

Kingdom Leadership
What Jesus Asks From Leaders
The Greatest Opportunity Series – Part 25
Mark 10:32-45
9/7-9/8

SHORTENED SERVICE THIS WEEK – 35 MINUTES

Introduction

- The Desire for Power – Ambition is inherent in the DNA of humanity. How do we know that? Because it was ambition mixed with selfishness that turned Lucifer into Satan and it was ambition mixed with selfishness that led to the downfall in Eden BEFORE there was any sin. Ambition purified is beautiful. Ambition distorted is dangerous.
- Societal Encouragement – in the nation of America, where rebellion is held as a virtue, no one wants to be known as a follower but only as a leader. The goal is to climb the ladder until you are on top. Leaders are in control. Some of us even use the term ‘control freak’ as a funny way of explaining that we too have a devilish desire to control the world around us. There is little in the marketing of America that says submission, obedience and servanthood is something to seek out and develop.
- The Kingdom Reality – the challenge with that is Jesus introduced the principles of the Kingdom of God in very different terms. He spoke about power, blessing, and advantage as being something that comes attached to responsibility to bless others. He demonstrated what it would look like for the Son of God to humble Himself and come to earth and care for His people. As the powerful person on the planet, He exhibited a stunningly different paradigm. He revealed that...

Greater LEADERSHIP Equals Greater SERVICE

- Christian Leadership Roles – Christian leadership means making others better not merely serving ourselves. It means empowering those with you to be their best. It means using your authority to get the right people in the right places so that everyone is blessed. It means problem solving to remove obstacles and using your privilege to pave the way for others to be all that God designed them to be. The higher the title, the greater the servanthood is required.
- Last Week – Pastor Brian taught us the story of the Rich Young Ruler. He brought out some amazing points. He show us:
 - Contrast – children with nothing received; rich young ruler challenged
 - Challenged us – how much the world stuff matters to us. Jesus invites us into the freedom from bondage to things, and deeper meaning found in the Kingdom of God. This life isn’t about accumulation of stuff as much as giving away Kingdom fullness.

- True Transformation - God is looking for more than people that do the minimum to alleviate guilt, but those who do things because it's who they have allowed God to make them.
- Amazing Example – I received a letter this week from a child. It was handwritten and every "O" had a smiley face in it. It said, *"Dear Reverend Hahn – please find a small donation for your excellent church! The guy from Sheraton Grand Sacramento (a hotel) takes me all over 'child friendly' Roseville! He has several tomes taken me here to your excellent church! Your different sermons always to me seem appropriate for what at that time is happening in my life at that same time! You will find my different reviews on YELP under KarynC of Oakland, California!"* (included was a dollar bill and a nickel, taped to the page).
- This week – Jesus had to re-rack the heads of His team back into alignment with the plans of God. Maybe He wants to do the same with us here at Bridgeway.

Lesson

- The Road of Uncertainty
 - Jesus Takes the Disciples on a Tense Trip to Jerusalem
 - [Mark 10:32a](#) – *"And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid."*
 - They were going up to Jerusalem – A couple things to note here: 1.) the Bible talks about going UP to Jerusalem because it is on a small mountain and it's all about elevation not direction (it's not up as in a northern direction – actually it's in the South of Israel). 2.) Jerusalem is a big deal and biblically it's always significant. Although Israel was occupied by the Roman Empire and were dominated in most realms, the city of Jerusalem was still the de facto capital of Israel. Most significantly it was the religious capital of a very culturally strict religious nation. Everything important that happened with the Jewish people was determined in Jerusalem. That was where the temple was. That's where the religious leaders were primarily housed. In California it would be like combining the activity of Los Angeles with the legislature power of Sacramento, and the influence of the Bay Area. All the rest of the Nation did whatever Jerusalem told them to. 3.) You went to Jerusalem for a reason – Jesus was born in the southern city of Bethlehem but grew up and was raised in the Northern region of Galilee. But every Jews, especially males, were tied to Jerusalem in the South. Periodic times it was demanded that all male Jews return to Jerusalem for events. But it was a lot to get there. Although Israel is only really the size of New Jersey it was still a long walk down there without a lot in between. So if you were north, you stay north. You go to Jerusalem for a reason. It wasn't normally a casual trip.

