

Introduction

- As we have seen previously, living as a disciple of Jesus means that we will face various forms of _____.
- For most of us, the greatest opposition that we face comes from _____ not _____.

Key Point: As followers of Jesus, we must be continually reminded to get our focus off of ourselves and look to Him (His person and work) in order that we might properly _____ Him as our Master.

Matthew 20:20-28 — True Greatness

The Context

- In 19:27-30, Jesus promised that His disciples would be given positions of prominence in His Kingdom in response to Peter's statement about them all having left everything behind to follow Him.
- In 20:17-19, Jesus once again told the disciples that what was ahead for Him was arrest and execution as well as resurrection.

Observations from the Text

1. James, John, and their mother came to Jesus and made a request of Him.

Matt. 20:20-21—²⁰ Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. ²¹ And he said to her, “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.”

⇒ James and John's mother appears to also have been a _____ of Jesus.

The Sons of Zebedee —

Their Mother —

⇒ The goal seems to have been to secure for her _____ a place of prominence in Jesus' Kingdom.

2. Jesus' response to such a question was both *compassionate* and *solemn*.

Matt. 20:22-23—²² Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?” They said to him, “We are able.” ²³ He said to them, “You will drink my cup, 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.”

⇒ His response highlighted their lack of _____.

⇒ The use of _____ imagery is significant.

Isa. 51:17—Wake yourself, wake yourself, stand up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the Lord the cup of his wrath, who have drunk to the dregs the bowl, the cup of staggering.

⇒ Jesus _____ that they would “drink” His cup, but that their request was not His to grant.

The Suffering of James —

The Suffering of John —

3. The other disciples did not appreciate the brothers seeking to secure positions of honor at their expense.

Matt. 20:24—And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers.

⇒ The disciples were noticeably _____.

4. Jesus addressed their anger by asking them to call to mind the *conduct* of the leaders of the unbelieving world.

Matt. 20:25—But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.

“rulers” → “lord it over them”

“great ones” → “exercise authority”

⇒ The progression of the terminology emphasizes that those of this world wield their power _____ others.

5. Jesus then stated that true greatness is obtained not by following the *example* of worldly leaders, but by following that of His own.

Matt. 20:26-28—²⁶ 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 your slave, 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.”

“great” → “servant”

“first” → “slave”

⇒ The progression of the terminology emphasizes that His followers must wield their power on _____ of others.

⇒ There is a _____ drawn between the expected conduct of Jesus’ followers and His own conduct and mission.

* As the Son of Man, He was owed all allegiance and submission (Dan. 7:27), and yet He came to _____ others.

* Although He was the ideal worshiper of God, He came to lay down His life in order to _____ His people.

Implications of the Text

1. Followers of Jesus are prone to misunderstand the true _____ of discipleship.

2. Followers of Jesus are prone to the same _____ tendencies that characterize the unbelieving world.

3. True greatness is demonstrated through the _____ and _____ of Jesus.

Principles for Courageous Discipleship

- As disciples of Jesus, we must continually take our focus off our _____ and place back onto Him.
- As disciples of Jesus, we have a secure identity in Him that is the basis for our looking to the _____ of others.
- As Jesus’ followers, we must not _____ from others even what we are properly due, but must look to love and serve them.

Phil. 2:3-11—³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.