

Global Ministry Conference 2026

Rico Tice

Reconciling the World – What does Jesus say about Eternity?

Well, it's a great joy to be here tonight. I'm off home tomorrow. But, Brian, I just wanted you to give you a gift before I go. Here we are, brother. You ready? Yeah. That's a gift. That's a gift to Briarwood. Thank you. Are you ready? It's coming now, guys, are you ready? (Throwing the rugby ball around!) Whoa! Oh oh! And back. Chance to shine and back. Please don't hit the grandmothers. I don't have to bury a granny and back. Oh, that's a great throw. Wow. God bless America. That was brilliant. Ready? Oh! I'm back. Chance to shine, brother. Oh, not such a goal. Not such a good throw. I think that's the best throw ever. I'm going. I'm going to go back here. Throw it to me again. That is an amazing play. Who is that guy? He must be a quarterback. Okay, brother. Chance to shine. Oh, look. Yes! Gosh, you're a gifted bunch. Okay, let's do it without the ball. You ready? I'm back. Are you ready?

Brothers and sisters. If there's no ball, the game loses its meaning. If there's no ball, it just loses its focus. And Christ is essential to life as a ball is to a game. Now, the thing is that you've got all over Birmingham, all over the South is you've got people who go, when it comes to Christianity, they go, oh, Jesus is the rules. It's just rules. The Bible's rules. Now the rules are great. The rules are a foundation for my life, not a fence that keeps me in. The rules are great. So God says, because it reflects his character. So he says, don't lie because he's got a truth. He says, don't commit adultery because he's a giving God. He says, don't. Just don't commit adultery because he's a faithful God. Don't steal because he's a giving God. So the rules are great. But when you open up Mark's gospel, Jesus becomes the ball. He is what life is about. And until you meet him, you're dead. You're going through the motions. Now we want to equip you to be able to open up mark's Gospels with other individuals, because he then becomes the ball. They see it. It's not just the rules.

Can we just flash up on the screen, get your phones out, take a picture of this, please. I've spent thirty years developing the material. Can we just flick it up, guys? No, the code for the phone. We got that one. Next one. That's the one. Guys, can you just there. That is the Christianity Explored material, which is all about how to teach Mark's gospel. Can you grab your phone? Just take a photo of that, go to the booth. And it's all about how do we enable Jesus to walk off the pages? So that's a little series that we run. You can download it on the phone you can work through and you can do that, but it just enables you to have the confidence to do it. So we preach Christ from the front, small group one to one and at home. But just take that, come to the booth.

I've given thirty years of my life trying to work out how do you help people to teach through Mark's gospel? So that's the tool. Do take that. And then the second thing to do is listen to Scott's preaching wonderfully. You're going through Mark's gospel now, brothers and sisters, when you come along, come along with your little your little book here, come along with your

highlighters and just internalize Mark's gospel. Let's just see the structure of Mark's gospel. Let's have a look at it.

So let's can we have the next slide, brother. That's it. There. Every verse in Mark's gospel is identity mission call. It's all that. So let's just get that in place and it gives you the confidence to go through it. Because the disciples are blind and they can't see who Jesus is, why he came, and what it means to follow him. And with that in mind, can we please turn in our in our little Bibles? Or if you haven't got a Bible, can you grab the pew Bible? And can we turn please, to Mark 10? Where's Brian gone? Brian, brother, where are you? Aha! Oh, not great hands. Sorry, brother. I'm just saying, I'm just so pathetic at throwing compared to that other chap. What's your name, by the way, brother? What's your name? What's his name? John, if I may say, it looks as though you spent your youth very badly. If you can throw like that, honestly, you must. You can't have done much Bible. That's all I can say. Great. Off we go, everyone. Let's get this, this passage open. Mark chapter ten and verse thirty five. Let me read it to you. Everyone got it. Our little highlighters. You'll need the green, the green. Pull out the green. Because this is about what does it mean to follow Jesus. So we'll be doing that. But there'll also be a couple of little reds, which is why did he die? It'll mainly be called, though. What does it mean to follow him?

And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him and said to him, teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask for. And he said to them, what do you want me to do for you? And they said to him, Grant us to sit one at your right and the other at your left in your glory. Jesus said to them, you do not know what you're asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with? And they said to him, we're able. And Jesus said to them, the cup that I drink you will drink. And with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized. But to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared. And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. Yeah, of course they were. They wish they'd got the request in themselves. Verse forty two. And Jesus called them to him and said to them, you know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Our father God. The Lord Jesus is so extraordinary. He's so unlike us. Please change us as we see your word this night and then help us to teach it to others. We pray. Amen.