- Jesus was walking ahead of them¹ - There seems to be a couple reasons why Mark highlights this interesting point about Jesus walking ahead of the team: 1.) It means leader – typically rabbis would walk first and the disciples would follow, although many times they would group around so it was hard to tell. But to mention that everyone else in His crew was following, means that He stood out as the director, the leader. 2.) It indicates intentionality – Jesus is supposed to be pictured here as driven, clear, organized, and passionate about going where He was going. He was undeterred. In a very important sense, it didn't matter who was walking next to Him, He was on a mission. It seems this focus is what was unsettling to His team and perhaps why they were falling back a bit.
- They were amazed and afraid – **why are they afraid?** Mark and Luke's gospel (which all 3 synoptic gospels include) says that just before this Jesus was talking to the Rich Young Ruler and to the crowd about how hard it is to be a follower of Christ. It would mean loss for so many. Jesus had painted a terrible picture of the future followers. Maybe this was it. But Matthew doesn't mention any of that. His prior story is about God's grace and generosity to His people who serve him. So, what was it that made the disciples so intense and worried? From the context here, especially considering the following conversation Jesus was about to have with them, **it seems that it was the PURPOSE of the trip to Jerusalem, along with Jesus' intensity and focus that had them unsettled.** It's one thing to have a mission, but a mission to Jerusalem, after all that had happened and what they knew and what He said? This can't be good.
- Jerusalem context – Reading all of the gospels it's difficult to tell what the disciples knew and were tracking on what they weren't. Therefore, we are kind of guessing as to what was unsettling them. But from what can be gathered most clearly I see a few things: 1.) Jerusalem was dangerous. Jerusalem leaders hated Jesus. The whole ministry that the disciples/guys had been with Jesus had been fraught with animosity, attacks, coup attempts, and violence from the religious leaders in Jerusalem (Mark records at least 11 confrontations or battles with the religious leaders by this point). They were the status quo-power structure, and they didn't believe that Jesus was the legitimate Messiah. They wanted Him gone, dead. Therefore, Jerusalem was a dangerous place. Jesus had made many trips there (at least 3). 2.) Prophetic Doom – Jesus had already twice mentioned to the disciples that He was going to die at the hands of the religious leaders. The details weren't clear but the ominous nature of His

¹ "The action of Jesus walking ahead of the Twelve corresponds to rabbinic custom, but far more than this is involved. The description anticipates the action of the Risen Lord promised in Chs. 14:28; 16:7, and evokes the image of the powerful Savior who leads his people with purpose and direction. The person of Jesus is central in the scene sketched in verse 32a. What awakens amazement and terror in the disciples who follow is not the recognition that the road leads to Jerusalem nor an awareness of what will be accomplished there, but Jesus himself. The power of the Lord, who holds in his hands his own destiny as well as that of the people of God, is manifested for Mark and his readers in the awe and dread which characterize those around him (cf. Ch. 9:32)." William Lane, NICNT

demise was clear. Every attack that religious leaders brought instilled fear in the disciples that maybe it was the last time they would see Him. Things had only been intensifying in the recent months. 3.) Jesus is famous – there is no way that Jesus is going to walk around Jerusalem and not be noticed. He was revealed by many to be the Messiah. He was renowned for His miracles, His exorcisms, His healings, His teachings. He was a revolutionary and one that was well-known. That’s a recipe for disaster. Whatever was going to happen was going to be intense. There’s no way that the disciples knew this was going to be the last Southern/Jerusalem visit (at least according to Mark’s timeline). They only knew that every trip was intense. John the Baptist was famous and outspoken and he had been killed. According to Mark’s timeline Passover and the Feast of Unleavened bread was coming up (thus the trip) and that was going to draw tons of people which only intensifies the conflict of a revolutionary walking the streets.

- Big Bad News
 - Jesus Predicts His Arrest, Trial, and Crucifixion
 - *Mark 10:32b-34 – “And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him,³³ saying, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles.³⁴ And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him² and kill him. And after three days he will rise.”*
 - Taking the Twelve again – Jesus would periodically gather the team together for teaching moments. This was one of those. The Twelve are the 12 that were called out from the group of disciples, to be His ambassadors, called Apostles.
 - He began to tell them what was to happen to him³ – Prophetically – Jesus was about to speak something secret,...the future. He was about to reveal to His followers what had been revealed to Him by the Father and the Holy Spirit regarding this particular trip. My guess was that this fact was confirmed or revealed by the Transfiguration group (Elijah and Moses conversation). Jesus knew the future as if it was fact. Everything was planned out ahead of time.
 - saying, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, - Jesus calls out blatantly (although some of the other gospel writers indicate that the guys still weren’t tracking on what He was saying and the seriousness nor the imminence of His words) what is going to happen. He said, ‘yes, we

