



Loving Jesus, Loving People, Plowing a Counter-Culture

SERMON TEXT: Matthew 20:17-34

KEY POINT: Jesus gives us both the vision and example of what it means to be “great” in God’s Kingdom.

FOR LEADERS

- **Last week of Fall Season!** *A heartfelt thank you to all of our leaders who’ve so graciously stepped forward to open their homes and their lives to connect others in community and disciple them toward Jesus! We rejoice that our church continues to be a central hub for people to connect with others who love Jesus and can help lead them forward in their own walks of faith.*
- **Winter 2020 Season!** *Our next Communities Season will begin the week of Sunday, January 26th and run for ten weeks. If there is anything changing about your group that you would like reflected on the website, please reach out to us and we’ll be happy to update it accordingly.*
- **Feedback!** *How was your Community this season? What did you think about the resources? How can our church continue to grow and improve the way we disciple others to follow Jesus? Let us know by going to Emergencenj.org/feedback!!*

GETTING STARTED

- [1] Communities Video:** Watch this week’s community extras video!
- [2] Icebreaker:** As you look over our season together, what has personally impacted you most?
- [3] Opener:** How did your own personal study go in the workbook this week? Was there anything that you found particularly eye opening?

AMBITION

Ask for a volunteer to read Matthew 20: 17-28

In our passage this week we see the ambitious mother of James and John attempt to have Jesus elevate her sons to positions of prominence. Ryan pointed out that the ambitions for this woman were misplaced, and went on to explain how being overly ambitious or under ambitious can hurt us if we aren’t careful.

- [1]** In your own words, how would you define what it means to be ambitious? Do you personally feel that ambition is a good thing or a bad thing?
- [2]** In the sermon this week, Ryan talked about one kind of misguided ambition that he referred to as *vain ambition*. How would you define what it means to have vain ambition? What are some of the motivations that could make our ambitions vain?
- [3]** What are some ways in which people (Christians especially!) try to disguise vain ambition as genuine? How do you tell the difference?
- [4]** What do you think should be the proper motivations for our ambitions?
- [5]** In what way can a lack of ambition be just as harmful as vain ambition? How would you try to motivate someone with low ambition?
- [6]** Do you personally tend to be someone who is overly ambitious or someone who lacks ambition? What are some ways to keep us properly ambitious for the right things?



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Leaders: As Ryan pointed out in the sermon, ambition itself is not inherently a bad thing. In fact, ambition is what often drives us – in leadership, in serving one another and in running our race with zeal and faithfulness. Often, it is the ambition of a Christian to want to see the Kingdom go forward that drives him or her to better love, serve, and care for others. It's when ambition turns from glorifying God to glorifying ourselves that it becomes deadly. When we begin building our own kingdoms here on earth, rather than serving God, we should step back and ask ourselves where our ambition is leading us. Similarly, a lack of ambition can be just as harmful as it also fails to accomplish God's will. Instead of being overly ambitious for the wrong thing, a person who lacks ambition is utterly unmotivated and doesn't care FOR the things of God enough to have any effective ministry. Both of these can completely nullify a fruitful walk with Jesus. We should have absolutely have ambition for God's Kingdom, but it should be to glorify Jesus, to build His church, to see people come to know Him as Lord and Savior, and to serve, care, encourage, lead, pray for, motivate and otherwise love those whom God has entrusted to us.

LEADERSHIP

In verse 25, Jesus reminds us that we are all too familiar with what bad leadership looks like, using the secular rulers ("the rulers of the Gentiles") as examples. These, he says, lord their authority over others.

- [7] What does it mean to "lord authority" over others? What would be some examples of this that you've seen?
[8] In what way(s) does our constant exposure to poor leadership affect the way we think and feel about leadership and authority?
[9] In this section of Scripture Jesus gives us a third (and most detailed) prediction of his suffering that is to come. What should this teach us about leadership in God's Kingdom?
[10] How does Jesus exemplify the qualities of what he's talking about in verses 25-28? (Use your workbook answer to question 3 to help you!)
[11] Who is someone that you know that exemplifies what it means to be a servant leader? What is it about them that you admire or would want to emulate?
[12] Ryan talked about how, to some extent, we ALL lead someone else in some way. Who are some of the people that you feel God has called you to lead, and how can you show them a reflection of Jesus?
[13] How do verses 29-34 reflect Jesus' teaching in the previous paragraph?

Leaders: The entirety of this account serves to show us that leadership in God's Kingdom is different than on earth, in that it has less to do with power and authority so much as love, humility, and servanthood. For more insight into this, and further explanation of the account of the blind man, refer to Pastor Doug's comments on pgs 87-88 of the workbook!

IN CLOSING

- [1] Given all that we've seen and studied throughout our time this season, what has been most challenging or most impactful for you?
[2] What is at least one area of your life or your walk with God that you would hope to see changed?
[3] Close out your time together in prayer.

