

–Chapter 8–
Misguided Mother
Jesus and Salome

The Big Picture

A mother approaches Jesus to put in a good word for her sons. Would he reward them places of honor and authority in his quickly approaching kingdom? The request demonstrated a lack of understanding in what God's kingdom would entail. God's kingdom is not about privilege or power. It is about being the servant of all.

Discuss

"When Jesus came the first time, it was to bear the sin of the world... he will come a second time—at the end of this age—to rule the earth from Jerusalem and bring peace to Israel... Two comings, with two very different agendas. Salome and the Jews of her day did not understand this. So their expectations of Jesus during his first coming were doomed to be unfulfilled."

How does our view of the Kingdom of God impact our expectations concerning our participation in it?

"God's kingdom is like that. As Jesus told them, man's ideas of greatness and God's ideas were polar opposites. It would be an upside-down, backward kind of kingdom, at least according to human ideals. The standard of greatness would not be a wielding of power to one's own gain. The standard of greatness in the kingdom of God would be the cross."

From a human standpoint, what should characterize an important kingdom and its leadership? How do God's standards contrast with these ideas?

"During his earthly existence, Christ experienced a great deal of suffering... To follow the suffering Messiah would mean to walk in his footsteps, inevitably experiencing in some way what he experienced."

Do you think of suffering as a part of following Christ? Why do you think it is an important and even necessary part of being his disciple?

"The answer to such shortsightedness is in the disciples' focus. They were all about the here and now, limited by an earthly driven perspective. They needed to widen their horizons. It was time to start thinking with a heavenly mind-set."

What is the difference between being earthly as opposed to heavenly-minded? How would being heavenly-minded influence any course of action?

"When Scripture instructs leaders, it uses the Greek word *kephale*... This kind of leader operates right alongside the troops. He is the first to go into battle and leads by example, rather than control. The troops follow him wholeheartedly because he

commiserates with them in hardship and treats his position as one of service. This second kind of leadership should characterize leaders in the kingdom of God.”

Why do you think God instructs us to lead with a servant attitude? Can you think of advantages to being this kind of leader? How might it make your influence over others more effective?

Moving Forward

1. We follow in the footsteps of a suffering savior. 1 Peter 2:21-24 describes Jesus’ responses to difficulty. What specific things did he do that leave an example for us to follow?

2. Look up the following passages and find the benefits of suffering.

1 Peter 4:1

2 Corinthians 4:8-11

James 1:2-4

Romans 5:3-4

3. Shortly before Salome approached Jesus, the disciples were arguing over which of them would be the greatest. In response to their misguided ideas, Jesus used a child for his object lesson. Read Mark 9:33-37. Why do you think he used a child to illustrate his point?

4. Read Mark 10:42-45. Why do you think greatness in the Kingdom of God is measured by this standard? How is it consistent with what we know to be true about God?

5. The world can misinterpret humility as weakness. How does God view it? See 1 Corinthians 1:26-31, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, and Philippians 4:10-13. What advantage do we have when we are “weak”?