² “in accordance with the Roman law that scourging always accompanied a capital sentence.” NICNT

³ “It is far more likely that the form of the prophecy indicates Jesus’ reflection on such OT texts as Ps. 22:6–8, where the righteous Sufferer is cruelly mocked, and Isa. 50:6, which speaks of scourging and spitting as the tokens of contempt to which the righteous Servant is exposed. It is appropriate to see in verses 33–34 a further revelation of sufferings which Jesus will assume in fulfilment of his messianic vocation.” NICNT

are going to Jerusalem for the last time. The “Son of Man”, Jesus’ favorite descriptor for Himself (meaning humanity’s representative), was going to be arrested by the religious leaders. The primary leadership of that group was largely chief priests and scribes (Mosaic lawyers). Since they didn’t go out and do stuff themselves, someone had to hand Jesus over to them, so who would that be? It was likely going to be either a group of radical Pharisees (like the ones who had been on His case since day one), or some other radical group that wanted Jesus dead (no one could have imagine the real truth about how Jesus was going to be handed over).

- and they will condemn him to death – For a third time now Jesus confirms that He was going to be arrested, according to God’s plan, and be condemned to death. They will pass judgment upon Him that He is NOT the promised Messiah, and they will remove Him. This much was clear. Jesus had already twice talked about how he would be killed and on the third day rise again, but every indicator is that the disciples didn’t fully understand or receive this information at this point.
- and deliver him over to the Gentiles. – this bit of information seems relatively new. Jesus says that in order to actually kill Him the Jewish religious leaders, who didn’t have that level of authority under occupation of the Roman Empire, would need to submit Jesus to the Roman authorities to fulfill a capital punishment.
- And they will mock him and spit on him, - here are more details which we know to be prophetic details. In his arrest and trial he would be mocked by unbelievers and dishonored by them spitting on Him.
- and flog him and kill him. – part of any capital punishment process for Rome was flogging, so that was a given.
- And after three days he will rise – But here again we have a promise of resurrection. It’s beautiful to us on this side of the cross, but for those on the other side, this meant death first. They still had the bad news to grapple with (the death of Jesus). This must have been shadowy hope if any hope at all.
- Luke’s odd addition – Strangely the gospel of Luke explains after all of this... *“But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.”* (Luke 18:34). I don’t know what to do with this information. I don’t know how they couldn’t know what He was saying. I would guess that they didn’t WANT to know what He was saying because they couldn’t imagine how this could happen, and they couldn’t emotionally accept that this could happen. They would be undone without Jesus.

- Power Move
 - James and John Ask for Priority Status

- Mark 10:35-37 – *“And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up 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 do you want me to do for you?”³⁷ And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.”*
 - ESV Combo Account⁴ - Matt 20:20-23; Mk 10:35-40
 - *“Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, James and John, and kneeling before him (they) asked him for something (saying), “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” And he said to them, “What do you want?” She said to him, “Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.” And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.”*
- And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, - Both Matthew and Mark record this story and record that it happened after Jesus’ third prophetic revelation that He was going to die in Jerusalem and rise again. But the BIG DIFFERENCE is that Matthew records that it was James and John’s mom’s (Jesus’ aunt) idea. She was travelling with them and funding most of the operation. So, whose idea was it? The boys or their mom? The answer is likely, YES. They talked about wanting it and they lacked the guts to ask about it and the mom went with them and stood with them prodding it on.
 - The Sons of Thunder – By this time most of us are very familiar with these two famous disciples/apostles of Jesus. They are brothers. James is the older one and John is the younger one. Later James will be the first to be killed for the faith, while John is the youngest of the team and the ONLY one who will live a long life. They were Jesus’ closest companions, save Peter (they were part of the Inner 3 group). They were deemed the ‘sons of thunder’ likely do to their intensity either of loudness or boldness. They were fishermen by trade and had left the family business (owned by their dad Zebedee) to follow Jesus (and so did mom). Their boldness shows here clearly, and where they got it from (it wasn’t dad).
- came up to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” – It seems like an odd time to ask for anything. They are already nervous about an intense trip to Jerusalem, and Jesus has just said that He’s going to die. So, why are they asking for anything in this moment? Likely this uncomfortable conversation is forced by TIMING. Although they may not have understood all the details about what was going to happen or how, they did get the gist that things were coming to a head and Jesus was about to do something really important both physically and spiritually. Therefore, if they were going to get in a request, this may be their last opportunity. The bummer is that the way that this is written seems that they are playing off either a card of family,

