

Matthew 20:17-28

Ambition

(The King and His Kingdom)

Have you ever found yourself wrestling with some of the concepts in the Christian faith.

A) Jesus taught – love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

B) Honest – I don't want to do that – I want to stay mad at enemies.

C) Turn the other cheek – **really?** - I want to get even

1) Pastor's son story

D) Rejoice when someone else is blessed and you are not – **be honest – that is not my first reaction**

1) Yea – good for him

Have you ever wrestled with those type of things?

A) No pastor Rob – your problem.

B) The Bible tells Husbands – serve their wives

1) **She is going to walk all over me**

C) Wives submit to husbands leadership – I don't know – I am afraid – lead us in the wrong direction

1) Husband is the head – **the wife is the neck right?**

Well today in our text we are going to look at another one of those statements of Jesus

A) That At first glance – hard – **goes against the cultural norms – against what learned in School.**

B) The tendency of many at what we are going to look at today will be to say –

1) **Ah – we just don't do it that way!**

C) But that is precisely what Jesus wants us to understand is –

1) HIS WAY – IS different than the norm

Matthew 20 is our text – Subject of Ambition
The Narrative is the backdrop for the lesson

17 Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them, 18 “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, 19 and deliver Him to

the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again.” (Heavy stuff – going to be beaten.....)

20 Then the mother of Zebedee's sons (**this is James and John's mom**)

Mark's gospel gives us the idea **the boys** put her up to this: **Her name is Salome** –

She is the sister of Mary the mother of Jesus – Jesus' Aunt – James and John were his cousins.

20 Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him.

²¹ And He said to her, “What do you wish?”

She said to Him, “Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.”

Now think about this:

A) Jesus just shared with them – going up to Jerusalem mocked beaten and crucified. -

B) James and John – are like – Ask him now – Here comes Aunt Salome –

1) Can my boys have prominent seats in your kingdom? – **Right and the left – most prominent**

C) If I am Jesus – my reaction is - Hello – did you just hear what I said? –

Just explaining – what is going to happen to me – That is all you have to say: -

A) Picture: Sitting down with your family, you announce **lost your job –OR Diagnosis of Cancer**

B) Your son a minute later Dad can I be excused there is a show I want to watch on TV

1) Daughter says – Have my allowance – Mall

C) You would be hurt right? – Livid

D) Jesus stays Calm - ²² But Jesus answered and said, “You do not know what you ask. (Note – he is addressing them – not her –

E) Jesus knows they are behind this request..

1) This isn't aunt Salome looking out for her boys, this is the boys using their mom. –

He likes our mom – he won't say no to her.”

Jesus answered and said, “You do not know what you ask Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”

They said to Him, “We are able.” (Yep – sure are! – Sons of thunder right)

²³ So He said to them, “You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but *it is for those* for whom it is prepared by My Father.”

Later this very Salome – would be standing with Mary at the foot of the Cross –

A)Watching as Jesus was crucified – between two thieves – one on the right and the other on the left

B)Probably thinking I am so glad – you didn’t grant my request.

1)Thank God for unanswered prayer! Right?

C)But her boys would indeed drink of the cup of suffering that Jesus drank from.

1)James becomes the first martyr – beheaded John according to the legend was boiled in oil.

D)He didn't boil but at least we know historically he was exiled to the Island of Patmos.

E)V.24 is interesting

²⁴ **And when the ten heard it,** (their request – for prominence) they were greatly displeased with the two brothers.

The idea here is not – “Can you believe James and John being so insensitive?”

A)The idea is they were bummed that they didn’t think to ask it first! –

B)They were Bummed that James and John got the jump on them for Seats on Jesus Staff

C)Now if I am Jesus – I am like What? - Are you kidding me? –

1)I am going to fire all these guys – get some new Disciples. –

D)OR Next time they are in a storm on the Sea – they are going down.

1)Not going to rescue them.

