, may we be open to his access so we can be used as a healing agent to others. May there be less of the imposter, less selfish ambition and more of Jesus, loving, serving, and giving that cup of water, whether or not we receive anything in return. You've been hearing a message by Pastor Jason Epperson of CU Church.

Continue growing under the Mark & Friends tab at GreatNewsRadio.org or WLUJ.org. Thanks for listening. Thanks for being a part of our radio listening family. This is Mark Burns with the Ministry of Great News Media.

God bless you and have a great day and night.