⁴ Scriptural Color Key - Luke is black; Matthew is orange; Mark is green; John is red; My additions are non bold, black and non-italicized

closeness, or we've followed you now you can do something for us. Either way it has the air of manipulation or pressure. Maybe I'm making too much of it.

- The wrong opportunity – this is the **Year of Opportunity** at Bridgeway, and I would imagine that you as well as me have **tried to take advantage of the wrong opportunity in the wrong way** in your life, maybe even this year, especially when it comes to God. Think about **what we ask for**. Think about why we ask it. Consider the **content of our prayer life** and tell me whether it reflects His will be done or our will being done.
- And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" – Jesus still heard them out. He knew what was coming and must have been saddened and a bit exhausted. But He heard them through His beautiful patience.
- And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory – This is crazy! Do you hear what they are asking? They are saying, 'we know you are going to die. We know that you are a big deal and you are going to be spiritual king of heaven, and hopefully king of earth in some way (hopefully physically). What we want is to be your right and left hand guys in that new reality. How about it? This is very bold. It seems selfish. BUT, I do want to give them credit for a couple things before I blast them too hard for a selfish request at a time when Jesus is already facing death and stressed out.
- Incredible Faith: They knew He would live – Jesus said that He was going to die three times. Although they may not have understood all the ins and outs of that, they clearly understood that He was going to die, but there's no point in asking for a future gift from someone who is going to die unless you **ULTIMATELY** and firmly believe that they are going to live again. This demonstrates **POWERFUL FAITH** to me. They are looking at circumstances and believing His word more.
- Incredible Faith: He would overcome – In order to say this they would have to believe that Jesus, a relative nobody, albeit famous, would overcome the behemoth power structure of the Jewish Religious leaders of Jerusalem. To rule He would have to overcome the oppression and occupation of the Roman Empire, the greatest empire known at that time. He would have to break out of whatever arrest, defeat whatever trial there was, and **IF** He is serious about the getting killed thing, He would have to defeat death and rise again for any of this to work.
- Incredible Faith: At least Supernatural Victory – Even if they got all this wrong and it was all supernatural instead of literal, or physical, they still wanted it. They didn't know what the new kingdom would be but they wanted what Jesus was involved in. **WHATEVER** that was, they wanted to be a part of it. This is the **exact opposite of the heart of Judas Iscariot** who wanted something but didn't want it Jesus' way.

Both had ambition but one's ambitious plan included Jesus as King and one didn't.

- Not My Problem
 - Jesus Rejects Their Request
 - Mark 10:38-40 – *“Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking.⁵ Are you able to drink the cup that I drink,⁶ or to be baptized with the baptism⁷ with which I am baptized?⁸”³⁹ And they said to him, “We are able.” And 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 grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”*
 - ESV Combo Account⁹ - Matt 20:20-23; Mk 10:35-40
 - *Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?” They said to him, “We are able.” And 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 and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.*
 - Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking.¹⁰ – This is an odd conversation because at the beginning it sounds like Jesus is rebuking them for asking a dumb question but then upon conversation

⁵ “In their struggle for rank and precedence, and the desire to exercise authority for their own advantage, the disciples were actually imitating those whom they undoubtedly despised.” NICNT

⁶ “The cup and baptism signify that Jesus in his passion will be the voluntary sacrifice for the sins of men; when applied to the disciples in verse 39 these images suggest their moral participation in Jesus’ passion.

