

## Saint James the Elder, Apostle

July 25

Sermon Road Map

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Mark 10:35-45

9<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost 2021

### Want to be somebody? Live to serve like your Lord.

- *Dibs on the front seat.* = I lay claim to the front seat, 'cause I said it first.
  - ◆ Did you do this as a child - as a teen or even adult? With siblings?
  - ◆ The Dictionary of American Regional English offers 14 ways to lay claim: *Dubs/Dibs, Ducks, Wackie, Aikies, Yakers, Digsies, Snacks, Ballow, Hosey, Honey...*
- James and John tried to call dibs on 2 seats more important than the front seat.
  - ◆ That would put them in the *catbird seats: enviable positions with the upper hand*
  - ◆ The 10 were not pleased when they learned what James and John did.
  - ◆ This gave Jesus the opportunity to teach them and us an important kingdom truth.

### Want to be somebody? Live to serve like your Lord.

- ❖ The human desire to be *somebody*.
  - To be loved, have a friend, wanted, have a family, sought out, cared about
  - Desire to be a spouse - a parent - a teacher, mentor, coach
  - Dream to be like your idol - someone everyone knows, or a family member idol
  - Have a skill, a talent or ability, something you are good at or known for
  - Position, power, popularity, privilege - big stage or *big fish in a little pond*
    - ◆ Many: to live the lifestyle they want - others catering to their whims and wishes
    - ◆ Others: seek positions to make a difference - to serve, leave a legacy
      - Valued, a purpose, important, significant - **a someone** - still about *me*
  - Nobody want to be a *nobody*. Insignificant, forgotten, of little or no value
    - ◆ God doesn't want that either. He values all - every single one - the *many* of v. 45
    - ◆ Value each one enough to shed his Son's blood for their release.
- ❖ Left to ourselves people look in the wrong place for self-worth. Look to **self**
  - To find value and purpose in myself - what's left with failure or failing health?
  - To find value in self - valued by others - what's left when the crowd moves on?
  - To find your value and purpose in self - is to **make yourself your god**.
    - ◆ Such pride is humbled in death, if not before.
    - ◆ Where then is your position, power, popularity, privilege, purpose? A **nobody**.
- ❖ The Christian's struggle to change from a *self-serving heart* to a *servant's heart*
  - The Apostles struggled with this through the last 9 months of Jesus' ministry.
    - ◆ In Mark 9, right after Jesus' Transfiguration and revelation of his Passion
      - They had been arguing over *who of them was the greatest*.
      - They were embarrassed when Jesus asked what they were arguing about.
      - **"If anyone wants to be first, he will be the last of all and the servant of all."** v. 35
    - ◆ They are still arguing about this the night of the Last Supper.
      - Jesus said, <sup>26</sup> **...let the greatest among you become like the youngest, and the one who leads like the one who serves.** <sup>27</sup> **For who is greater, one who reclines at the table or one who serves? Isn't it the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.** Jesus also washed their feet to call them to servant hearts.
  - The 10 were angry with James and John.
    - Not for being immature. But for what they saw as an attempted power grab.

- What was James and John's motives for this request?
  - ◆ A grab for glory or a deep desire to serve the Christ?
  - ◆ The fact that Jesus **doesn't** chide them, "*Didn't I just teach you about this....*"
    - Seem to suggest it was not a grab for glory and power.
  - ◆ It seems to come out of a desire to serve - to work for Christ and his kingdom
    - Jesus' challenge and question, *Are you really up to what goes with this service?*  
Their answer and Jesus' affirmation: *You will drink ...and be baptized....*
    - Both affirm their desire to serve Jesus - no matter how hard the task.
  - ◆ Their request reflected the way faith prays - boldly, with confidence.
  - ◆ However, their approach - *do whatever we ask* - hints of a guilty power play.
  - ◆ Faith's devotion to serve on the part of John's elder brother James - Spirit worked
    - A devotion that would drink of the cup of suffering and death - 1<sup>st</sup> Apostle to die
- ❖ What cultivates a *servant heart* in every disciple of Jesus?
  - It takes much more than *Jesus told us to serve*. **Not** a willing servant heart
  - ***For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.***
    - ◆ Stunned by the Son of God setting aside glory to be a slave to serve us.
    - ◆ Humbled by his heart to serve as a ransom payment for us selfish sinners.
    - ◆ This opens our eyes to see **how superior** it is for us to live to serve our God.
      - We also serve our God when we serve others in his name according to his word.
    - ◆ We **desire to discover** the joy Jesus found in serving the Father by serving us.
    - ◆ Jesus paid the ransom to **free** us from captivity to **self-service slavery**.
  - Our search for value and importance ends here: restored to be what we were made for.
  - We're freed from staking our claim for preservation and protection. That's God's job.
  - This mindset change means we start to **live for God** vs. **live for self**.
- ❖ Help for living with a servant heart in a sinful world.
  - Our joy to serve is severely tested when working with others who gladly let us serve.
    - ◆ Who take advantage of our love, selfishly using us for their advantage.
  - How does our Lord **liberate us** from being **taken captive by their sin**?
    - ◆ Recognize this is what Jesus taught us to expect of the world = affirms the truth
    - ◆ Forgive them, as God forgives you from taking advantage of his grace. Frees you.
    - ◆ Let Jesus' light shine through your servant heart. Pray Jesus uses it to free them.
    - ◆ Sense how unfilled, dangerous, & destructive their lives are. Pity - don't envy.
  - Realize: We don't serve Jesus and practice love when we enable others to sin.
    - ◆ Look for ways to appeal to their sense of honor and pride in doing a good job.
    - ◆ Help your manager manage for the good of your employer: suggestions & concerns
    - ◆ Ask Jesus for wisdom, strength, and love how to not enable sin without losing your servant heart - to never act out of fairness or spite. Trust that Jesus is using you.
  - Jesus clear words are not intended to oppress us - but **free our servant hearts**.
    - ◆ <sup>43</sup> ***...whoever wants to be great among you will be your servant,*** <sup>44</sup> ***and whoever wants to be first among you will be a slave of all.***
    - ◆ It's an invitation to discover our new life and grow as servant under Servant Jesus.

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