

## Discussion Notes

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Mark 10.32-45

Rikk Watts

God has come and he's not what you thought! Last week we looked at the story of the rich young man – a man everyone assumed God had blessed and would be pleased with. This man, however, based his righteousness on his merit given his adherence to the Mosaic Law. Jesus' interaction with him teaches us that we must all approach God as little children, dependent and in need. This is our true state before God. We can only know God and have eternal life when we approach God with trust and not perceived merit in our own goodness. This, as it turns out, is really good news!

### Mark 10.32-34

- Jesus and the disciples are on the road but this is the first time we hear they are headed directly for Jerusalem.
- All nations are gathered around David and Solomon in Israel's scriptures. Jesus is going to Jerusalem to do the very same thing.
- God is not just in the business of saving souls; he's interested in redeeming cultures. Our cultures are epitomized by our cities.
- Jerusalem is meant to be the "city of the great king", a light to the nations. Jesus embodies this.
- It will become a city of abuse, however, even to the God who comes to redeem it.
- Both Jewish people and gentile people abuse and kill Jesus. We're all in this together.

### 10.35-37

- They disciples are in Jesus' inner circle and they still don't understand his character and what he's all about. What makes us think we're immune?
- Thinking they already have "eternal life" James and John ask for more, intending to get a jump on the other disciples.
- They don't know what they're asking and Jesus knows this.

### 10.38-42

- "Drinking the cup" means taking on God's judgment. Only Jesus can do this, not his disciples.
- "Baptism" language is Exodus-like. Jesus will be baptized into death, and death will forever be left in the water.
- Even though James and John are foolish in their thinking that they can "drink the cup" that Jesus will drink, they are met with grace. God does not look for chances to punish us. "Be careful what you ask God for" thinking is errant.
- Later James and John will lose their lives for Jesus, but they will do this willingly, conformed to the likeness of their master and following in his

footsteps. Their deaths are not punishment, but obedient service, like Jesus molded.

- The other disciples aren't pleased when they hear about James and John's attempts to get on Jesus' good side in this way. This shows they have the same character issues as the two brothers do. Pride is a problem.

#### 10.43-45

- How does God deal with cities of rebellion? He takes on their punishment himself, redeems them and brings them into his plan for the cosmos beautiful future.
- The heart of our problem is that we don't know what it means to be king. We think it's about power and control. Jesus says it means to serve and be humble. This is what God's like. This is what we can be like, too.
- Jerusalem (in its Jewish history and Christian heritage) may well have given us the modern view of the world, not Athens.
  - The world is ever changing.
  - We "know" by touching, seeing, testing.
  - Society is egalitarian, not hierarchical.
  - All people are valuable.
- This thinking emerges from Israel's history and Jesus' teaching. Jerusalem gave us the modern world, not Athens.
- So, in a world that is ever changing, where we know from experience, can live equally and everyone is to be honored, *character* is vital.
- Jesus give us an example of Godly character. To serve is to be God-like. To serve is to be truly human. To serve is to progress.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- What stood out to you in this teaching? What did you grab on to?
- Have you ever acted like James and John?
- We spent lots of time talking about God's grander vision for the world – that he's not just interested in saving souls but redeeming culture and the cosmos. What does that mean?
- How can Christians be part of redeeming culture with God? Why does character matter so much in doing this?