

Chapter 6

Relationship with Others: Serving Like Jesus

Opening Question: What is attractive about serving like Jesus? What makes it challenging to serve like Jesus?

DEBRIEF and OPENING

Have group members share how they did with last week's "Respond" step (Generosity in gifts and talents) and repeat the memory verse (Matthew 25:21) as they arrive.

Open with prayer for the Spirit to guide the group during the study.

Last week we saw that relationship with God involves using the talents and resources he has given us for his glory. This week we begin thinking about relationship with others. Jesus calls us to be servants in our relationships with others.

HEAR THE WORD

Context: The Old Testament context of this passage includes the four Servant Songs in Isaiah that describe the coming Messiah (42:1-7, 49:1-7, 50:4-9 and 52:13-53:12). Isaiah 53:4-6 states that the Messiah will suffer for the infirmities (weaknesses), sorrows, iniquities and transgressions (different words for sins) of people who have gone astray like sheep. Isaiah 53:5 says that the punishment the Servant took brought us peace, that is, as we have learned, is the wonderful reality of shalom.

The immediate context in Mark is that Jesus has already twice predicted that he would suffer, die and be raised to life in Jerusalem (8:31-32 and 9:30-32) and taught the disciples about greatness and servanthood in chapter 9:33-37.

Have a volunteer read the passage aloud.

Mark 10:32-45 (NIV)

³² They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. ³³ "We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests

and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles,³⁴ who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.”

³⁵ Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.”

³⁶ “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked.

³⁷ They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.”

³⁸ “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?”

³⁹ “We can,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with,⁴⁰ but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.”

⁴¹ When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John.⁴² Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.⁴³ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ 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.”

OBSERVE (What does the passage say?)

1. Check to see that everyone understands the words in the passage. Then, let people read the text quietly to themselves.

What questions do you have about the text?

2. Jesus is going ahead of them all. What are the disciples and those who follow thinking and feeling?
3. The other ten disciples react with anger when they hear what James and John have asked. What contrast does Jesus make, and what word picture does he use as he responds to the ten disciples?

INTERPRET (What does the passage mean?)

4. Why do you think the disciples are astonished and those who followed are afraid? What about Jesus' attitude may be influencing them?
5. How does Jesus' model of being the servant of all compare and contrast to models of leadership or influence in your community?
6. The disciples would have understood Jesus' words about "giving his life a ransom for many" as saying that his death would free people from their slavery to weakness (infirmity), sorrow and sin. How is his death for others connected to servanthood?

APPLY (What does the passage mean to me and my community?)

7. Jesus gave us an example of supreme service.. What are some practical ways, even small ones, that you can serve others now? After you graduate? What opportunities for service might there be for your group?
8. For later reflection: According Isaiah 53:4-6, Jesus is the Suffering Servant who died to give us shalom and ransom us from sin, weakness and sorrow. What is your response to these gifts that he died to give us? If you would like to receive them for the first time or more deeply, you can do so with a simple prayer. You can also ask a mature Christian friend or your staff worker to pray with you.

RESPOND

Practice: Service

This week prayerfully look for opportunities where you can serve others. Even something as small as pausing to listen to a friend who needs to talk can be of service. Ask the Lord to give you a vision of how and where you can serve others after you graduate and write that down to share next week.

Memory Verse: Mark 10:45 (NIV)

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.

Memorize the memory verse in your heart language and English this week.

CLOSING

Close in prayer to hear well from the Lord about ways to serve now and later, for group member needs, and the needs of the world.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

This chapter was written by Katie Rawson of InterVarsity-USA. She became involved with international students as an international grad student doing research in Paris, where she was part of the GBU, the French student movement associated with the IFES. Katie has served among international students in the USA for over forty years, and she has a passion to see students living in and glorifying Jesus wherever God sends them. Joan Krebs, a volunteer who serves InterVarsity-USA's International Student Ministry, commented on this chapter.

Facilitator's Notes

Objectives of the Study

- To give students a vision of Jesus, the Suffering Servant
- To enable them to grasp more deeply the cost and the implications of Jesus' death for us
- To help them see the great contrast between Jesus' view of greatness and that of our cultures
- To challenge them to servant, even sacrificial, living like that of Jesus

Notes on the Questions

Question 3: The contrast is between the rulers of the Gentiles and how Jesus intends his disciples should live (note: some Jewish rulers exercised authority in the same way the Gentiles did). James and John want to sit on Jesus right and left when he comes into glory. Jesus responds with "Can you drink the cup I drink?" is an expression that means "share my destiny." Specifically, drinking this cup was a cup of suffering—in this case, suffering was being alone and separated from God and others. You don't need to address this unless someone asks what it means.

The word picture is that of a ransom, recalling the picture described in Isaiah 53. A ransom is the price one paid for the release of oneself or someone else from bondage (or slavery). Jesus is proclaiming that his death is that ransom for us. He is the King who is a servant, the Master who suffers on our behalf.

Question 4: Jesus knows what will happen in Jerusalem. Perhaps both groups see his expression of resoluteness and feel some fear and foreboding about the (uncertain) future, and what it will mean for them.

Question 6: This is a deep mystery but a powerful truth. Jesus' death is the ultimate, highest act of love, giving up his own life so that others may have true life. The One who is Master of all becomes the Servant of all. In doing this, he shows what true leadership is.

Question 7: This question may bring some of the same answers as last week's on using gifts. But consider having the group brainstorm ways, even small ones, the group could serve others together.

Question 8: For any who don't know Jesus personally, this reflection allows them a chance to receive his gift for the first time. Others will respond in praise and thanksgiving. Staff might want to pray with others, asking the Lord to help them receive this freedom more deeply.