

Lenten Devotional March 22, 2024

Mark 10:32-45

32 They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them what was to happen to him, 33 saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles; 34 they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise again."

35 James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." 36 And he said to them, "What is it you want me to do for you?" 37 And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." 38 But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" 39 They replied, "We are able." Then Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; 40 but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."

41 When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. 42 So Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. 43 But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. 45 For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Devotion

The Rev. Mark Allio '11

In these verses, Jesus reveals the gravity of the mission ahead, foretelling his imminent suffering and death. Remarkably, amidst this revelation, he teaches a crucial lesson on servant leadership. Jesus, the Son of God, models humility on the journey to the cross, dismantling earthly expectations of power and prestige.

In a society driven by ambition and the pursuit of greatness, Jesus redefines leadership. He contrasts the world's hierarchical structure, where rulers lord over their subjects, with the kingdom's radical model. True leadership, he asserts, is not about dominating but about serving.

Jesus uses the metaphor of drinking from the cup he drinks and undergoing the baptism he undergoes. This imagery symbolizes the sacrificial nature of leadership, where leaders are called to share in the sufferings of those they serve. And both baptism and cup point to the sacraments connecting us both to Christ's sacrifice and Christ's victory. Lent beckons us to consider our willingness to embrace this sacrificial cup in our own lives.

Jesus points to himself as the ultimate servant, declaring that even the Son of Man came "not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." This powerful proclamation encapsulates

the essence of Lent—a season of introspection, repentance, and a renewed commitment to selfless service.

As we journey through Lent, let us ponder the implications of Christ's call to servant leadership. How can we, in our roles and spheres of influence, emulate Jesus' humility and sacrificial love? This season prompts us to examine the motives behind our actions, inviting a shift from self-centered ambitions to a posture of genuine service.

May this Lenten journey be a transformative one, as we embrace the model of Jesus, the Servant-King, and allow his selfless love to shape our hearts and actions.

Prayer

Dear God, during this Lenten journey, we seek your guidance in understanding and embodying servant leadership as modeled by Jesus. May his humility inspire us to serve with selflessness and compassion. Grant us the strength to drink from the cup of sacrifice, embracing your call to love and serve others as we follow the example of our Servant-King. Amen.