Well, at this point, we see in Mark's gospel the blindness of the disciples. They are so blind. And we'll see. And if you're taking notes, jot this down, brothers and sisters. There are two value systems and two lifestyles, and we have to decide which way we're going to go. We are the choices that we make, and we'll see that there's absolutely no harmonization between the two philosophies of life in this passage. Can you see them both? Let's see them jot this down. We're going to teach this to others. The first one is in verse thirty five. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him, and they said, teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask for. And the second one is in Mark ten forty five for even the Son of Man came not to be served, but

to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. I wonder if you can see the choice here. It's the choice between self-seeking and self-sacrifice, and it has to actually be said. It's a very ironic passage. Can you get out your highlighters and can you see, just as we color in now, can you just turn to the word teacher because that is the identity of Jesus. Do you see there in verse thirty five, teacher, color that one in yellow. In yellow, teacher because that's his identity. but they absolutely haven't understood one of the key facets of his teaching. On the contrary, they speak with a different voice and with a totally different spirit. They're fired by a different ambition. These boys, James and John, they couldn't be more self-seeking. They want to occupy thrones in power and glory. It's blatant self-seeking. James and John have anticipated that, that there'll be an unholy scramble for seats in Jesus kingdom, and they judge it prudent to make a reservation. And they're determined to bend Jesus's will to their own. It's amazing Jesus. And they're bending his will to their own. So they are go getters. They're status seekers. They're people who are hungry for fame and honor. They want to be singled out. They're people who measure life by achievement. They're dreaming of success. So their daydreams are about success. And they want adulation and they want crowds, and they think of that, and they get a lovely feeling inside as they think of fame and achievement and success, and they're aggressively ambitious for those things, and sadly. My heart is full of that, and I don't think I'm the only one in this room. I find myself being able to identify very easily. Even in the church, one can find that one's self-worth is pinned to the pecking order, and then you give your time and your energy and your money to the things that boost your self image. So it's very interesting, isn't it? As we come back to the passage, do you see, uh, what? Verse thirty six, Jesus said to them, what do you want me to do for you? What do you want me to do for you? Says Jesus. And they go, I want respect, and I want status, and I want significance, and I want to be known and admired, and I want recognition. That's what I'll go after, and I'll go after the things that have a capacity to deliver those things. That's the way of the world. That is the way of self-seeking. It's about learning to love yourself. That's what we've got all over London, where I work. You've got to learn to love yourself. And the way of the Lord Jesus is utterly different. It's utterly incompatible with that. Let's have a look at it, shall we?

You see again verse forty five, for even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. So Jesus, oh the Lord Jesus, brothers and sisters, he gave his life away. He did not count equality with God a prize or a privilege to be selfishly enjoyed. No, he relinquished his grasp on those things. And you remember Philippians two verse seven. It's reflexive. He made himself nothing. He took on the very nature of a servant. He humbled himself. He became obedient to death, even death on a cross. So Jesus goes down, down, down a man, a servant, a slave, a slave's death, a slave's death for you. So Jesus didn't snatch what was rightfully his. He was equal with God, but he didn't grasp for that equality. He doesn't get hung up about his rights. All over our work, people are talking about rights all the time, not duties. Now. Instead, in a staggering act of self-giving, Jesus became a man. And as a man he was obedient unto death, a slave's death. He doesn't use his humanity as an excuse to strut around the stage of human history. Now he comes to die a criminal's death. Can you see it? He humbled himself. He made himself nothing. It was a choice he made. That was his choice. And it's reflective. He did it to himself. So Jesus chose humanity. He chose the cross. He chose to pay our ransom. He chose to go to Jerusalem. He chose our interests. He chose to humble

himself. He was obsessed with the welfare of others and the glory of God. He never thought about himself. He humbled himself to serve. He never sought his own honor. He risked his reputation. He mixed with prostitutes and lepers and swindlers. Uh, he chose to sacrifice himself as a ransom. And so he presents us with a choice this night. It's a dramatic choice between self-seeking honor, glory, prestige for ourselves or self sacrifice in the service of the Lord Jesus and in the service of God. This night we have to choose. We have to choose. And we hold our nerve. And as we open the Mark's Gospel with non-Christians, We say you have to choose. And as we preach Christ, we trust. We trust the Holy Spirit to be regenerating them, to be causing them to be born again. So in their hearts, they're just going, yes, yes, but we've got to present it. We have to choose. So we have to choose firstly in this passage between self-seeking or self-sacrifice, what will you choose? But secondly, in this passage we have to choose between power and service. It's clear that James and John would not be satisfied with prestige and honor. That wasn't enough to feed their egos. That wasn't enough for their self, their self-image. No, they wanted power as well. So they asked for an opportunity to sit on the left and the right in Jesus's kingdom. Now here's the question. What do you think they were planning to sit on? Do you think they were going to say to Jesus, Oh Jesus, do you think we could have just a little cushion to sit on, just a little cushion to sit on left and right of you? Oh, no. What do they want to sit on? They want a throne. They want to sit on thrones. That's what they want. So they make this request. And there's no doubt they were anticipating that possibility. And they rather fancied having a throne each either side of Jesus and from that seat of authority. They were intending to boss people around because of the power and authority that comes from sitting on a throne. Now let's remember that they come from a well-to-do, I guess we'd say in England, a middle class family. Actually, it's quite funny in Matthew's gospel. Who is it that makes requests for thrones for James and John? Do you remember? Their mother. Their mother? Did you have a mother like that? Is your mum like that? I want a throne for my boys. Jesus. Terrifying mother. Can you imagine? Honestly. There we go. Some of you may have to read Mark's Gospel with your mothers. And good luck with that, my brother. Sister. There we go. Their father, Zebedee, had a household of servants and a fishing business, and it may well be that in following Jesus, James and John missed having servants to wait on them. They were hired men in the boat, weren't they? They probably had servants at home, and maybe they were willing to leave their home, family, fishing business, and servants as long as they were compensated by a decent throne. In the end, it would be worthwhile then, wouldn't it? So they coldly calculate this request in verses thirty five thirty seven to cement their power base. And we live in a world that loves power. We live in a grasping, acquisitive society that respects power. And here a classic characteristic of the powerful is displayed. Jesus has just run a little study on his own death. Can we see as we look down? Let's flick back, please, to page thirty three and to mark ten, verse thirty two.

