

### 3. The Path you Choose

It is easy to do life among others who are like you. That is the “tribe” where you find belonging and power. But it’s not easy to open your arms to “others” and not only welcome them in but serve them as Jesus did. Jesus came to break down barriers between “tribes”.

*6 And this is God's plan: Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God's children. Both are part of the same body, and both enjoy the promise of blessings because they belong to Christ Jesus. - Ephesians 3:6 NLT*

*What are some of the political, socio-economic, ethnic or other “tribes” that you are least comfortable in serving? What assumptions or judgments do you have to lay aside to do so?*

*24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me. 25 If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. 26 And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul? - Matthew 16:24-26 NLT*

*Do we really want to follow Jesus? Are we willing to give up selfish ways and lay down our lives to bring the Good News of redemption to others who don't look, think, act or vote like we do? Are we willing to speak the truth of God even when it doesn't match our party line?*

#### WRAP-UP

When Jesus announced that His Kingdom was near, He challenged those who sought to wield power. But it wasn't the way any expected. Jesus led by serving. He opened the way for all who were willing to join His Kingdom. And he called His followers to do likewise. We choose which path we take, we can follow our “tribe” and be part of the crowd, or follow Jesus, by taking up His cross, laying down our lives, and being a servant to all.

#### MEMORY VERSE

*But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, - Mark 10:43 NLT*

*Challenge – Ask yourself these questions: Do I want to be known more for my political party than Jesus? Where do I sense I want to push back against Jesus' teachings? How can I wrestle with, rather than just simply reject what doesn't agree with what I assumed to be right?*

## Among You it Will Be Different

Known For It #1

### INTRODUCTION

There are seasons we all go through when the struggle for power seems particularly intense. This is not unique to our times or our locale, it is something that is a part of the human experience. When Jesus announced His Kingdom, He challenged the norms of political power in His day. Even then, the disciples didn't understand how different Jesus' way would be. In this study we consider what leadership and power looks like in God's economy and how different it is from anything we might experience on earth. We need to take a close look at where we seek answers to our problems and how we choose our paths.

### Ice Breaker

When you encounter conflicting opinions, how do you decide which to embrace?

### Key Passage

*42 So Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. 43 But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else.*

*- Mark 10:42-44 NLT*

### STUDY QUESTIONS

#### 1. Jesus Doesn't Fit the Mold

Jesus' message of the kingdom was deeply political. He was announcing that He was king. But not everyone understood just what kind of king Jesus would be.

36 "What is your request?" he asked. 37 They replied, "When you sit on your glorious throne, we want to sit in places of honor next to you, one on your right and the other on your left."  
- Mark 10:36-37 NLT

The Jews of Jesus' day were under Roman oppression. They suffered under colonization and heavy taxation. These people longed for a Messiah who would overthrow the Roman rule and establish a new kingdom.

*James and John asked for places of honor next to Jesus in His glory. What do you think motivated them and how might they have envisioned Jesus' on His throne? What would equate to occupying that position of honor for us today?*

38 But Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you are asking! Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of suffering I am about to drink? Are you able to be baptized with the baptism of suffering I must be baptized with?" - Mark 10:38 NLT

33 "Listen," he said, "we're going up to Jerusalem, where the Son of Man will be betrayed to the leading priests and the teachers of religious law. They will sentence him to die and hand him over to the Romans. 34 They will mock him, spit on him, flog him with a whip, and kill him, but after three days he will rise again."  
- Mark 10:33-34 NLT

Jesus essentially said, "You don't get it." How did Jesus characterize His path to the throne (v.38)? How had He already described that path immediately before James and John asked for that favor (v.33-34)?

The disciples were either ignoring what Jesus had said, or they were trying to make it fit their idea of how God's Kingdom should look. We tend to do the same thing ourselves. If you read the whole of scripture, you will find Jesus' teaching offends both the political right (teaching us to care for the poor and immigrants) and left (teaching a respect for marriage and the unborn). Jesus has no party affiliation; He doesn't fit neatly on either platform. We are fortunate to be able to vote for the people and policies we believe are best for our country. But don't confuse your party affiliation with your faith- you may vote either Republican or Democrat, but your allegiance should be to Jesus, your King and how He teaches us to live.

## 2. A Leader in God's Kingdom

41 When the ten other disciples heard what James and John had asked, they were indignant. - Mark 10:41 NLT

The response of the disciples to James and John was indignance. The Greek word used here is *aganakteō* and can mean violent irritation, grieve, displeased or vexed. Possibly this response was because they felt left out of the distribution of power. If they had understood what Jesus was telling them, the others might have felt sad, or disappointed by their friends' request. But it looks like none of them understood. So, Jesus gathered them all to explain further.

42 So Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. 43 But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. 45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many." - Mark 10:42-45 NLT

Greatness in Jesus' day was shown by coercive power. Jesus highlights the manipulative, coercive and deceptive power of Rome when He described the officials of His day.

*How is power shown today through politics and campaigning? What did Jesus say would distinguish His followers who want to lead? Which leaders have you seen exhibiting this attitude currently? Do you think someone who promises to be a servant to all people would gain a following in today's political culture? Why?*

Jesus is blunt...this power-hungry type of leadership is not a part of the kingdom of God. Power doesn't make you great in God's Kingdom, serving does.

27 Who is more important, the one who sits at the table or the one who serves? The one who sits at the table, of course. But not here! For I am among you as one who serves. - Luke 22:27 NLT

*Jesus sacrificed Himself to make a way for everyone to enter God's Kingdom. What boundaries did Jesus cross as He led a servant's life? In what ways can we bring the Kingdom of God into the reality of our world? Who does it call us to serve or lay our lives down for?*