

Servant Leadership

⁴³ But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant.⁴⁴ and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:43-45)

The disciples had nearly spent three years going everywhere with Jesus and hearing everything he had said. However, the deep rooted belief that the Messiah would be an earthly power and do away with Israel’s enemies was still alive and well among the apostles.

In this coming week’s gospel, James and John are seeking special places of honor. But, they are not alone. Verse 41 tells us the other 10 were “indignant.” They probably also desired the positions of prestige and power for themselves. As was so often true, Jesus calls all of them together and teaches them.

Raw earthly power is necessary in certain worldly settings, but it is not a part of those ministering in his kingdom. The role of a kingdom worker is to serve others.

To be a “servant” (v. 43) means to be ready to serve. It makes no difference whether there is a reward or not. The more responsibility that comes to a servant leader the more he/she becomes like a “slave” (v. 44). This means less freedom or rights. When Jesus washes the feet of his disciples in John 13, he is doing the work that only non-Jewish slaves did. They had the lowest status in society. The ultimate example of servanthood on the part of Jesus is when he gives his life as a ransom to save us from our sins.

As Christians, we are called to the blessed work serving others. God takes care placing before us each day watching each day unfold with grace opportunities. Jesus’ death and resurrection cover all of our “missed openings,” and he gives us even more chances.

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for schooling me for the ministry of service. Thank you for your Word that empowers us to act as your faithful ambassadors to those around us whose lives we have the privilege to serve. Amen