

Daily Discipleship

Sunday, October 16-22 (B) – Mark 10:35-45

Living in Christ: *Serve*

Focus Question: *How can I share God's love by serving someone this week?*

word of life

“But whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.” Mark 10:43-44 (NRSV)

Read Mark 10:35-45

The brothers James and John were quite bold when they came forward to make their request of Jesus, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” (Mark 10:35 NRSV) How many students make such a request of their teacher? The irony is Jesus had been trying to instill in them just the opposite attitude so that they would ask the question, “Teacher, what do you ask of us?”

1. *What is your reaction to the question asked by James and John?*

Jesus listens to their request to sit on his right and left side in glory. Obviously, they have been listening to Jesus teach of the coming of the kingdom of God, and they want a good seat. Jesus continues the conversation by asking if they can drink from his cup and share in his baptism. Their reply is short, “We are able.”

2. *What does Jesus mean by sharing in his cup and his baptism?*

3. *How can these disciples be so confident?*

4. *When Jesus dies on the cross, he is joined by someone on his left and his right. Are these disciples ready for that?*

Even though these disciples do not seem ready to follow Jesus through a path of persecution and death, Jesus predicts that each will be able to share. Yet, Jesus cannot promise them a special seat for eternity.

5. *Do you think the brothers would have been satisfied with this response?*

6. *What is Jesus trying to say to these brothers?*

The other disciples are angry and upset at James and John for approaching Jesus with such a self-centered request. Jesus uses the opportunity to teach all of the disciples about status and leadership in the new community. Leaders are not to act like those who lord their position over others. Once more, Jesus turns things upside down. “But whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.” (Mark 10:43-44 NRSV)

7. *Describe the role of a leader as taught by Jesus.*

8. *Give an example of how Jesus led by becoming a servant.*

Perhaps James and John thought they were making a simple request by asking for reserved seating when Jesus comes into his glory. Yet, by the end of the discussion, they probably were confused. Somehow in the new community described by Jesus, the better seat is actually the worse seat surrounded by other servants. Jesus gave those brothers something to ponder as they sorted out the seating chart in glory.

9. *What would you like to say to James and John?*

word among us

HELP WANTED!

Need leaders who will serve. No experience necessary.
Must be good at washing feet. Apply at your local church.

Imagine running that advertisement in your local newspaper or in your own church newsletter. Imagine the conversation such an ad might spark.

1. *What else might be included in the advertisement?*
2. *What might be a television commercial for a servant-leader?*

James and John wanted to have a good seat at God's banquet feast and a front row to enjoy the glory of Jesus. Their boldness is quite striking when they ask Jesus, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." (Mark 10:35 NRSV)

3. *Have you ever approached God with a similar attitude? Why or why not?*
4. *Is their request reasonable?*
5. *How do we learn to say to Jesus, "We want to do whatever you ask of us?"*
6. *What if Jesus asks us to do something too difficult? What options do we have?*

Seminars teach people how to be leaders, but not many include a session on leading by becoming a servant. Yet, Jesus promotes a new type of leader. Before his death, he demonstrated this leadership style by getting on his knees and washing the feet of his disciples. (John 13) That night, he commands them to love one other as he loved them. That love includes the extreme action of dying for them.

7. *Define a leader.*
8. *How does that definition match the teaching of Jesus?*
9. *How does one learn to be a servant-leader?*
10. *Whom do you know who is a servant-leader?*
11. *Reflect on any current roles of leaders. What changes might you need to make in your approach to leadership roles to more fully reflect the teaching of Jesus?*

Jesus will ask his disciples, "What is it you want me to do for you?" That is a wonderful question to ponder in our prayer. Take a few moments for silence. Allow God's presence to descend upon you. Imagine Jesus coming to you and calling you by name. Imagine Jesus asking you, "What is it you want me to do for you?" Try to be clear as to your request.

Now take a few more minutes in prayer. Again, imagine Jesus coming to you and calling you by name. This time, imagine you asking Jesus, "What is it you want me to do for you?" Be still and listen.

12. *What did you learn from this lesson?*

Prayer

Jesus, you came to us and lived among us as one of us. Teach us follow your example and willingly serve. Amen

Dig Deeper

John 13:1-11; 31-35

last word

List your roles as a leader (including with children) and try to apply the teachings of Jesus in each role.



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