

What does it mean to be a servant?

“You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
 (Matthew 20:25b-28)

I tend to bristle at this passage of Scripture because 1.) it flies in the face of everything we’ve ever been taught about how to get ahead in the world, and 2.) I am Zebedee’s son.

James and John are ambitious. Not to an offensive level, they just see that Jesus’ star is rising and they want to go along for the ride. Their appeal seems completely normal to me, but Jesus slaps them down.

There are a couple of noteworthy things about this story. First, James and John convince their mom to take their request to Jesus. But Jesus sees right through their charade because He does not even respond to her, He answers James and John. The second thing that strikes me as funny is that the other ten were “indignant.” As if they would never ask such a thing. In truth, I believe they were thinking, “that’s what we were going to say, but they got to Jesus before we had the chance!”

Jesus called all twelve together and His words turn society’s value system on its ear.

Jesus tells them that, in the world, greatness comes from designated authority (and we know that achievement comes through charm or effort or rich relatives). Jesus goes on to explain that Kingdom greatness is a byproduct of servanthood. In the Kingdom, one climbs the success ladder by going lower.

Biblical servanthood has very little to do with acts of service. Servanthood is a posture. Christ-followers regard others as better and themselves smaller. The good deeds we’re called to flow out of that attitude of servanthood. And (this is vital!) we don’t take the lower place only where believers are concerned, but we also elevate strangers to the place of honor.

As we at City Church move out to Serve the City, we will make Kingdom inroads when the people of our community see that we genuinely value them. To us, they are not a problem to be solved, but a treasure to be embraced.

I think that’s what Jesus was saying.

Pray

Jesus, teach me the value of serving as you served. Amen.

RECURRING NEEDS

Revival
 Repentance
 Wisdom
 Marriages
 Families
 Sick/Grieving
 Depression/Mental illness
 City Church
 Church leaders
 Children
 Youth
 Singles
 Senior citizens
 Volunteers
 Teachers and support staff
 Emergency personnel
 Business community
 Elected officials
 Missionaries
 Worldwide church
 The lost

REFLECTIONS
