

³² Jesus and his disciples were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, with Jesus in the lead. The disciples were *amazed* while the others following behind were *afraid*. Taking the Twelve aside again, he told them what was about to happen to him. ³³ “Look!” he said. “We’re going up to Jerusalem. The Human One^[a] will be handed over to the chief priests and the legal experts. They will condemn him to death and hand him over to the Gentiles. ³⁴ They will ridicule him, spit on him, torture him, and kill him. After three days, he will rise up.”

³⁵ James and John, Zebedee’s sons, came to Jesus and said, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask.” ³⁶ “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked. ³⁷ They said, “Allow one of us to sit on your right and the other on your left when you enter your glory.”

³⁸ Jesus replied, “You don’t know what you’re asking! Can you drink the cup I drink or receive the baptism I receive?” ³⁹ “We can,” they answered. Jesus said, “You will drink the cup I drink and receive the baptism I receive, ⁴⁰ but to sit at my right or left hand isn’t mine to give. It belongs to those for whom it has been prepared.”

⁴¹ Now when the other ten disciples heard about this, they became *angry* with James and John. ⁴² Jesus called them over and said, “You know that the ones who are considered the rulers by the Gentiles show off their authority over them and their high-ranking officials order them around. ⁴³ But that’s not the way it will be with you. *Whoever wants to be great among you will be your servant*. ⁴⁴ Whoever wants to be first among you will be the *slave* of all, ⁴⁵ for the Human One^[b] didn’t come to be served but rather to serve and to give his life to liberate many people.”

The Glory

Mark 10:32-45

Why are you here? Seriously, why did you come to church today? What is your purpose? What is your reasoning? Why are we here? Do we ever really think about it?

You earlier heard from one of our newer members. On Wednesday I asked the Trustees why they are here, why did they say yes to being Trustees? First Joyce said, “Cause I didn’t want to be an elder.” But seriously she admitted she wanted to honor those who had gone before us by taking care of this remarkable building and overseeing the investments. Others find that being a Trustee is a way to serve, to help, to participate in this community.

We had four young people (five if you count Brie as young) join the church last week. Why did they join? Calla, Jackson, Daniel, Daisy and yes, even Brie all joined for individually different, yet the same reasons. They joined for community. They joined the journey. They joined to be a part of something bigger than themselves.

As I read from the Gospel of Mark, I noticed it really is an embarrassing passage. Did you see that the disciples lost sight of their direction, their purpose, their reason for living? They lost their calling. Why were they there?

When we read all of Mark, we see that the disciples never quite grasp who Jesus is. They mistake who He is, what he stands for, where He is going and what He is up to. They misinterpret God's calling and God's Glory. They miss God's claim on their lives in their baptism.

The cross is looming large in this passage. It is rushing towards them. Yet the disciples are completely oblivious and totally wrapped up in their own petty power struggles, their own wants and wishes. The disciples are arguing about Glory, their glory, and Jesus talks about servanthood, slavery and death.

This is the third time, third time in three chapters! Jesus tells the disciples that he is going to Jerusalem...to die! Mark 8:31, Mark 9:30 and now Mark 10:33. "Look!" Jesus said. "We're going up to Jerusalem. The Human One^[a] will be handed over to the chief priests and the legal experts. 2

They will condemn him to death and hand him over to the Gentiles. ³⁴ They will ridicule him, spit on him, torture him, and kill him. After three days, he will rise up." You'd think the disciples would get it- but NO!

No, James and John sidle up to Jesus and whisper in his ear, "Rabbi, we want you to do whatever we want." I would imagine that if I heard someone command Jesus to do whatever they wanted, my jaw would hit the floor. But are we really any different? We call Jesus Lord and Christ, but do we listen to what he wants us to do and do we follow His lead? No, I ask, "Jesus, what's in it for me? If I am good, will you bless me with riches and popularity and have people like me?"

It seems as though I forget why I am here. Sometimes I let it slip my mind what the Westminster Confession states. You know, the first question of the catechism? Question: "What is the chief end of humanity?" (What is our purpose in life?) Say the answer with me: "The chief end of humanity is to glorify God and enjoy God forever." Say it again: The chief end of humanity is to glorify God and enjoy God forever. We are to glorify God!3

James and John are asking to shine in Jesus' Glory- but can they (can we) drink the cup? Can we (can they) make the sacrifices? Can we (can they) live for the other, the outcast, the different, the estranged, the broken, the unwanted? Can we set aside our plans, our desires, our wants and our wishes and follow Christ? Remember where He is heading? To Jerusalem, to the cross, to His death. Are we ready to follow?

Is that why we are here today? Are we here to try and figure out how we can follow Christ?

Ann Marie and I were leading a youth retreat in Decatur, Illinois many years ago. We were having a great time engaging the youth in telling the Biblical stories. I announced, "Let's act out this next story. Who wants to play Jesus?" and one middle school boy, way back in the back jumped out of his seat. I called him down and he bound down the aisle with great excitement. "Come on down" I said. "We're acting out the crucifixion!" You should have seen his face. His whole countenance fell. His body slumped. He knew the story. He wanted to follow. He wanted to play Christ until he realized the cost. 4

Jesus calls us to worship God in God's Glory. And God's Glory is nothing like what the world worships. God's Glory is sacrificial love. God's Glory is selfless care for others! God's Glory is serving others, it's servanthood, slavery even. If we want to follow Christ, be prepared to, how did he say it? "He will be ridiculed, spit upon, tortured, and killed." Are we serious about following Jesus?

Jesus says to James and John and to you and me, "You want to be great? Follow me. Serve the poor, the sick, the homeless, the imprisoned, the disabled, the hurting people of the world. Follow me. Follow me."

Martin Luther King, Jr understood that when he said, "Everyone can be great because anyone can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You don't have to know about Plato or Aristotle to serve. You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love and you can be that servant." To God be the Glory. Amen.

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