



ENTER God's presence

I put no trust in my bow, my sword does not bring me victory; but you give us victory over our enemies, you put our adversaries to shame. In God we make our boast all day long, and we will praise your name forever.

-Psalm 44:6-8

Heavenly Father, so often we come to you in prayer full of our own agendas and purposes. Help us to lay those things at your feet today and to come in humble submission to your Word, to hear what you would say to each of us and to grow in us a desire to serve you more completely. Amen.



SHARE life together

1. **Share your highs and lows with each other?**
2. **Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?**
3. **Do you have a bucket list? What is at the top of it?**
4. **If you had to articulate your ultimate goal in life, what would it be?**

"Are we there yet?" It's not just a question that children ask their parents on a long journey. It's a question that many ask in life. Have we arrived? Have we fulfilled our goals? Scaled the heights of our ambitions? Reached the pinnacle of our aspirations? We all have an instinctual motivation to aspire to greater things, to make something happen or to have an impact through our life. Ambition by itself is neither good or bad. But today as we continue a journey of deliberate discipleship, Jesus challenges the inner motivations that drive our ambition. He leads us on a path that is relationship driven rather than results driven; a way that transforms our motivations into a life that reveals his glory and makes a powerful impact for eternity. Less ambition...more submission. Are you there yet? That's what we will explore today.

Week beginning:
Sunday 21st March 2021

Worship series:
**Addition via Subtraction:
Deliberate Discipleship**



VERSE for the week

"...whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all!"

Mark 10:43-44



REMEMBER this week

**Godly ambition
submits to the
Heavenly Father's
vision and is willing to
be poured out to serve
his mission.**



LISTEN attentively

Read Mark 10:35-45

- 5. What key words/thoughts/ideas/questions arise for you as you hear this text?**
- 6. What do you hear this scripture saying to you right now?**
- 7. How do you think you would have responded to James' and John's request if you had been one of the other disciples?**

Pride and ambition are valuable and desirable traits, particularly in the cut throat worlds of commerce, finance, law, and politics. Businesses love to employ those who are driven to achieve more; to reach and exceed their sales targets. Law firms reward those who have killer instinct in the courtroom and are prepared to do whatever it takes to get a win. Sometimes this works out well and people find a good fit in their careers or in their lives which suits their drive or ambition to achieve. However, more often we see how pride and ambition can bring about disaster. Pride and ambition in the political sphere has resulted in the ends of many political careers and tension and turmoil within political parties. Greed and ambition in the financial sector has led to the corruption and unethical practices which were uncovered in the recent enquiry into the banking sector. Each of us has some kind of drive or ambition, something within us that pushes us forward and provides the spark of energy for us to achieve things, to do things, to make things happen. Ambition itself, is neither good nor bad, but the focus of our ambition is what makes all the difference.

8. How hard/easy do you find it to set and achieve goals?

In this story, Jesus' disciples get upset with James and John and their request to be seated at Jesus' right and left in heaven. Our usual response is to empathise with the other disciples. We often feel left out, or neglected when others ask for or receive things which we think we deserve just as much as they do. However, notice Jesus' response to James and John – he does not actually tell them off for their request, he asks them if they really know what it is they are asking.

- 9. What motivation apart from selfish ambition could have driven James and John to make their request?**
- 10. Have you ever asked God for something in prayer and later come to realise that you did not really appreciate the significance of what you were asking? What was it?**

If James and John made their request from a simple desire to be as close as possible to Jesus and have some assurance of their relationship with him, then it would perhaps not be a surprise that Jesus follows up with this question, "You don't know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?" James and John answered confidently that "yes they could". Jesus says numerous times across all four gospels that the closer we follow him, the more opposition we will receive from the world. We see in this story that this can happen even from other disciples who perhaps have not had the same experiences of Jesus as you have.

- 11. Have you ever felt that the closer you have walked with Jesus, the more the world around you stood opposition? Give an example.**
- 12. Have you ever been jealous of someone else's story of life with Jesus and wished that yours were different? What was it that made you jealous?**



GROW deeper

Our world measures success by the size of the pedestal that we are placed upon. This often leads us to turn our ambition and drive on collecting wealth, power and prestige for ourselves so that the world around us will place us on a higher pedestal.

God has not given you a pedestal but he has given you a platform. Our mission from God is not to use what he has given us to build for ourselves a higher pedestal, but to build for him a larger platform from which his people can share the good news of Jesus Christ with the world.

The trick is to allow our ambition and pride to be humbly submitted to the Lordship of Jesus. This is an incredible difficult thing to do in a world which increasingly fails to recognise God as a valid authority or object of worship. When we hand our drive and ambition over to God in a world like that, we are of course going to be aiming for very different goals. God's goal and ambition is to have all of creation restored unto himself. The rest of the world's ambition is to distance itself as far away from God as possible.

13. How do you submit your will and ambition to Jesus?

14. Why is it sometimes easier to serve God and his mission than it is at other times?



LIVE purposefully

"Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matt 6:33). Laying our goals and ambitions at Jesus feet is not as bad as the world or the devil would have us believe. Surrendering to and serving the will of God allows us to trust in his provision for our needs and also in his providence for our success in his mission. The more you come to trust God and serve him, the greater freedom you come to know. Jesus himself, gave all he had to fulfil the Father's mission of restoring you to himself. In his humble death for us we received life. Through his ugly, brutal, humiliation on the cross, God revealed his glory to the world. In Christ you have become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:12), the purpose and mission you serve will determine the glory in which you share.

15. What does it mean to you to have become 'the righteousness of God' through faith in Jesus?

16. What is one way that you might redirect your ambition this week so that it might serve God more faithfully?



PRAY intentionally

- Praise God for his goodness and mercy and willingness to pour out his Son in love for the world.
- Thank Jesus for his willing submission and obedience to the Father's will to serve us in love through his death on the cross.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you be still and to know more deeply all that God has done for you so that your ambition may be to make Christ known wherever you go.



BLESS one another

You might like to address one person in your group and make the sign of the cross in the air as you say...

[Name], Christ poured out his life for you. Amen.