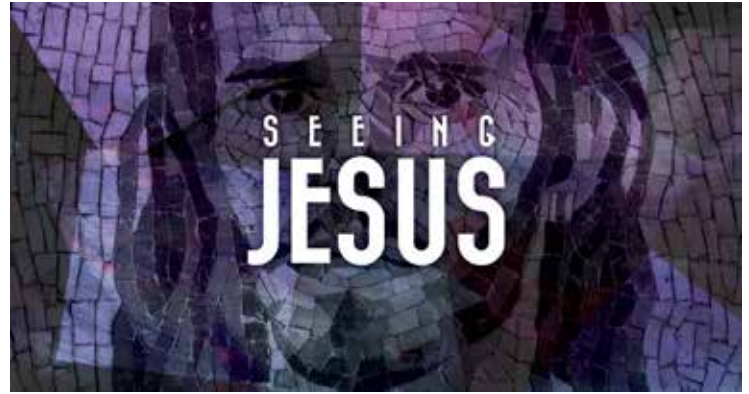


WEEK OF APRIL 2



DAY
1

The Way of Servant Leadership

Psalm 78:70-72; Matthew 20:20-28

Servant leadership is a wonderful idea, and sometimes it remains just that— an idea! It sounds good in theory, but doing it is much harder. And still, it is the essential biblical standard and model for all authentic Christian leadership. Leaders are those who serve. They are the lead servants.

In Psalm 78:70-72, David is described as the ideal model of a servant-leader. He is a **shepherd** of humble beginnings who will shepherd God's people. God calls David his **servant**. Since the people actually belong to God, David is but a **steward** who is raised up to care for the people who belong to God. As a steward, David must be faithful and God will hold him accountable. David is a **skilled** leader and a **spiritual** leader (he has integrity of heart).

Eventually David messed up (very badly and quite often). He did not finish his leadership in top form. But David, when he was at his best, is the model the prophets used to talk about the future coming leader-shepherd-king (see Ezekiel 34:16, 22, 23 and Isaiah 9:7; 42:1-4).

In Matthew 20:20-28, the mother of James and John makes a power play for her sons to get a privileged position in the Kingdom of Jesus. That is the context for Jesus to describe the way of servant leadership. As you read this passage notice the characteristics of leadership in the way of the world. Now jot down what Jesus says is the way of servant leadership.

What do you think as you compare these two lists?

Which kind of leader would you like to work for, under, or with?

If you have been in leadership roles, in what ways were you able to be a servant leader? How difficult was it to be that kind of leader in the workplace?

DAY
2

The Triumphal Entry

Zechariah 9:0; John 12:12-18 (or Matthew 21:1-11)

Lazarus has been raised from the dead. It was a very public event. Jesus has entered the city of Jerusalem. Now is the time that some Greeks who had come to worship approach Phillip and say, "We would like to see Jesus" (John 12:20-21).

To understand the Triumphal Entry, some background knowledge is needed. The Jewish people were ruled by the Roman Empire. The Jews were divided on what they thought about those who were ruling over them. Some were fine with the status quo and could live with that rule. Others were part of the system and made money off of the system. And some were revolutionaries who wanted to overthrow Rome and rule their own nation. It turned out that the disciples of Jesus came from those different groups.

But anticipation was high in Israel and Jerusalem for a coming Messiah. Messiah means anointed one. The hope was for a Messiah who would be a new King who would defeat Rome and restore the Davidic kingdom. In the Triumphal Entry, the people believed that Jesus was going to do JUST THAT VERY THING.

But here comes the King, riding a donkey! It was the picture of humility. Many in the crowd were present when Jesus

raised Lazarus from the dead (skim read John 11). That gave them the confidence to believe the King was here and they were ready to join the revolution (John 12:17-18). The Pharisees were worried. Jesus is dangerous (12:19). No wonder people want to see Jesus!