But that is not Jesus – nope watch what he does

²⁵ **But Jesus called them to Himself** (this is how it all started – Mark’s gospel tells us that when Jesus picked his disciples – he called them to himself.)

A)With Jesus It was always about relationship – it was always about intimacy. –

B)Here almost 3 years into their training – when they are still missing it – he is still calling them to himself

C)Reminds me of how patient the Lord is with me

1)and how patient I need to be with others!

D)Aren’t you thankful for God’s patience with you

V.24 Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them.

A) **“Yes that is how the world works. – We know this”**

B)There are the people in Charge and there are the people who report to the people in Charge. –

1)we know that.

C)There are the leaders and then there are the servants.

1)People in charge tell the people under them what to do.

D)Why do you think we are following you – we are hoping this plays out well for us –

1)we want to be leaders:

So Jesus says- You know how things work in the world – How the gentiles operate

A)²⁶**Yet it shall not be so among you;** (these guys are the future leaders of the church) –

B)This thing is going to blow up in the book of Acts ch.2 – 3,000 saved one say 2,000 another –

C)In a matter of a few shorts weeks the early church goes from 120 people meeting in upper room

1)To over 5,000 people

D)The Disciples are leading – But Jesus is introducing a whole different paradigm in the

early church as it related to leadership

He says: V. 26 but whoever desires to become great among you, (that is such an evil desire-)

A)Note: Jesus doesn't say that – He doesn't chastise them for wanting to be great –

B)but He is going to give them a new definition of what greatness is suppose to look like – Ready for this?) **but whoever desires to become great among you, (Valid desire) let him be your servant.** (New description)

²⁷ **And whoever desires to be first among you, (Again not a bad desire- someone has to be the leader-again new description) let him be your slave—**

(Then he gives an example-)²⁸just as the Son of Man (that is him – title for the MESSIAH) did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

C)Jesus is describing a whole different type of leadership – **opposite of Top down leadership**

Top down leadership was the norm in that culture even as it is in our culture.

A)You have a leader – he gives the orders – he sets the vision – he calls the shots – **the other people are there to serve and carry out his vision.**

B)That is Top down leadership

1)That is how it worked in that culture – and that is how it works in MOST PLACES day!

C)There are leaders and there are servants

1)There are bosses and there are workers

Top down leadership is prevalent today even in much of the Church world.

A)Some of you might have grown up in a Church – that during services there were 2 chairs on the stage –

B)One Pastor Sat – the other the Music director sat.

C)Olden times you can still see this in old churches in Europe – big chair almost looked like a throne –

1)that is where the pastor sat –

D)Next to it were two small thrones – assistant pastors sat - Weird

E)That is how Top down leadership works – you are going to know who is in Charge.

1)Sign on the door – picture in the lobby – reserved parking place for the CEO

Jesus said: No – we are not going to do it like the World

A)His MODEL of leadership is going to look RADICALLY different

B)Note this: Jesus is not against Leadership: But he demonstrates a different kind of leadership.

1)IN fact – Paul in Romans Ch. 12 Paul list leadership as a gift. {One of the gifts

C)Leadership is necessary – there has to be leaders

1)Some people try to advocate – no leaders – ALL ONE –

D)Problem: things either don't get done (everyone is looking for someone to take the lead.

1)Lots of talk – little action

E)Or things are **not done** efficiently – No leader

Jesus is not against leadership - Leadership is essential

A)But JESUS describes a different kind of leadership

B)And What Jesus describes here can be applied in a Home- a Church – Your business – friendships

C)If you Get this: If you do - You will be someone others love to **work for.** – Others love to **work with**

D)Your company will have a low turnover rate.-

1)You might not even pay the most but you will be the best company people have ever worked for.

E)You get this in friendships –

1)You will Thrive- be someone that others love to have around – love to be friends with.

Jesus says:

You want to be great? – You want to be first?

A)Servant leadership:

B)The word translated “servant” is *diakonos* (the word sometimes used to refer to a **table waiter**).

