

06.13.10 / Mark 10:35-52

Passage Insight

In this passage we see James and John seeking power. Of all the reasons people want power, there is a common desire among all those who seek it – the desire for control – control of our situations, circumstances, and surroundings. Interestingly enough, this desire for control is not just exhibited by those who want power, but even by those who are happy to answer to someone else on the sidelines, for even in this we are often trying to control our situations, circumstances, and surroundings. Let's address this desire for control that we all face as humans.

At the heart of our desire to control things is an inherent mistrust of God. From the rebuke following the fall in the garden, where Adam and Eve sought knowledge that would make them like God (more powerful, in control) . . . all the way to Jesus' actions in Mark 10:13-16, where He makes it clear that if we do not receive the kingdom of God like a child, then we will not enter it. . . we have been told that ultimately power is not ours to take, that control is not ours to exercise. These things belong solely to God. As we are told in 2 Corinthians 12:1-10, the Lord's power is made perfect in our *weakness*, and when we as followers of Jesus are *weak*, it is then that we are strong – not due to our own strength, but due to the strength of the One who lives in us. Praise the Lord.

While Jesus' greatest act of servanthood was dying and resurrecting to destroy sin and bring us to the Father through His sacrifice, He also demonstrated service by honoring the faith of those He encountered along the way. When He healed Bartimaeus, He told him to, "Go your way. . ." and Bartimaeus' response was to follow Jesus. This, too, should be our response. When we are saved by Him, our call is to immediately follow Him with abandon as did Bartimaeus.

So, what does this following of Jesus look like in terms of servanthood? We must see in this passage that the call to be a servant is NOT the call to just start doing things for people out of our own strength. While part of following Jesus is doing what He does, Jesus thankfully does not leave us alone to do it of our own strength. Consider this. . . when we believe in Jesus, the God of all control and power sends His Spirit to live inside of us, inviting us to be transformed into His image (2 Corinthians 3:18). This is servanthood, pouring Himself out to the point of death so that others may live as He lives, by His Spirit. We are told in John 15:20 that, "A servant is not greater than his master." If we are to follow the example of our master, Jesus, we must serve one another " . . . by the strength that God supplies – in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (1 Peter 4:7-11). What will you have to give up in order to live by the Spirit, work by God's strength, and serve as your Master serves?

Application Questions**Letting Go of Control**

- 1) At the heart of James and John's actions in this passage is a search for power. We want power so that we can have control. Where do you seek control?
- 2) What evidence in your life makes you think you can actually control things to go the way you want them to go?
- 3) What evidence do you see in Scripture (talk specifics here) that only God can actually control things?
- 4) What does this mean for you?

Inviting Others

- 1) When we believe in Jesus, the God of all power and control sends His Spirit to live inside of us, inviting us to be transformed into His image (2 Corinthians 3:18). This is an unmatched invitation for us to share in His joy. How do you actively invite others to share the joy you have in Christ?
- 2) What's been the impact on those you've seen come to know Jesus through loving invitations to share in Jesus together?
- 3) Where could you be doing more?
- 4) What's holding you back?

Priorities

- 1) What we ask of Jesus reveals our priorities, and James and John's desire for control through power was revealed when they made this request of Jesus. What do you regularly ask Jesus for?
- 2) What does this reveal about your priorities?
- 3) Where are they not in line with the Servant Master who calls you to serve others?
- 4) What is the sin that's keeping your priorities out of line?
- 5) What does your repentance look like?

Sources

- Tyndale
- BST
- Prayer