

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (YEAR B) Sunday 20 October  
2024

## EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

# SERVANT LEADER

### EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

#### *Introducing the Gospel*

*Ambition and service (Mark 10: 35-45)*

The third prediction of Jesus' passion and death given by Mark is followed by this request from James and John to be given special status alongside the Messiah. The other disciples are angry with James and John, possibly because they wished that they had asked first. Once again the disciples have failed to grasp Jesus' teaching about what it means to be Messiah. Jesus replies that he came not to be served but to serve. The disciples must learn from his example.

Our image to stimulate reflection on this passage is *servant leader*.

#### *Core extract from the Gospel (Mark 10: 43-45; for reflection throughout the week)*

Jesus said, 'Whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant,  
and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.

For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve,  
and to give his life a ransom for many.'

#### *Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)*

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you came not to be served,  
but to serve others.  
Inspire us to follow your example  
of serving others,  
that we in turn may welcome  
your service to us;  
for you are our servant leader.  
Amen.

**READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL**

**Mark 10: 35-45**

**The Request of James and John**

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, 'Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.' And he said to them, 'What is it you want me to do for you?' And they said to him, 'Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.' But Jesus said to them, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?' They replied, 'We are able.' Then Jesus said to them, 'The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.'

When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. So Jesus called them and said to them, 'You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.'

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## **ENGAGING WITH THE THEME**

### *Dwelling with the text (Mark 10: 32-45)*

Put today's passage into context by reading from Mark 10: 32-45. Explore Mark's teaching about the nature of Jesus' Messiahship as servant leader by employing the SIFT approach of Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking. You may find that one of these approaches comes easier to you than the others. But it is worth trying all four.

- What details in the passage catch your attention (Sensing)?
- What big ideas in the passage spark in your mind (Intuition)?
- What most touches your heart in the passage (Feeling)?
- What most stretches your mind and makes you think in the passage (Thinking)?

### *Thinking and talking*

Identify topics within the passage that can get you thinking and talking. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- Why is it important to read Mark 10: 32-34 before starting at verse 35?
- What really were James and John asking for?
- What had James and John failed to grasp?
- What was Jesus' attitude toward the other ten?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

### *Using your Bible*

Place the three predictions of Jesus' death side-by-side, together with the controversy that follow each one.

- Mark 8: 31, with 8: 32-35
- Mark 9: 31, with 9: 32-37
- Mark 10: 32-34, with 10: 35-40

Compare with John's image of Jesus as servant leader.

- John 13: 3-7

Explore images of the servant leader in the Old Testament.

- Psalm 23

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### *Exploring online*

Widen your exploration of Mark's teaching about Jesus' Messiahship as servant leader by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Servant leadership characteristics.
- Servant leadership in the Old Testament.
- Servant leadership in the New Testament.

### *Drawing on experience*

The image to stimulate reflection on Mark's teaching about the nature of Jesus' Messiahship is *servant leader*. Draw on your own experience of servant leaders. For example:

- What is your experience of servant leaders in the secular world?
- What is your experience of servant leaders in the Church?
- What qualities have you experienced among servant leaders?

What have you learned about servant leadership?

### *Creating and making*

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by Mark's teaching about Jesus' style of Messiahship or by the image of servant leader.

- Create a poster profiling Jesus as servant leader.
- Make a collage of servant leaders from the Bible.
- Display ways in which your church models servant leadership.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of Mark's teaching about Jesus' style of Messiahship or by the image of servant leader.

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**Liverpool  
Cathedral**

## **EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL**

Each week we are inviting people in their homes to look forward to those Sunday services that follow the Revised Common Lectionary Gospel readings. We employ the SIFT approach (Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking) to encourage reflection on the Sunday Gospel. We are suggesting a variety of ways in which people of all ages, and households working together, may engage with the Gospel reading and celebrate that engagement with shared activities.

Our invitation then is for you to share your reflections, prayers and photos of your creative work with the Cathedral by emailing them to [smc.lesliefrancis@gmail.com](mailto:smc.lesliefrancis@gmail.com).

These materials have been developed by the Canon Theologian of Liverpool Cathedral working in collaboration with the staff team here at the Cathedral, and with sponsorship and support from the St Mary's Centre in Wales.



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