Marks of a good waiter / waitress

A)They are constantly looking to serve the people who they are taking care of.

B)Their eyes are always looking to try and anticipate what the people would need next. ICE TEA, etc

C)To have a heart of a servant is to always look for ways to serve people without them even asking for the help.

D)So what does Servant leadership look like? look like in a family? – A Church ? A Business – A friendship?

THREE PRACTICAL WAYS

What did Jesus do? - He uses himself as an example.

He said: I didn't come to be served but to serve!

#1 Model Servitude

A)Jesus did this his whole life – but one of the most vivid examples happened in John 13

B)It was the night before the Cross!

C)Now if there was ever a time where Jesus could have requested/demanded – expected to be served

1)It was that night RIGHT?

What does Jesus do – goes and grabs a bowl of water

A)Starts washing the disciples feet. – Note: A task Reserved for the lowest servant on the totem pole

B)Sandals – Feet grimy – dirty

C)A servant leader should be willing to do the lowest Job in the company.

1)Get his hands dirty – do the hard stuff –

D)Get in the dirt with people -

E)A servant leader models servitude – He/she leads by example. –

1)Ministry/ Business/ family/ friendship

John 13 -----}

¹² So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³ You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for *so* I am. ¹⁴ If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.” John 13:12-15

#1 Jesus modeled Servitude -

#2 You leverage your position for the benefit of others.

²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

A)Jesus took everything that He had – everything that He was – God in human flesh / Perfect...

B)He leveraged all of that – for the sake of others.

C)See the Bible pictures mankind – all of us – as being in Bondage to sin / Satan

1)Because - We all have sinned – missed the mark – fallen short of the glory of God

D)Sin left us in bondage: We are not sinners because we sin – we sin because we are sinners

1)Ingrained in us. - Pride – addictions – anger – Jealousies – WHO WE ARE.

D)Fallen people – broken people – flawed Sinners

The Bible says that in that condition – we were doomed – our destiny – spend eternity in hell.

A)Plight of every man and every woman – because we have all sinned.

B)So picture yourself – dungeon – You need a savior

1)The price of the Ransom is the blood of a perfect person.

C)Someone who has never sinned – someone who was able to live a perfect life.

1)year and year – decade after decade – NONE

Phil 2 Jesus humbled himself – He steps off His throne – agrees to leave Heaven-

A)The place where He is worshipped – honored –

B)He lowers himself – and agrees to come to earth as a baby..... man

1) Teach us about the Love of God – the heart of God

C) He lives a perfect life – not to **throw it in our face** and say – **SEE IT CAN BE DONE.**

D) The whole thing is a rescue mission – The whole thing is about paying a ransom

1) He allows himself to be arrested – beaten – crucified – PAY THE PRICE – FOR US!

E) **Gave himself a Ransom for Many** – HE WAS the only one who could do that.

He leveraged all that He was – and all that He had for the benefit of others.

A) That is what a servant leader does. – You leverage your position, assets your power – benefit of others

B) You leverage your time, your resources, your talents, your position –

1) to help those you are working with – accomplish their goals.

Paul the apostle – who grew up trained to be a Pharisee – knew the top down model

A) He was being groomed to be the big honcho – the one everyone else was to listen to and cater to

B) Hated Christians – tried to destroy the early church – Face to face encounter with a Resurrected Jesus

1) Changed everything. **Quit Pharisee – followed Jesus**

C) Paul would refer to himself **as a Doulos** – a willing slave – 7 yrs – willing slave of Jesus

D) He would refer to himself as a minister = under rower – galley ship

1) Job of them – get those on the top to their destination

C) Servant leaders empower others to become everything that God intended them to be.

1) Servant leaders help others accomplish their dreams –

Think about this- what this might look like in your world – your sphere of influence

A) House- Wife, kids – Roommates – How can you be used to help them get to where they want to go – accomplish what they need to accomplish

B) Examples: **My kids are younger** – Art project – they need a good drawing –

1) I can't draw a lick – stick figures look bad.

