



We are in week six of a series called “Misunderstood: Jesus According to Mark.” This series is an opportunity for us to prepare our hearts and lives for Easter as we study the book of Mark together. This discussion guide is designed to help your small group or class dive deeper into what is being taught each weekend, and to be intentional about applying it to your life as you prepare to celebrate Easter. If you weren’t able to hear the sermon this weekend, please check it out at:
<http://www.firstdecatour.org/sermons/>

WEEK 6: SERVANT

We have come to the last week of our study. Over the past five weeks, we have examined some ways the opposition, fans and followers Mis/Understood Jesus. We conclude today with two disciples misunderstanding about power, authority, and humility. Instead of self-promotion, Jesus taught that leading by serving is the essence of the Upside Down Kingdom over which he reigns.



START

In the sermon this week, Pastor Wayne shared several examples of the nature of humility and servitude as part of our testimony as Christ-followers. Being humble and serving others is an attractive trait to those both inside and outside our Christian circle. Just for fun; below are listed a variety of quotes on humility from Christian and non-Christian sources.

Read through these as a group and allow a few minutes for comments and observations.

*O Lord, it's hard to be humble; when you're perfect in every way. I can't wait to look in the mirror, cause I get better looking each day. **Mac Davis; country music singer, songwriter and actor***

*True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less. **Rick Warren; evangelical pastor and author***

“These are the few ways we can practice humility:

- *To speak as little as possible of one's self.*
- *To mind one's own business.*
- *Not to want to manage other people's affairs.*
- *To avoid curiosity.*
- *To accept contradictions and correction cheerfully.*
- *To pass over the mistakes of others.*
- *To accept insults and injuries.*
- *To accept being slighted, forgotten and disliked.*

- *To be kind and gentle even under provocation.*
- *Never to stand on one's dignity.*
- *To choose always the hardest."*

The Joy in Loving: A Guide to Daily Living by Mother Teresa; Roman Catholic nun and missionary to Calcutta, India

"I have three precious things which I hold fast and prize. The first is gentleness; the second is frugality; the third is humility, which keeps me from putting myself before others. Be gentle and you can be bold; be frugal and you can be liberal; avoid putting yourself before others and you can become a leader among men."

Lao Tzu (a Taoist Chinese philosopher)

"Be careful not to mistake insecurity and inadequacy for humility! Humility has nothing to do with the insecure and inadequate! Just like arrogance has nothing to do with greatness!"

C. JoyBell C. (most frequently quoted author on "Good Reads", she is touted as the leading female Thinker, Writer and Mentor in our world today....in other words a strong non-Christian voice speaking into our culture, particularly to women)

- ▶ Share within your group the ones with which you agree or disagree.
- ▶ Which statements seem the closest to describing what we know about Jesus' example of becoming a humble servant? Does the source of these quotes surprise you?



READ MARK 10:35-40 & MATTHEW 20:20-23

In these two accounts we see a variation, but we do not see a contradiction. James and John, with their mother, approached Jesus and asked to be shown special favor. We see both Jesus' response and the reaction of the other disciples in these passages.

- ▶ Keeping in mind that both of these are true, envision the scene as it would have played out. Both the mother and her sons made these requests at the same time. Think of conversations you have when several people are saying the same thing; for example any committee meeting or family dinner you have ever attended. What do you notice about the different approaches as recorded in Matthew and Mark? How do the postures and requests differ?
- ▶ As a group, combine the details of both Matthew 20:20-21 and Mark 10:35-37. Notice that in both accounts Jesus spoke directly to James and John. As Pastor Wayne said in his sermon, this was not one of their finer moments. However, look closely at **how** Jesus **responded to them**. What was his attitude toward the request? What do you sense about his mood in answering them? Did he chastise them for asking? What does this say about Jesus and his relationship with his disciples?
- ▶ What two facts did Jesus address as to why it is not up to him to grant their wish? What are the demands of the "cup" and "baptism" that Jesus said James and John would partake of? (see Matthew 24:9 and John 16:33)

- ▶ It is easy for us to criticize James and John for making this request, but as we search our own hearts, are there times we would say we have desired to share more in the glory of Christ than in his sufferings? Do we sometimes want to be the one who is closer to Jesus than our fellow Christ-followers?



READ MARK 10:41-45 and MATTHEW 20:24-28

As the remaining disciples became aware of the bold request made by John and James in these passages, we are shown more clearly the nature and character of Jesus, fully God/fully man. Depending on the translation you have, the ten were indignant, angry, upset or greatly displeased.

- ▶ How did Jesus handle the potential conflict of this situation? What example did he give them from every day life that was the opposite of his Kingdom plan?

Jesus not only gave them this instruction that they were to serve, he gave an example in just a few short days. Read these familiar words, ironically recorded by John in his Gospel, with fresh eyes:

John 13:3-17 English Standard Version (ESV)

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you." For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."

- ▶ How did Jesus model serving to the disciples? Jesus did not deny his position and authority over them when he referred to himself as their "Lord and Teacher". How can we follow his example of serving without denying our place?
- ▶ Why do you think it was difficult for Peter to allow Jesus to serve him? Have you ever had a cringing moment when someone did something for you? It would seem that we are more comfortable serving than receiving service from others. Do you have difficulty allowing others to serve you? Why do you think that is? How can you humble yourself by both serving and receiving service from others?

VIDEO

Take a minute to watch “Week 6 Misunderstood: Jesus According to Mark” and think about what Mark wanted us to understand about Jesus. You can stream or download the video at <https://vimeo.com/album/4987313> or on the Grow Together Blog at: <https://fccgrowtogether.org>

WHO SAW THAT

In the video Pastor Wayne shared a common human reaction of embarrassment when we slip, trip or make a goof of some kind. We look around to see if anyone was watching. Pastor Wayne pointed out how this is the other side of the same issue of self-promotion. Just as James and John sought prominent seating in Christ’s new Kingdom, when we are focused on self in our failings, we are still self-focused.

- ▶ Can you relate to feeling self-conscious over something like Pastor Wayne’s example? In honesty, which is harder for you to recognize - times you are embarrassed over a mishap or times you have desired a position of recognition? Take some time to lift these to Jesus and acknowledge the tendency to be self-focused. Take heart that he knows what we are made of. Take a moment to offer thanksgiving because, just like James and John, we are given opportunities to have our attitudes shifted as we become more like Jesus.
- ▶ As we have looked at Jesus’ ministry through the lens of the Gospel of Mark, how has your focus shifted from yourself to your Savior? What plans have you made to continue to learn more about who Jesus Christ is and what his Kingdom is about?

BRING IT HOME

At the beginning of this week’s study we looked at some quotes about humility. While truth can be revealed through many sources, the source of all TRUTH is always found in God’s Word. Conclude your study time with the reading of these passages and meditate on how Scripture describes the humility of Christ our Savior and Lord.

- Philippians 2:5-11
- 2 Corinthians 8:8-9
- Isaiah 53
- And in Jesus’ own words in Mark 10: 45 ***“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” NKJV.***