

SELF-SERVING OR SELF-SACRIFICING? (Mark 10:32-45)

The Kingdom of God is not based on power and control but on service and giving. A life with Jesus means giving, not taking. Jesus said, "Follow me." Following Jesus means following His life and pattern. Jesus is not self-serving but self-sacrificing.

I. AM I SELF SERVING? (vv. 32-40)

1. Jesus had spent three years with the disciples modeling the meaning of "servant."
 - Jesus plainly stated Jerusalem was where his earthly life would end—His ultimate service!
 - He had already counted the cost and nothing would stop Him.
 - God had those details planned out for Jesus including the detail of His final breath.
2. The disciples James and John seized the opportunity to make a personal request.
 - First, they asked Jesus to sign a blank check.
 - They wanted to be exalted as Jesus' #1 and #2 rulers with all the benefits.
3. Jesus responded with the truth of the mission with a patient and gracious spirit. He compared His upcoming suffering and death to a cup and to baptism.
 - Cup and baptism are symbolic of something allotted by God.
 - Jesus was not electing a course but fulfilling a role.
 - James and John wanted the benefits of following Jesus without the cost.
4. God decides who is rewarded with what!
 - Let's be sure we don't mask our worship and discipleship with self-interest.
 - Let's seriously ask ourselves: Do I treat Jesus as a magical genie to grant my wishes?

II. ARE WE SELF-SACRIFICING? (vv. 41-45)

1. Jesus first pointed out the world's pattern of self-promotion.
2. Jesus rejected this completely.
 - In God's Kingdom, the more important you are, the more people you serve.
 - This is not simply an idea of how the Kingdom operates; it is the condition of the Kingdom of God.
3. The model was presented of servant and slave.
 - The desire for power and dominance stand contrary to the things of God. His way is love and service focused on others.
 - It is not simply a principle of the Kingdom. It was the pattern of Jesus' life.
4. Verse 45 is the main verse of the entire book of Mark: It is the essence of the Gospel.
 - Jesus offered His life as the ransom price for all: He was a substitute through His suffering, death, and subsequent resurrection.
5. Jesus came as the humble servant, and we are called to follow Him.
 - We follow Jesus not because of what we will or won't get out of it, but because this is the way Jesus leads.

The antidote for the self-serving problem is to focus on the Greatest Servant of all; to offer God our praise and thanksgiving at all times. When we focus on God, we look at His character and ways, we are reminded of His power and security, and we can then shift our eyes off of ourselves and onto Him and others.