

Lent Devotional March 27, 2026

Scripture

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, “Look, 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, “Appoint 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 appoint, 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; instead, 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. Jacob Judy '19

Jesus responds to James and John's request with a profound statement and a sobering challenge: "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" It does not seem possible that James and John would be unaware of the implications of their request. Remember, they had traveled with Jesus from the beginning of his ministry, which means they were witnesses to several astonishing miracles, present for Jesus's transfiguration, and had a first-hand experience of how Jesus treated those he encountered. Yet, their ill-timed, selfish request for power and position in Jesus' kingdom makes it clear that they have misunderstood what Jesus just told them about the events that would take place in Jerusalem.

However, Jesus' next words are clear and to the point, "But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Many of us are nodding our heads in resounding agreement, while murmuring to ourselves, "yep, those words make it clear, that is what it means to be a disciple!" So, as Easter approaches, let us remember our affirmation that being a disciple of Jesus is not about lording our perceptions of righteousness over others to receive their praise; it is about walking with others as they enter Jerusalem—as they are mocked, flogged, spit on, and unjustly persecuted. Being a disciple of Jesus means that we give ourselves in obedient service to God so others will learn about the power of Christ's love.

Prayer

Mighty and loving God, we thank You for Your Son, Who demonstrated to us a servant's heart. Transform our selfish desire for power and position into a desire to demonstrate the power of Christ's love, as seen in the position of a servant. We ask this in the name of Jesus and through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.