

RTS Women's Study: The Gospel of Mark

#22: Mark 10:32-52: What Does Biblical Leadership Look Like?

Intro: "No one does more harm in the Church than he who has title or rank of holiness and acts perversely."—Gregory the Great

I. Good Leaders Choose Suffering Over Glory (v.32-41)

A. The Problem: Some Leaders are In It for Themselves

- James and John make an audacious request to Jesus (v.37)
- It's so audacious and glory-seeking, that "when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John" (v.41)
- They had confused *present* glory with *future* glory—they had assumed following Jesus meant earthly rewards

B. The Solution: Realize Suffering Comes Before Glory

- Jesus is the ultimate example of suffering before glory
 - We are told that on the road to Jerusalem, "Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid" (v.32)
 - Jesus knew he was to die, intended to die, and didn't shirk his plan (v.33-34)
 - "Look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising its shame, and is seated and the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb 12:2)
 - **Rejoice in the faithfulness of Jesus and his willingness to suffer!
- We are called to follow in Jesus' footsteps of suffering
 - Christians tend to underestimate the amount of suffering we will endure (v.38)
 - Christians tend to overestimate their ability to handle suffering (v.39)
 - Regardless, we need to remember: "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22)
- **Key take away: If we want to be like Christ, we are most like him when we suffer

II. Good Leaders Seek to Serve Rather than Rule (v.42-44)

A. The Problem: Some Leaders domineer those under their care

- Jesus warns against a worldly approach to leadership
 - Jesus says worldly leaders "lord it over" (*katakuriuo*) people
 - Same warning to pastors in 1 Pet 5:3: "not domineering (*katakuriuo*) over those in your charge"
- Such leaders are not a new problem in the church
 - Israel were warned that a worldly king will "reign over you" harshly (1 Sam 8:11)
 - Rehoboam laid a "heavy yoke" of harsh leadership on Israel (1 Kings 12:13-14)
 - Ezekiel tells of bad shepherds who ruled with "force and harshness" (34:4)

- Question: Ever been under a domineering leader? What's it like? Why is it a problem?

B. The Solution: Jesus Calls Leaders to be Gentle Servants

- "It shall not be so among you" (v.43)
 - Calls leaders to be a "servant" or a "slave"
 - Servant is used not just of deacons, but is the same word translated "minister" (1 Cor 3:5; Eph 3:7; Col 1:7)
 - Tied in with this are repeated calls for ministers to be "gentle" and "kind" (1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7; 2 Tim 2:24)
 - Essentially Christian leadership should be *notably different* from the world
- Jesus is the ultimate servant leader
 - If anyone *deserved* glory and power it was Jesus
 - "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many" (v.45)
- Key question: Why do you think Christian leadership sometimes looks so much like the world's idea of leadership?

III. Good Leaders Notice the Weak Rather than the Strong (v.46-52)

A. The Problem: We Tend to Notice People We Can *Get* Something From

- Even in Christian spaces, we can tend to talk to those who are accomplished or in leadership, usually under the heading of "networking"
- Diagnostic question: When you enter a room, what kind of people do you notice?

B. The Solution: Notice Those Who are In Need

- Jesus noticed the blind beggar Bartimaeus
 - There is no one lower than a blind beggar! He has nothing to offer, nothing to give, no status that's attractive
 - The rest of the group did not think he should be noticed: "And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent"
 - **Jesus often welcomes people that his own followers reject!
- Jesus is pleased to help those who are open about their weakness
 - The blind man cried out persistently for help
 - Jesus heals him: "Your faith has made you well" (v.52)
- Note: Mark is the only Gospel that mentions Bartimaeus' name, and name of his father. It's likely that Mark knew him after Bartimaeus became a believer (v.52)

Discussion Groups

1. Share honestly with the group about how you tend to handle suffering. Do you get depressed? Angry? Disillusioned? How does this passage help you today?
2. If God calls us to be gentle servant leaders, what are some steps we can take to get there? What truths do we need to remember that allow us to be gentle and servant-hearted to those under our care?
3. What are some practical places in your life right now where you can notice people who are weak, on the margins, or in need?