

All in this together

Mark 10.35-45

Two of his disciples, James and John, ask Jesus to put them in a place of higher authority than the others, in his heavenly kingdom. Jesus points out that to be with him in glory they must share in his suffering on earth. He then reprimands them for wanting preferential treatment: instead, they should live sacrificially for others, as he does.

Now read **Mark 10.35-45** see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

There are some basic problems with the request the brothers make. Why do they think they are more important? Don't they know that with authority comes responsibility and, in this case, suffering? Jesus isn't able to directly fulfil their request – he tells them they can achieve greatness by serving others. This is counter-cultural and can be difficult to hear: How does it make you feel?

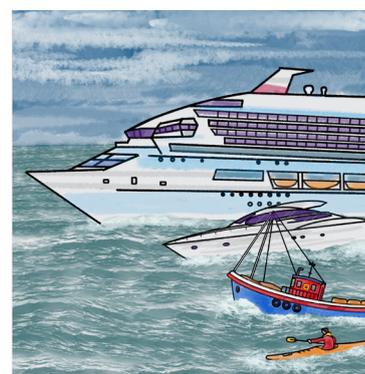


START YOUR DAY

Think through what your day will hold, and who you may speak to, or hear or see in any way. Think about who they are, not just their role as newsreader, postman, neighbour, but as individuals with value in God's eyes. As your day unfolds, offer each person who you hear and see to God, being thankful for their part in your life.

Learn

October is Black History Month. Read one or two featured articles from the Black History Month website each day and learn how attitudes have changed over the decades. <https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/section/history-of-slavery/> There may be parts of the story which are new to you, some shocking, others encouraging. How do you feel about the progress your community has made to recognise the equal importance of all its citizens?



Ask yourself: How do our circumstances affect challenges we may face together?



BAKE

Bake some biscuits. But before you start, get all the ingredients together and think about what part they each play. Are all the ingredients equally important? Could you leave anything out and still get biscuits worth sharing? Even if you only need a small amount of one item, would it be missed if you didn't add it? Appreciate that many things have to come together to make recipe work. Enjoy your biscuits!

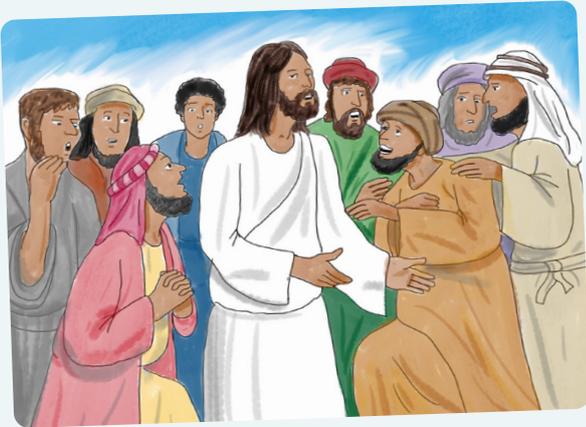


Jesus' teaching speaks first of being a servant and then of being a slave of all. In Jesus' time and in ours, being forced into slavery is not the same as choosing to serve. We don't have the same culture of servants today, thankfully, but we might go to a restaurant where we are served, or go to church for a service: in both cases, others are providing something to 'feed' us. Being a servant to others might involve a small act of thoughtfulness, or be on the scale of the efforts made by so many during the pandemic. What act of serving can you offer to someone today?



On your own or with others, imagine an organisation in which all involved in it are counted as equal, and how this would work. The official UK guidance on equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace refers to employees being able to raise issues with their managers. Any group, large or small, relies on someone taking responsibility, and others being willing to offer their services. From what you read of Jesus in the Bible, what was his role among the disciples with whom he had this conversation about serving others?

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.



One day, the disciples James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus and said, 'Teacher, we want you to do whatever we ask.'

Jesus said, 'What do you want me to do?'

'When your reign comes,' they replied, 'will you make us the two most important people in your kingdom, one to sit at your right hand, and the other to sit at your left hand?'

Jesus shook his head. 'You have no idea what you are asking,' he said. 'Will you be able to drink the cup of suffering that I have to drink?'

'Yes, of course!' the brothers replied.

'Well then,' Jesus said, 'you will drink the same bitter cup as me, and suffer like me; but as for having the most important jobs, that's for God to decide.'

The other disciples heard about this conversation and were angry with James and John for daring to ask such a thing. Jesus called them together and said, 'Sometimes, when people have power, it goes to their head. But I want you to be different. Whoever wants to be great must become a servant. Whoever wants to be first must be prepared to be everyone else's slave. For even the Son of Man came to serve, not to be served, and to give up his life for many people.'

Mark 10.35-45

Did you know?

- To sit at the right or left hand of an important person made you important and recognised too.
- The Son of Man is a title from the Old Testament Book of Daniel, used by Jesus to describe himself as fully human as well as being the Son of God.

Mark 10.35-45 (NRSV)

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to Jesus and said to him, 'Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.' And he said to them, 'What is it you want me to do for you?' And they said to him, 'Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.' 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?' 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; 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.'

When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. 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. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.'