

# Explore the Bible: October 22

*Serves • Mark 10:32-45*

*By Rick Henson*



Henson

Au  
th  
or  
it  
y  
an  
d  
po  
we  
r  
in  
bu  
si  
ne  
ss  
re  
si  
de  
at  
th  
e  
to  
p  
of  
a  
py  
ra  
mi  
d,  
wi

th  
le  
ss  
au  
th  
or  
it  
y  
an  
d  
po  
we  
r  
th  
e  
lo  
we  
r  
on  
e'  
s  
st  
at  
us  
in  
th  
e  
or  
ga  
ni  
za  
ti  
on  
. Mo  
st  
or

ga  
ni  
za  
ti  
on  
s  
ha  
ve  
ei  
th  
er  
an  
in  
di  
vi  
du  
al  
or  
a  
sm  
al  
l  
te  
am  
wh  
o  
ma  
ke  
mo  
st  
de  
ci  
si  
on  
s  
an  
d

th  
e  
re  
st  
ca  
rr  
y  
ou  
t  
th  
e  
de  
ci  
si  
on  
s.

Most churches follow this pattern of leadership in decision-making, even those that vote on issues. An individual or team carries out the outcome of each vote.

For the third time in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus told His disciples about His upcoming death. He concluded as with the previous times in Mark 8:31 and Mark 9:31 about His resurrection: *And the third day he shall rise again (Mark 10:34 KJV).*

As they walked up to Jerusalem (an incline of about 3,000 feet over 20 miles), Jesus led the fearful disciples. Jesus already told them what awaited them in Jerusalem, yet He continued teaching about it. From the Greek wording of this passage we can surmise others accompanied the twelve and Jesus, possibly pilgrims going to celebrate Passover.

Somewhere along the way, possibly during a rest stop, James and John, the sons of Zebedee asked Jesus a favor. Matthew's Gospel adds their mother to the questioning. Since the twelve and Jesus were not traveling alone, this explained why she was

there. The two asked Jesus if they would sit on His right and left hand when He came into His glory.

Jesus hardly finished telling them about His upcoming suffering and death, and these two asked Jesus for preferential treatment in heaven. They obviously did not listen well to the part where Jesus sacrifices Himself for them.

I wonder what part of mocking, scourging, and spitting they perceived as self-aggrandizing? Yet they boldly requested special places in His glory.

The disciples seemed to follow the world's pattern for leadership where people desire to be at the top of the pyramid. They even stated where they wished to be in the line of authority. Possibly their mother told Jesus all their accomplishments and why they deserved the numbers two and three positions.

Maybe the older was on the right and the younger on the left, since the right hand is a higher authority. Surely John the Baptist and Jesus Himself were on their resumes.

Amazingly, Jesus actually answered them while challenging them as well. He stated those positions would be determined by the Father. Jesus knew that honors in the Kingdom of God are not bestowed because of ambition but by the Father's sovereign will.

Mark stated the other ten were displeased, forgetting they had argued about which one of them was the greatest as recorded in Mark 9:34. Maybe they were upset that James and John tried to get ahead of them in pursuit of the honor they all desired.

Jesus called the disciples to Him and taught them. He reminded them about the way of the world with someone at the top of the pyramid of power. In society's scheme, the most powerful person has the most authority over the most people.

Jesus taught that disciples were not to live that way: *But so shall it not be among you (Mark 10:43 KJV)*. His church should have no place for those who lead by force. 1 Peter 5:3 addresses those who are to shepherd the flock of God: *Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock (KJV)*. Leaders in God's plan serve as examples to the church.

In the Kingdom of God, the bottom of the pyramid should be preferred. The text reads, *but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all (Mark 10:43-44KJV)*.

John described Diotrephes in 3 John 9 as someone who loved to be first among them. John warned his readers not to follow such a leader.

Jesus was the greatest example of leadership. Philippians 2:7 reminds us Jesus, *made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant (KJV)*. For those who desire to be great in the Kingdom of God, Jesus said to become the greatest servant. Mark 10:45 reads, *For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many (KJV)*.

The only one who deserved to be at the top of all authority, became a servant, even dying for us all. Let us examine how we serve and let that mind be in us all.

*Henson is minister of outreach and evangelism at Bethel Church, Brandon.*