

March 20, 2022

3. Disciples Should Expect the Unexpected — **Mark 10:35-45, NRSV**

More in Need of Love than Judgment

“Can’t you see what I did?” “Don’t I have a right to be respected?” “Do you not know who I am?” On any given day, I feel these remarks. Jesus says a place of honor is bestowed. My expectations are irrelevant. The sacrificial servant eventually gets the highest place of honor. How I feel doesn’t translate into how I think it should be.

In my world, people see me and decide they know my story, my motives, and my worth. Jesus asks you to serve, not to worry about getting it the way you want. Just do as God has instructed—serve. I check “privilege” at the door, roll up my sleeves, and be of service. I must serve others. Do you stand in judgment of those you see as the poor, the homeless, or the immigrant?

People who live on the margins of society are more in need of love than judgment. Where do you put your “privilege” when you are face-to-face with the underprivileged? When Jesus says to forget your seat, where do you stand? Don’t be concerned with your reward. Focus on how you can help. My cup. My cross. My Jesus.

—Greg Battle, battlegregory1@gmail.com

It takes some humility to work hard enough to figure out what being a servant even means in most situations. People are complex, and particular cultures are complex in how subtle words or actions signal superiority. In any culture, power is at play—and often at many levels. To follow Jesus as a servant is to love other people enough to understand what impact we have on them.

If something in me makes another person feel dominated, I’ve got work to do. What kind of attitude, assumptions, power, or aura am I projecting that will leave another person feeling “less than” after interacting with me? If I have been an authentic servant, there’s a chance they will sense it: in feeling “seen,” in being somehow honored for an instant, in sensing a connection of human dignity.

I am haunted by this daring assertion of our Lord to his all-too-much-like-us disciples: “But it is not so among you” (v. 43). *Really?* He had the nerve to say that after “the ten” had just heard James and John trigger Jesus’ correction and their anger (v. 41). How those words must have stung! They still sting today as I feel my need to check myself and my privilege.

—Greg Bowman, GMBowman33@gmail.com



Gregory Edwin Battle is a 66-year-old Black American elder and AV minister at Lee Heights Community Church, Cleveland, Ohio. He is a proud father, son, husband, brother, uncle, and neighbor. Greg's favorite Scripture is Micah 6:6–8 and his favorite saying is, "Everything I know is subject to revision, especially what I know to be the truth" (*Narcotics Anonymous* textbook). We do recover.



Greg Bowman and his wife, Ellen, live as active retirees in the northeastern Ohio community and congregation where they were reared. Previously living in other rural, suburban, and urban communities has humbled and challenged Greg as to God's ways of working in and beyond "the church." He is alert for God's transforming moves in his community as he keeps on gardening.

Resources for this session

A readers theater of Mark 10:35–45 is available for this session at www.MennoMedia.org/salt-light-supplements.

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