

Matthew 20 17 Now Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. On the way, he took the Twelve aside and said to them, **18** "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death **19** and will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!"

20 Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him. **21** "What is it you want?" he asked. She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom." **22** "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" "We can," they answered.

23 Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father."

24 When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. **25** Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. **26** Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, **27** and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— **28** just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

How has your life been a pursuit of greatness?

Have you noticed a tendency for your focus to shift to yourself?

READ Matthew 20:17-28

V. 17-19 How do you think you would have reacted to this prediction from Jesus about his death and resurrection?

V. 20-21 Look back to Matthew 19 and put yourself in that context. Does it make sense why the mother of James and John inquired about her sons the way she did?

When have you made a request for your kids to be honored for their greatness?

Do you think this mother's request was good or bad? Or neither?

What does her request show you about human nature and how we approach Jesus?

V.22-23

What other Bible passages come to mind that use the imagery of "the cup"?

See Ps. 23:5-6, 116:13 Is. 51:17-18, Jer. 25:27-29, John 18:11 Rev. 18

How could you describe the cup that God has given you to drink? Is it pleasant? Is it full of sorrow? Are you willing to drink the cup you have been given?

V.24 Do you think you would be similarly annoyed with James and John? Why?

V.25-28 If you were to summarize how our society pursues greatness, what would your description be?

Who is the focus on when pursuing greatness? For people in general? For you?

In verse 26, Jesus is rather blunt saying "Not so with you." Do you need to hear that from Jesus today? Why or why not?

Jesus uses the social roles of servant and slave to show his disciples his new way to greatness. Can you think of a role in our society that would flip upside down our understanding of greatness?

Does serving others come easily for you? Why do you think that is?

Look back through Matthew 19 - 20; how would you summarize Jesus' point that he reiterates about the first being last or the last being first? What is he getting at? How does this apply to you today?

If anyone on earth could have demanded that others serve him, it was Jesus.

Jesus instead focused on others - on you - how does Jesus coming to serve make you feel?

Have you ever served others while also focusing on yourself? Why is this problematic?

How could contemplating Jesus being focused on you change your approach to serving others?

What questions do you have about this text?

How can you apply this text this week?

Next Steps:

Write an honest assessment of how you pursue greatness and who your focus is on.

Ask yourself what is a tangible way that you can humbly serve someone other than yourself? Prioritize time to do that this week.

Spend time contemplating the fact that Jesus' focus is on you. Is that hard to accept? How does it make you feel? What could your life look like as you realize Jesus' focus is on you, humbly serving you? How could this change the way you serve others?