Jesus knows he is the King, and Jesus knows the kind of King he is. He is the Servant-King, the humble King, and the King who will sacrifice his life for the people. Jesus is the kind of King who washes the feet of his followers (John 13:1-17). Jesus is the Servant-King who REQUIRES that all who follow him lead with humble service (vv. 14-15).

Shane Claiborne wrote a book called Jesus for President. Do you think Jesus would make a good president? Or why would Jesus NOT be a good president? Would you want a president like Jesus?

DAY
3

Jesus Before Pilate

Isaiah 53:1-12; John 18:28-19:22

First read Isaiah 53. It is a short chapter. If you are familiar with Good Friday and Easter, you will recognize this passage. It is also prominent in Handel's Messiah. It is a prophecy about Jesus and his suffering.

In John 18 Jesus is before Pilate. There is much overlap and a few unique points in each gospel. Pilate is the governor who rules over Israel on behalf of the Roman empire. Pilate is there to enforce the will, the rule, the law, the taxes, and the Pax Romana (Roman Peace). Rome is harsh with all potential threats to their rule. Rome moves quickly and decisively against "pretend" messiahs and kings. Other pretenders and revolutionaries had arisen and been eliminated. Now Pilate has to face one more—Jesus.

But Jesus is a person with claims to Kingship, unlike anyone else. Without saying much more, read the story and compare Pilate the leader with Jesus the leader.

What do you learn about leadership in the way of the world (Pilate) and leadership in the way of God's Kingdom (Jesus)?

Are there any surprises in this passage?

Try to imagine what Pilate was experiencing as he had this unique person before him.

DAY
4

Crucified and Buried

Matthew 27:26-66

This is the entire story of Jesus flogged, crucified, and buried. There are crowds watching the entire ordeal. Some of these same people were at the Triumphal Entry.

As you read this text, we want you to try as best you can to do a spiritual formation exercise. It is called "entering the story."

As you read this story, put yourself in the story. Be part of the crowd that is watching.

What do you see at the different places?

What do you see happening to Jesus?

What do you hear the people around you say as they watch?

What are you feeling inside as you see Jesus on the cross?

You see the sign hanging above Jesus.

THIS IS JESUS.
THE KING OF THE JEWS.

When you see Jesus on a cross, do you see a King?

You hear Jesus cry out, "My God, why have you forsaken me?" Why does Jesus say this? What do you feel for Jesus?

Jesus dies and miraculous things happen (vv. 51-53). What do you experience as you see these things?

And you hear the Roman centurion say, “Surely he was the Son of God!” Is that who you see when you look at Jesus on the cross?

What is God saying to you as you see Jesus in his suffering and death?

Personal Reflection & LifeGroup Conversation

Before you dive into this week’s group questions, start with a few moments of catching up. How was your week? Does anyone in your group have ideas for how to mark Holy Week? Do you have any family traditions surrounding Easter that you would like to share?

ONE: “We would like to see Jesus.” That was the request of the Greek worshippers who were at the Passover festival. That is our series: Seeing Jesus. How much do you want to see Jesus? How strong is your attraction to Jesus?

TWO: When we see Jesus we see a Servant-King. The way of the Servant-King is NOT the way of aggression and power, nor manipulation, prestige, status, and fame. It is not the way of personal advancement. It is the way of humble, gentle, loving, suffering, even sacrificial, service.

Why do you think so many Christians are so mesmerized by leaders in the world who are the exact opposite of the way of Jesus? Why do you think we like our politicians to act more like Herod and Pilate than like Jesus?

THREE: Here is an old saying: *People get the leaders they deserve.* Another version says: *People get the politicians they deserve!* What does this mean? What is the warning in this saying? And what do you think—are we getting the people we deserve?

FOUR: If your group wants to do a little more Bible study, read Colossians 1:24–2:5 and skim over 2 Corinthians 11:16–12:10. This is Paul describing his own suffering and sacrifice for the church. Would you like to have pastoral leadership like this? As you answer, remember that Paul was defending and explaining himself to Christians who were NOT impressed with Paul’s ministry. Really? How do you explain that?