To share someone’s cup was a recognized expression for sharing his fate. In the OT the cup of wine is a common metaphor for the wrath of God’s judgment upon human sin and rebellion, and this understanding was kept alive into the first century.⁸² The total ruin which the cup represents is willed by God and constitutes a divine judgment. In interpreting verse 38 it is necessary to see the cup as a designation of judgment. Jesus boldly applied to himself the image of the cup used by the prophets to threaten the enemies of God with his divine vengeance. The cup which Jesus must drink has reference to divine punishment of sins which he bears in place of the guilty (cf. Chs. 10:45; 14:24). The reality which the image represents is expressed in Isa. 53:5: “he was wounded because of our sins, bruised because of our iniquities; the chastisement which gives us peace has been upon him, and it is by his sufferings that we are healed.” NICNT

⁷ “The image of baptism is parallel to that of the cup. In popular Greek usage the vocabulary of baptism was used to speak of being overwhelmed by disaster or danger, and a similar metaphorical use of submersion is present in Scripture. The texts of the OT, however, do not demonstrate that to be submerged signified submission to a fearful death, and it is this which is required in the context. Apparently Jesus called his passion a baptism (cf. Lk. 12:50) because he and the disciples were familiar with John’s rite of repentance, which he called “baptism” and set in an explicit context of God’s judgment upon human sin. Jesus understood that his baptism expressed his solidarity with sinful men and signified his willingness to assume the burden of the judgment of God (see on Ch. 1:2–11). The baptism which he anticipates is his death upon the cross in fulfillment of his messianic vocation. Applied to Jesus, the images of the cup and baptism signify that he bears the judgment merited by the sins of men (cf. Ch. 14:36; 15:34). While informed by the OT motifs, the primary key for interpreting the parabolic language of verse 38 is Jesus’ messianic task.” NICNT

⁸ “Normally the usage of the present indicates an action already begun. The question posed could thus be translated: Can you drink the cup that I am in the process of drinking? More probably the underlying Aramaic would be interpreted as a future, in which case it points forward to the passion. Cf. Mt. 20:22 τὸ ποτήριον ὃ ἐγὼ μέλλω πίνειν.” NICNT

⁹ Scriptural Color Key - Luke is black; Matthew is orange; Mark is green; John is red; My additions are non bold, black and non-italicized

¹⁰ “The disciples had failed completely to grasp the significance of Jesus’ teaching that he would be treated with contempt and be put to death. The request of the sons of Zebedee for places of honor in the glory of the Son of Man immediately follows Jesus’ announcement that they were going to Jerusalem and after three days the Son of Man will rise. The enthusiasm reflected in the sweeping terms of verse 35, and the form of the petition in verse 37, in the context of approaching the royal city, show that the brothers regard Jesus as the eschatological Lord who goes to Jerusalem to restore the glory of the fallen throne of David. The question of rank, involving an inflated understanding of their own position, is best explained in the context of royal messiahship. The request may be for the places of honor at the messianic banquet⁷⁷ or for the positions of eminence and authority at the parousia, when Jesus is enthroned as the eschatological judge (see Chs. 8:38; 13:26). The place of honor is the seat on the right, and next to it, the seat on the left (cf. 1 Kings 2:19; Ps. 110:1; 1 Esdras 4:29; Eccles. 12:12; Josephus, Antiquities VI. xi. 9).”

NICNT

He agrees that they understand part of it. So, I conclude that He was referring to the actual request of placement. They didn't know what that entailed and who was involved in the process of that.

- Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?"¹¹ – this is the odd part because Jesus is asking them whether or not they are going to be able to suffer like He is going to suffer. Although the total answer is obviously going to be NO (they aren't going to deal with the sins of the world's judgment coming upon their soul like Jesus will), there is a portion of it that they ARE going to be sharing in. The way He asks it involves some very COMMON imagery in the ancient world, especially in a Jewish context. He refers to CUP¹² and BAPTISM motifs.
 - Cup Motif – The cup has to do with something stored up for someone and something poured out upon someone. In religious circles it speaks to the cup of God's wrath, or the cup of God's blessings. It usually means God is releasing something upon mankind either good or bad. Jesus used the term to describe God-ordained suffering most often (like in the Garden of Gethsemane).
 - Baptism motif – A baptism motif in religious and ancient contexts usually involves something overwhelming like a flooding, or immersion into something. It means dunked fully into without escape. It means wholly overcome by something. It's usually an intense process that is being referred to.
- And they said to him, "We are able."¹³ – After Jesus pushes back on them and says, 'you think you can handle the suffering and process that I'm about to go through????' They said, 'yep, we do.' That's bold.
- And 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, - This is the odd part, Jesus agrees. He's like, 'yeah, you are right, you are going to suffer intensely like me, good point.'
- but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant,¹⁴ - But, Jesus goes to the original request: I can't do that. I don't hand out assignments for who does what in the coming Kingdom (it's unclear if it's the Millennial Kingdom reference – which is most likely – or a heavenly eternal kingdom

