

SERVES

MARK 10:32-45

(Prepared by Gene Thompson using LifeWay's ETB materials.)

An acquaintance of mine has a sister who is a missionary with our International Mission Board among an unreached people group in a closed country. He related: "Years ago she told me that she was at a meeting of the IMB, and she had hoped to see the man who was the President of the Board, at the meeting. She said she was seated at one of the tables, and kept craning her neck around the room, looking for when he might come in. Finally, she saw a man with a pitcher of water in his hand, filling people's water glasses. When she looked more closely—that was him! That was the President of the IMB—NOT some "imposing figure" making a grand entrance, but a humble servant, filling water glasses like a waiter."

1. Can you share an experience when you were humbled by how someone served you or others?
2. What are some ways people served you in the past week? (Waiter in a restaurant; a driver lets you merge into traffic; etc.)
3. How often are we grateful?

Jesus and His disciples are on their journey to Jerusalem for the Passover observance. Jesus focused the conversation on what was about to happen to Him and what He expected of them. As we'll see, He turned their expectations of the kingdom of God upside down. Here we find Jesus predicting what would happen to Him in even more detail. This is the third time He has told them He would be arrested, beaten, turned over to the Romans to be put to death and would rise on the third day. Once again it went right over their heads—they still didn't get it!

DEATH COMING! Read Mark 10:32-34

1. Who was leading the way as they walked? (Jesus! He was leading them.)
Despite all He said the disciples were amazed at Jesus' determination and purposefulness. Because of the mounting hostility from the religious leaders, those who followed Him were afraid.
2. Why do you think Jesus took His disciples aside to talk to them? (He is trying to prepare them for what lies ahead.)
3. Why was it necessary for Jesus to continually remind His disciples about His death and resurrection? (The disciples' expectations of a Messiah did not meet the image of a suffering Savior. But the Christian life is countercultural—upside down, and Jesus led through service and sacrifice.)
4. How can we make Jesus' teaching plain to a world who doesn't understand? (We present the gospel to them and pray for the Holy Spirit to work in their heart.)

Romans 1:4— "He was declared the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead." He even "called it" in advance. It is unmatched and unique in all history; no other religion has anything like this. It is the most amazing prophecy!

REQUEST MADE! Read Mark 10:35-40

1. Have you ever been in a situation where a person was hurting, or dying, but all someone else could think of was their own selfish desires?

This is what James and John did.

They seemed to expect a coronation, and they wanted power in the new political structure. They wanted to sit at Jesus' right and at His left when He was crowned king.

2. What does Jesus' response to James and John tell you about His character? (I'm amazed at how calm and gentle Jesus dealt with this circumstance.)

Jesus didn't shame James and John. Instead, He reminded them what following Him required. Likewise, God doesn't shame us for our questions and doubts. He invites us to speak our minds, while reminding us of what it means to be a disciple.

3. How do we know if the requests we make of God in prayer are self-centered or servant-centered? (Motive and who gets the glory in the end.)
4. How does pride and position get in the way of serving others? (We are only thinking about ourselves and looking to be served.)

Jesus pointed out there would be suffering and asked if they were ready to drink "the cup." They naively believed they were able to accept the challenge. History would bear out the fact that they would indeed suffer. Instead of power and privilege, the disciples needed to develop humility and a servant's mentality. In God's kingdom, submission is the pathway to honor.

5. Why do you think servanthood is sometimes disgraced in modern society rather than valued or honored? (Everyone seems to be pushing for the top position where they are served rather than serving.)
6. How can we, as believers, develop a servant's attitude today? (Stay in the Word. Pray and look to Jesus as our example, who emptied Himself and became a servant for our redemption—Phil. 2:7.)

Jesus used this tense moment as an opportunity to teach more about what being a true leader means in His kingdom.

ROLES REVERSED! Read Mark 10:41-45

1. What was the attitude of the other disciples when they heard what James and John did? (Indignant! They were mad.)
2. Why do you think they were angry with them? (Some call it the "older brother syndrome" from the story of the "Prodigal Son in Luke 15.)

As Jesus often showed us, those Pharisaical sins are often worse to deal with than the sins they condemn! Nothing is worse than a proud, self-righteous heart! Beware of it!

3. Is there anyone right now that I am tempted to judge, feel superior to, or not forgive, because of some sin in their life?
4. What's the connection between individual humility and unity within the body of Christ? (Unity and selfishness do not go together. Only when we want the best for others can there be true unity.)
5. How does serving others set Christianity apart from other worldviews? (We serve out of a heart of gratitude for our redemption not to earn it.)

There are religions throughout the world that emphasize service to others. The difference in them and Christianity is motivation. They serve to earn recognition and right standing with their god; Christians serve out of a heart of gratitude for what Christ has done for us!

6. How does pride get in the way of serving others? (We get to thinking WE deserve to be waited on instead of waiting on or serving others!)

Pastors are not to be this way. 1 Peter 5:3 "Nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge but proving to be examples to the flock." This isn't just for pastors; it applies to all of us in any position we might be in.

The following is recorded in a biography of President John Adams: "One evening a fire broke out next door in the Treasury Building, President Adams was immediately out the door and across the way to lend a hand. A newspaper described the event the next day: 'the fire for some time threatened the most destructive effects—but through the exertions of the citizens, animated by the example of the President of the United States (who on this occasion fell into the ranks and aided in passing the buckets) was at length subdued.'"

CHALLENGE!

1. Which of the following statements resonate with you the most?
 - Believers should humbly recognize the necessity of the death and resurrection of Jesus.
 - Believers must examine their motives for serving others.
 - Believers demonstrate Christian character by serving others.
2. How can we serve in our church? (Harvest Party.)
3. What are some needs in our community that we can help meet?
4. What is one specific way you can humble yourself and be a servant this week?