C) I could say: **Sorry can't help** – but I have influence – I know some artist- I can call.

1) I have means – I can kick in a few bucks

Denise: Women's ministry event – Special music

A) Not in the budget – they don't want to raise the price – can you help?

B) Well I have some influence on how money is spent

1) I helped work on the Budget – **I know we have this amount for music – shift here and there.**

C) I am using my position my resources – to help them accomplish their desire.

Someone is moving – Well I don't have the back anymore – to be hauling around couches

A) But you know what I have a truck – you can use it

B) I have a nephew who is strong as an OX – I can see if he is free.

Here is my point: Being a servant leader is more than just being willing to do the worst Job.

A) Sure you are willing and able to mop the floor – but that might not be the best use of your position.

B) You have talent – ability – influence – means – that could be better served in many of other ways

C) Being a servant leader is using all that you have to enhance – those around you in their calling

#3 Learning to ask this question: How can I help?

A) Oh boy – that is the thing: I really don't want to help

B) I am kind of comfortable in my present situation – I have worked hard to get to this place

C) That is top down leadership – you work hard enough – success is everyone is doing stuff for you.

Jesus' model is different – it is seeing the need and asking the question – How can I help?

A)**Husbands** – Instead of ignoring a problem at home coming to your wife – How can I help.

B)**Wives:** Instead of complaining about how things are not going the way you want at home

1)Or the fact that your husband is under a lot of pressure – works too much – How can I help/

C)**Parents coming to your kids- Pressure school – whatever – How can I help?**

D)Friends –struggling – How can I help?

Mark Foreman – Large church – heard about a Pastor in his town – smaller church

A)This pastor every year took a trip to Hungary to do missions work

B)One year – he couldn't afford to go – so he was going to skip the trip.

C)My **friend who pastors a larger church** – heard about it

1)Had his church write a check – send it to the guy – note that said: For your Hungary trip

D)The Pastor of the smaller church – received it didn't understand – why would they do that – called

E)Answer: Why not – I can't go to Hungary – You are me – We are ONE –

1)**I CAN'T GO – but I can help you go!!!!**

Listen: When you see a need in the church or a need around you – instead of saying – somebody needs to take care of that

A)Or complaining – They should be more on the ball here.

B)ASKING the LORD– How can I help!!!

1)**I DARE YOU TO DO THAT!**

C)He might say: Volunteer in this way – you are good at that.

1)He might say –Write a check – you have means

D)Jesus said: **It is more blessed to give than to receive.**

1)**We don't believe that** – we live in a culture that is all about consumption –

E)Most of us have consumed way more than we could ever imagine – still want more

1)Try Jesus' way: Give more than consume – AND watch what happens

Imagine for a moment Church what the culture here at Calvary Vista would be like if we did this?

A)If all of us – looked for ways to model servanthood

B)If all of us looked for ways to leverage what we have who we are – to bless others

C)If all of us – started asking that simple question – How can I help?

D)**I think it would be amazing** – Jesus would blow our minds – what we were able to accomplish

1)The People that we could bless.

Maybe you are here today and you are not a Follower of Jesus

A)On the one hand – this sounds crazy to you – that would never work

B)But on the other hand – there is a part of you that would **love to be a community like that.**

1)People who approached life that way.

C)Well - That is exactly what Jesus wants His Kingdom to look – like – exactly what He modeled

D)Exactly why He came – to take people who were living for themselves – empty – bondage

1)Redeem them – to do something new

He came to give his life a ransom –for many!

A)Many is the key word - His death paid the price for all to be Ransomed – set free.

B)But it is Many – because you have to decide – do I want to be set free!

C)Your choice: **Not force you** – but He invites you today to respond to his invitation.

D)He loved you enough to leave heaven – and leverage everything He had to purchase your freedom

E)Question is – do you want to be set free!