

D-Up: A Series on Discipleship
A Disciple's Service to Others
Mark 10:32-45

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Text Introduction: This morning I am continuing our series on discipleship. We are calling this series of messages "D-Up!" The "D" stands for discipleship.

We have focused on our initial decision to follow Christ, on baptism and the importance of the church to help us grow as disciples. We next focused on daily reading of the Word, prayer, stewardship, and sharing our faith.

We are closing out this series with several ideas focused on outcomes. As we always talk about, we do not study the Bible for information, but for transformation. In talking about discipleship, we are certainly not talking about what a disciple knows, but what a disciple does.

In the last two weeks, we have talked about disciples keeping God's commands and loving one another. Today, we want to talk about serving one another—a fitting subject after yesterday's "First Baptist Church Loves Lafayette."

Text: ³² They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. They were astonished, but those who followed Him were afraid. Taking the Twelve aside again, He began to tell them the things that would happen to Him.

³³ "Listen! We are going up to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn Him to death. Then they will hand Him over to the Gentiles, ³⁴ and they will mock Him, spit on Him, flog Him, and kill Him, and He will rise after three days."

³⁵ Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached Him and said, "Teacher, we want You to do something for us if we ask You."

³⁶ "What do you want Me to do for you?" He asked them.

³⁷ They answered Him, "Allow us to sit at Your right and at Your left in Your glory."

³⁸ But Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you're asking. Are you able to drink the cup I drink or to be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"

³⁹ "We are able," they told Him.

Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink, and you will be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with. ⁴⁰ But to sit at My right or left is not Mine to give; instead, it is for those it has been prepared for."⁴¹ When the other 10 disciples heard this, they began to be indignant with James and John.

⁴² Jesus called them over and said to them, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles dominate them, and their men of high positions exercise power over them. ⁴³ But it must not be like that among you. On the contrary, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first among you must be a slave to all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life—a ransom for many.”

Introduction: (Put the Loves Lafayette Logo on the screen) Take a look at our logo from yesterday’s “First Baptist Loves Lafayette” Day. Love. Serve. Repeat. I hope that you will see that message in yesterday’s day of service, and I hope that you will see that in today’s passage.

Along with keeping God’s commands and loving people, one of the results of discipleship is to serve. Serving others is at the heart of the Gospel.

There are several principles about serving others that I want you to see this morning.

Serving others prevents attitudes inconsistent with discipleship.

In verses 32-34 of our text, there is revealed what might be called a “confidential discovery.” Jesus takes the disciples aside to tell them of the plan. We know this story rather well, but this is the first time that the disciples are hearing of Jesus’ death. Based upon their reactions at His death and resurrection, it is clear that the disciples do not fully understand what Jesus has in mind. However, we do understand that the disciples understand that danger lurks.

What is difficult to understand at first glance is the reactions of the disciples. Their reactions indicate several ungodly attitudes. These ungodly attitudes help us to identify the attitudes that are opposite of servanthood and therefore opposite or inconsistent with discipleship.

- Greed (v. 35)—We are always on pretty shaky ground when we ask what James and John asked. “We want you to do for us whatever we ask.”
- Selfishness (v. 37)—Jesus has just revealed His coming death. What is the response of these two disciples? They ask to sit at the right and left of Jesus in His kingdom. When all of the focus should be on Him, these two disciples shift the focus to themselves. Selfishness. I wonder if we ever do the same. What about when we come to worship? The focus should be on Him, but instead, we shift the focus to us. What about what we think the priorities of the church should be? Should they be on us? What we want? What we prefer? What we like? Or should they not reflect others?
- Arrogance (v. 39)—When Jesus reveals to James and John that they are not able to drink the cup and be baptized in His baptisms (both references to His death), in arrogance, they say they are able.
- Jealousy (v. 41)—Verse 41 indicates that these ungodly attitudes are not confined to James and John. When the rest of the disciples find out about the request, they are angry. They are not

angry that James and John have made the request. Rather, Jesus' response to all of them most likely indicates that they are angry that they may not be considered along with James and John.

- The Desire for Power (v. 42-43)—Jesus' response shows the disciples' ungodly appetite for power.

Serving others paves the way for spiritual growth.

From the first century until now, society has assumed that those who are great assume position and power. Jesus revealed just the opposite. Jesus gave a new view of greatness—greatness comes to those who serve. So the disciples wanted to be great. They suggested that they be given position. Jesus commanded them to take up a life of service. The irony is that to arrive at the place where they wanted to be would require the opposite action and attitude than they were willing to express.

Greatness is in service, but recognize a caution.

Caution: Only if the service is done in the right spirit. Sometimes you can continue to “exercise power” or “lord over” people while you serve. This is obviously not the attitude of Christ and therefore obviously does not lead to spiritual growth.

But when service is done in the right spirit, fruit is the reward.

S. I. McMillen, in his book *None of These Diseases*, tells a story of a young woman who wanted to go to college, but her heart sank when she read the question on the application blank that asked, "Are you a leader?"

Being both honest and conscientious, she wrote, "No," and returned the application, expecting the worst. To her surprise, she received this letter from the college: "Dear Applicant: A study of the application forms reveals that this year our college will have 1,452 new leaders. We are accepting you because we feel it is imperative that they have at least one follower."

You want to be a leader. Be a servant-leader. That's what Jesus did. Serving others paves the way for spiritual growth.

Serving others portrays the Gospel.

Jesus said, “Here is the reason that I came—“not to be served but to serve.” If Jesus did not demand to be served, how could we think that we ought to be served? If Jesus came to serve, why would we not desire to serve others?

So What?

Start serving! You ask, “Where do I start?” Serving is one thing that requires no position. Start serving. Serving requires no training. Just start serving. Serving requires no plan even. Start serving.

Who do we serve? Everyone. Serve those in your home. Serve those who are fellow believers. Serve those who are not believers. Serve those with whom you agree. Serve those with whom you disagree.

This is why serving is discipleship. We don't crave service. We crave the opposite. Only when our lives have been transformed by the Gospel will we want to serve one another.