

Small Group Discussion Guide

Mark 10:32-45

“An Empire Founded on Love”

Based on Sunday's
Sermon 9/27/26

Background

“Once **again** Jesus gathered **the Twelve** (cf. 3:13–15) around Him **and** revealed **what** would soon **happen to Him**. This third prediction is the most precise and comprehensive of the three Mark recorded (cf. comments on 8:31; 9:30–31; also see 9:12).”¹

“In Matthew 20:20, Salome, the mother of John and James, is reported as being the one who approached Jesus. “Salome was the sister of Jesus’ mother... In making this request, she apparently hoped to take advantage of this relationship” (Dowling, Foster, Marshall, Root, *Mark*, p. 97). Whether the request was made by Salome at her sons’ instigation, or by John and James at their mother’s initiative, the fact remains that it was a request born of selfish motives.”²

“Jesus contrasted the kingdom command structure with that of the world by declaring Himself the CSO—that is, the “Chief Serving Officer.” The eternal Son of God described His task as serving. Mark chose to use the Greek term *diakoneō* [1247], which originally meant “to wait tables.” In the broad sense, it means to “function as an intermediary,” “act as go-between/agent,” or “be at one’s service.” This came from the lips of one who could heal with a touch, compel the weather to change immediately, provide food for thousands, and cause demons to tremble before Him. As one expositor writes, “At no place do the ethics of the kingdom of God clash more vigorously with the ethics of the world than in the matters of power and service.”³

Discussion Questions

Getting Started

1. If you could sit *anywhere* in a famous place (Oval Office, courtside at the NBA Finals, backstage at a concert), where would you choose and why?

Observation

2. How many specific things does Jesus predict will happen to Him in Jerusalem (vv. 33–34)?

¹ John D. Grassmick, “Mark,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 152.

² Rodney L. Cooper, Mark, vol. 2, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 170.

³ Charles R. Swindoll, Mark, Swindoll’s Living Insights New Testament Commentary (Tyndale House Publishers, 2018), 284.

3. What request do James and John make, and how do they frame it (vv. 35–37)?
4. What contrast does Jesus draw between Gentile rulers and the way leadership works in His kingdom (vv. 42–44)?

Interpretation

5. The disciples are “amazed” and “afraid.” What might they be feeling, and why?
6. What do the metaphors “cup” and “baptism” represent in this context?
7. Why is Jesus’ teaching on leadership so radically different from the world’s model?
8. What does “ransom” imply about the condition of humanity and the work of Christ?

Application

9. In what ways do you still seek “glory seats” — recognition, status, influence — rather than sacrificial service?
10. What is one concrete way you can imitate the Servant-King this week?

Prayer List: