

Mark 10:35–45

35 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.” 36 And he said to them, “What is it you want me to do for you?” 37 And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.” 38 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?” 39 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; 40 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.”

41 When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. 42 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. 43 But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. 45 For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Mark 10:35–45

After this weekend we will only hear two more passages from the Gospel of Mark before entering the season of Advent.

Those passages will serve to bring our time hearing from Mark's Gospel to a close until the lectionary cycle brings it around again in a couple of years,

They will prepare us for the new season beginning on the first weekend in December.

This passage today, I believe, is the climax to the mission stories we hear about Jesus from Mark in our lectionary series.

If you look back over the stories we have heard since the end of August you revisit the occasions of Jesus teaching, healing, preaching,

dealing with the attacks and tests of the Pharisees.

Most importantly, however, in chapter 8 Jesus begins to try to let His disciples know that He will go to Jerusalem and there be killed, and three days later be raised from the dead.

You probably remember the first time he attempts this Jesus has just healed a blind man,

and upon hearing what Jesus says Peter rebukes Him, and in turn Jesus rebukes Peter to put him in his place.

The second time is in Chapter 9, and comes right after Jesus casts a spirit out of a boy that His disciples couldn't do anything with.

Immediately after His announcement the disciples got into an argument about which of them was the greatest.

Jesus places a child in front of them and tells them this is what leadership looks like, this is what life following me looks like.

Whoever welcomes one such child welcomes me and the one who sent me.

Last week you heard the story of the rich young man and Jesus call him to follow, after he had sold everything and given the money to the poor.

That story is followed by Jesus, for the third time, announcing His death and resurrection and immediately the disciples begin again.

This time it is James and John requesting, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory

And then the other ten are outraged because James and John beat them to it.

Jesus then 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?”

Jesus, with these words points again to His coming death in Jerusalem, but the disciples don't get it.

They really don't know what this cup represents, but since we know the rest of the story it isn't too difficult for us to figure out.

At their last supper together Jesus

“...took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.”

This cup that Jesus speaks of is the one He prayed the Father would take from Him in Gethsemane. Jump ahead to the 14th Chapter of Mark:

“...he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, “Abba,” Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.”

This is not what James and John have in mind. They are thinking only of Jesus' glory.

“Are you able to drink the cup that I drink...”

Jesus refers to the cup of suffering and death.

Oh, of course we can! And you will.

You all remember who it was at Jesus right hand and left while he hung on the cross;

a couple of thieves.

Jesus concludes this conversation with the same message we have heard over and over for the last 6 weeks:

“...but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. 45 For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

He came, not to be served but to serve.

He calls us to serve.

Who will you serve, how, when?

For Jesus this is not a matter that will wait. He has set the example with his life.

He has lived his teaching for those who needed to see what it looks like.

He has taught and preached, cajoled and challenged, done whatever he had to, to make his point.

Jesus knew what His mission was and was intent on fulfilling it.

It is the same for us as Christ's body in the world.

We too have a mission.

I recall that it was about this time last year we were talking a lot about it.

We had a plan to consider that described our mission.

We had cottage meetings to give everyone a chance to hear about it, ask questions about it, help understand it and make it better.

We had a stewardship drive to support it and you committed yourselves to the mission God has placed before us.

Our mission to *grow* in faith,

lead others to faith,

change the lives of people in

our community and *impact* the world.

Our faith enables us to carry out our mission.

Faith helps us ask the question, How do we lead others to faith and recognize the opportunities?

How can we improve the lives of the people around us and exactly who is it we are called to serve?

We grow in faith when we have the opportunity to send a little girl home from our After School program at the end of the day excited and talking about the time she spent here, rather than just about her day at school. Her faith grows too.

We grow in faith when we continue to help our middle and high school youth to stay connected to their faith and one another.

Our faith grows when we give to other ministries in the community through our change offerings, and help others around the world through other programs.

Our faith is about faithfulness to the mission of God here at All Saints, carried out here in the community and the world,

and when we are faithful in that we grow in our own faith.

Who will you serve?

“Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.”

Are you able to drink the cup that I drink?

There is a cup that we are able to drink.

This cup is only a remembrance of suffering and death, not the cup Jesus talks about in our Gospel lesson.

As the wine is poured into this cup the suffering and death are only a memory,

But through the drinking you are strengthened and empowered, you are given new life to carry out God’s mission here.

Through the words he spoke in these chapters of Mark’s gospel Jesus says to you,

- I have come to fulfill Isaiah’s dream. I have come to bear your infirmities.
- I have come to be wounded for your transgressions.
- I have come to bless your life with the blessing of God even if it requires that I be rejected, condemned and killed.

Jesus said I will go through all that for you, to bless you because I have come as a ransom for many.

Now go and do as I have shown you. Do as I have taught you, as I have commanded;

 Serve.

Amen