

Isaiah 53:10-11

Psalm 33

Hebrews 4:14-16

Mark 10:35-45

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James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." And he said to them, "What is it you want me to do for you?" And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory."

But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They replied, "We are able."

Then 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 or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."

When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John.

So Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Unfortunately, many people in our world
have had less than positive experiences
with people holding authority over them.

Today there is often a huge distance between
those who rule and those who are ruled.

Those who are ruled feel alienated and underappreciated,
by those calling the shots.

Just look at the large numbers of people quitting their jobs,
even during these Pandemic times.

They feel that those in charge are uncaring and remote.

It's easy for those who have worked their way
into higher positions to forget what it was like
when they were 'in the trenches'.

A GOOD PARENT REMEMBERS WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE A CHILD.

People seek authority for different reasons.
Some enjoy the power that goes with it;
it makes them feel important.
Others like the money and prestige that goes with it.

Authority can be used exclusively to promote oneself.
Authority can impose, dominate and control.

But there are other models of authority where those in authority listen,
accompany and empower others.

People can be given confidence in themselves
and calls them to be aware of their responsibilities, not just their rights.

Some people have a lust for power,
and use their authority to dominate others.
This lust for power shows someone who is weak and not strong.
Only the weak measure their worth by whom they can dominate.

This misuse of power isolates the holder of power
and usually brings out the worst in everyone involved.

When James and John asked Jesus,
"Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory."
they were only thinking of themselves.

They didn't worry about the effect this would have on the other apostles.

They thought that Christ's Kingdom was like worldly kingdoms.
They missed the point that Christ's Kingdom
is where the greatest would be those who were willing
to serve others rather than serving themselves.

Jesus saw authority as an opportunity to serve.

As usual Jesus set the example himself.
Just think of the Last Supper, where Jesus washed the feet of the disciples.

This is truly 'Servant Leadership' in action.

He invites us to follow, but he leaves the response to us.
He would lead, but not control.

Christ's authority mirrored that of God.

God uses power not to control people, but to enable them.

God does not force us to be better people.
but God sent his only Son Jesus
to show us how it's done.