¹¹ "The sufferings and death which await Jesus, expressed by the two images of the cup and baptism, belong to the unique messianic mission of the Son of Man. Verse 38 expresses an impossibility, and not the requisite condition for association with Jesus' glory." NICNT

¹² ch. 26:29, 42; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42; John 18:11; [Isa. 51:22] – contrast Psalm 11:6 & 16:5

¹³ "In verse 39 the two images are paradoxically applied to James and John. They indicate that the brothers will participate in the sufferings of Jesus (cf. 1 Peter 4:13). There must be a solidarity between the Son of Man and his disciples, and this is expressed not only by their grateful acceptance of his protection and favor, but also by their following his example of humility and service, if necessary to the extent of death. The description of discipleship implied conforms to Ch. 8:34–38. The reference, however, is neither exclusively nor necessarily to martyrdom, for the image of baptism is not found in this sense in Christian literature until the turn of the second century. Rather Jesus prophesies that the sons of Zebedee, like himself, will endure great tribulation and suffering for the gospel (cf. Acts 12:2; Rev. 1:9)." NICNT

¹⁴ "Jesus' denial of the right to set men on his right or left hand is consistent with his refusal to accept even the appearance of an arbitrary authority. His prerogatives are limited by his submission to the Father, and Jesus frankly admitted this (cf. Ch. 13:32; Acts 1:7). The appointment of the places of honor is the Father's prerogative, and James and John are only given the assurance that these will be assigned to those who have been prepared by him." NICNT

– which is possible). I don't get to determine who is on my team and in what place. That's over my paygrade at this time.

- but it is for those for whom it has been prepared – Someone else handles those assignments. Clearly Jesus is talking about the Father's authority and plans that He is not privy to at this point. Remember, the Son of God, the 2nd Person of the Trinity, restricted His deity to come here in the Incarnation. He was operating relatively blind and powerless awaiting any help to come from above. Jesus neither had the knowledge or authority at this point.

- Last Is First

- Jesus Teaches the Disciples Servant Leadership

- *Mark 10:41-45 – “And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant¹⁵ at James and John. ⁴² And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ⁴³ But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant,¹⁶ ⁴⁴ and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. ¹⁷ ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve,¹⁸ and to give his life as a ransom¹⁹ for many.”²⁰*

- **ESV Combo Account²¹ - Matt 20:20-23; Mk 10:35-40**

¹⁵ “It also indicates the degree to which selfish ambition and rivalry were the raw material from which Jesus had to fashion the leadership for the incipient Church.” NICNT

¹⁶ Mark 10:43 is “thus not an admonition to behave in a certain way as much as a description of the way things actually are in the kingdom of God, and even among disciples of the kingdom. Thus, to fail in being a servant is not simply to fall short of an ideal condition but to stand outside of an existing condition that corresponds to the kingdom of God.” Edwards, J. R. (2002). *The Gospel according to Mark* (p. 325). Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁷ “The reason why a servant is the most preeminent position in the kingdom of God is that the sole function of a servant is to give, and giving is the essence of God.” Edwards, J. R. (2002). *The Gospel according to Mark* (p. 327). Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁸ “The formulation “The Son of man came ...” places the entire statement in the context of Jesus’ messianic mission (cf. Ch. 2:17). The service in which the royal will of the Son of Man is displayed is fulfilled in his giving of himself. In a Jewish frame of reference this expression was characteristically used of the death of the martyrs (e.g. 1 Macc. 2:50; 6:44; Mekilta to Ex. 12:1). In this context it expresses the element of voluntariness or self-sacrifice in the death of Jesus who offers himself in obedience to the will of God. His death has infinite value because he dies not as a mere martyr but as the transcendent Son of Man.” NICNT

¹⁹ “The prevailing notion behind the metaphor is that of deliverance by purchase, whether a prisoner of war, a slave, or a forfeited life is the object to be delivered. Because the idea of equivalence, or substitution, was proper to the concept of a ransom, it became an integral element in the vocabulary of redemption in the OT. It speaks of a liberation which connotes a servitude or an imprisonment from which man cannot free himself. In the context of verse 45a, with its reference to the service of the Son of Man, it is appropriate to find an allusion to the Servant of the Lord in Isa. 53, who vicariously and voluntarily suffered and gave his life for the sins of others. The specific thought underlying the reference to the ransom is expressed in Isa. 53:10 which speaks of “making his life an offering for sin.” Jesus, as the messianic Servant, offers himself as a guilt-offering (Lev. 5:14–6:7; 7:1–7; Num. 5:5–8) in compensation for the sins of the people. The release effected by this offering overcomes man’s alienation from God, his subjection to death, and his bondage to sin. Jesus’ service is offered to God to release men from their indebtedness to God.” NICNT

