

The Path

Sermon Notes

Passage: Mark 10:32-45

Jesus is leading his disciples towards Jerusalem. Earlier predictions of his death now become an imminent reality. The author paints the response of the people following him in such a vivid and real way:

verse 32 ~ “The disciples were filled with awe, and the people following behind were overwhelmed with fear.”

They were amazed because he was literally intending to become the promised Messiah, but there was fear for what Jesus’ path of suffering would mean for those who followed him. He described the trajectory of his life, and invited those following him to join. For all who would choose to follow him, this is what comes across: There is going to be hardship, but there is also going to be hope!

verse 35 ~ “we want you to do us a favour.”

The disciples didn’t fully understand the nature of the heavenly kingdom that Jesus spent his ministry talking about, and some of them tried to leverage themselves into positions of power and authority. The disciples weren’t thinking about a whole new heavenly kingdom, but to be the rulers of the current system. Even today, there are definitely moments where our faith journey isn’t motivated by praying God’s will for the world, but rather simply a hope to leverage our relationship with God to improve our personal circumstances.

verse 38 ~ “Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of suffering I am about to drink?”

Jesus communicates to his disciples that our faith wouldn’t be all sunshine and rainbows, but that following Jesus on the path of faith would be marked with moments and seasons of suffering. Accordingly, Jesus serves as our perfect example of Christian behaviour: sacrificial service.

verse 45 ~ “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.”

Jesus uses this moment as a lesson for us: Human kingdoms and rulers, culture and economy, indeed human nature tends to operate on gaining power and influence to elevate oneself over others. In stark contrast, Jesus makes it completely plain:

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followers of Jesus are instead going to use their lives and influence to live in servitude to others, even so far as to leverage one's entire life. Power in the kingdom of God, authority on the path of faith is counter culturally measured in our heart's desire to live like Jesus in giving your life away for the sake of others.

Life Group Discussion:

Warm-up

1. Can you describe the longest you've ever been in line waiting for something? What was it for and why?
2. How has your stage of life determined what things are really important to you? Has that changed over previous seasons of your life?

Read together Mark 10:32-45

1. Consider the position of the disciples and the crowd following Jesus in this moment. How does the concept following Jesus in today's context differ from following Jesus as the disciples and the crowds did? What realities, risks and/or rewards come with each perspective?
2. Does the request that the disciples brought to Jesus, and Jesus' response, bring insight into how we ought to bring our desires and prayers before God? (It may be helpful to cross-examine this encounter with the instructions of Jesus recorded in Matthew 7:7-11)
3. How has your experience or perceptions of faith changed from when you first started your journey up to this point? How has the idea of suffering or perseverance shaped your interactions with God?
4. How does the practice of serving receive new context when Jesus introduces the idea of giving your life as a ransom for others? How does Jesus' concept of serving challenge our preconceptions of serving?