²⁰ “The thought of substitution is reinforced by the qualifying phrase “a ransom for the many.” The Son of Man takes the place of the many and there happens to him what would have happened to them (cf. Ch. 8:37: what no man can do, Jesus, as the unique Son of Man, achieves). The many had forfeited their lives, and what Jesus gives in their place is his life. In his death, Jesus pays the price that sets men free. The sacrifice of the one is contrasted with those for whom it is made, in allusion to Isa. 53:11f. In rabbinic literature, and even more strikingly at Qumran, “the many” is a technical term for the elect community, the eschatological people of God. The majestic figure of the Son of Man is linked here with the community which will be vindicated and saved in the eschatological judgment because Jesus goes to his death innocently, voluntarily and in accordance with the will of God. This corresponds perfectly with the main thought of Isa. 53. The ultimate meaning of Jesus’ vicarious suffering and his giving himself as a ransom, however, can be understood only from the reality of his life, death and resurrection as narrated in the Gospel. In Mark there is complete correspondence between the ransom saying and the death of Jesus. Because Jesus’ will is synchronous with the will of God he must die in the place of guilty men (Ch. 8:31, 33). This is what it means for him to offer his life as a ransom for the many.” NICNT

²¹ Scriptural Color Key - Luke is black; Matthew is orange; Mark is green; John is red; My additions are non bold, black and non-italicized

- *And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at the two brothers, James and John. ²⁵ But Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all, ²⁸ even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*
- And when the ten heard it, - Word got out quickly, it's a small team, that the guys and their mom were jockeying for position in the coming Kingdom and they got ticked off.
- they began to be indignant at James and John – this is a nice way of saying that they were all super angry at James and John for their selfish ambition.
- And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them." – Jesus had to have a **family meeting** again to calm all of this down and take advantage of the teaching moment. He gathered them around and started to re-rack their minds about all of this. They were thinking wrongly. He started by using the **Gentiles (which to the ancient Jews meant ignorant godless people) as an example**. He said, look around you at the culture you hate so much. Look at how they handle things. Their rulers, guys like Pilate, Herod, Felix, the Emperor, they all use their authority to lord things over other people's heads for their own advantage. They jockeyed for position to get where they are to maximize everything for their own selfish ambition. Right? They would have all agreed.
- But it shall not be so among you. – But that's not US. That's now how we do things. We are different. You know that. I have never led like them. I have never operated from a mindset like that.
- But whoever would be great among you must be your servant – On our team whoever is the most influential, the most privileged, the most powerful, the most influential, the greatest leader...they must be your servant. They must use all they have to bless others. The only reason they are in charge is to bless others.
- and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all – whoever is named as the most important, the first among men, the leader of any given Christian team, must be the SLAVE of everyone else. I mean a slave. I mean someone that doesn't look to their own interests but to the interests of others. I mean one that doesn't gather for themselves but gives away. I mean one that puts themselves on the back burner consistently for the needs of those around them. Someone that doesn't consider themselves anyone special outside of what God called them to.
- For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, - If you need ANY evidence that this is how we do it, look at me. Who am I? You

know this! I am the Son of Man. I am the Messiah. I am the Son of God. I am the anointed One. And what did I do when I called you, as my followers? What am I about to do walking into Jerusalem? I served you. I serve others. I use what I have to bless you. I don't make it about me. I don't make everyone less so I can be more, I become less so you can become more. That's how we DO.

- and to give his life as a ransom for many – And If I'm honest, that's exactly where we are going. I am on a mission to give away my life, to die, for the sake of many that they may live. I will give my life for theirs. I will suffer that they won't have to. I will take their wrath. I will take their sin. I'm the only one that can and the only one that WILL.

Conclusion

- Properly Channeled Ambition – Jesus-centric – Ambition is a part of how we are designed. What will we do with it? What will we do with our privilege? Our power? Our influence? Our wealth? The only reason we have it is to bless others. Let's go do that.