Let's see what Jesus said.

And they are on the road going up to Jerusalem, Jesus walking ahead of them, they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what must happen to him, saying, see, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests, the scribes. They will condemn him to death and

condemn him to death. And sorry, I've actually written this out in my book here, and I can't actually read the writing underneath there. Hold it. Let's have a look here. Let me go to the bigger one. We're going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests, the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. And they will mock him and spit on him and flog him and kill him. And after three days he'll rise. So Jesus has just been talking about the fact he's going to be murdered. And what do they then say we want you to do for us? Whatever we ask. He's just say, I'm going to Jerusalem. I'm going to be killed. But you see, that's the power mindset, brothers and sisters, the power mindset tramples on people in the pursuit of its own ends. They might do it with great charm. Maybe they're rather charming about it, but actually they're trampling. It does what it likes when it likes it. Bullies to whom it likes. It's not committed to the well-being of others, but to their exploitation. It sees the opportunity and it takes control, and it relishes in doing so. The power mindset says, look, it's my way or the highway, it's my way or the highway. In this home, in this office, whatever. That's what it is. And of course, what we have here. It's classic of the power mindset. Please jot this down. It refuses to listen. The power mindset will not listen. They've not listened to Jesus. I've been putting this material together for thirty years. In my late twenties, I started trying to work out how to do Mark's Gospel. We produced a little course, and a very senior evangelical leader wrote to me when Christianity was first published on the sixth edition. Now that's the stuff that you. I hope you'll look at. But back then, back nineteen ninety eight, that was the first edition. We pushed it out. It was it was a massive effort. I was living a sort of monastic life to do that, paying people out of my salary, whatever it was to see pompously. And this very senior evangelical Christian leader wrote to me and he said, we don't need your course, we don't need the serious. There's a series. There's another one we should get behind. Which wasn't going through a gospel. It was doing other stuff that was good, but it wasn't going through a gospel. And I got this letter and I was just devastated. I so respected this man. And you know what? I then found out He hadn't even read through the material. He just shot the letter off. We don't need that. I got in touch, and actually, he hadn't read through it. He literally hadn't opened it. He'd just written a letter and said, we don't need it. There's another course people should use. It was absolutely devastating. He hadn't listened. It was so. It was so disillusioning. And that's the experience of many in business and industry, the professions, whatever it is. And, you know, the pulpit can be a kind of throne where you boss people around. I worked at Hewlett Packard as a teaboy for a bit at HP, and I remember there was someone there and in their department they were defined by one thing. They would not change. They would not change. And Jesus calls his followers along a very different path.

Can we have a look as we look down? Verses forty one and forty two. And when the ten heard of it, they began to be indignant at James and John. And Jesus called them to him and said to them, you know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. Can we all say that together? Verse forty three, just those seven eight words there. Let's say it together. But it shall not be so among you. Let's say it again, but it shall not be so among you. And again. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. It shall not be so among you. If

we want to seek greatness, the greatness of Jesus, it is found in serving the word servant. Here is Kainos, which means one whose activities are not directed by his own interests, but by the interests of another. Actually, the word is a slave, and a slave belongs to others. If I'm a slave, I do not belong to myself. I don't have rights now. I belong to Christ and His people. And if you are a follower of Jesus, you do to my brother and sister. You do not belong to yourself. You have been brought at a great price. Your life is not your own. You belong to Christ and to his people, and your life is to be laid down in service for the Lord Jesus Christ and his people. And it means that I must see that Jesus introduced, and this is what's so glorious about him, a new style of leadership into the world. Christian leadership is by example and not by coercion. There's to be no trampling here. Christian leaders are called to be servants, not bosses. The key words, verse forty three are it shall not be so with you. We're not to go on a power trip. We're called to serve because that's the pattern of Jesus, our King. And the only way this happens is because we're so sinful. If each morning in our quiet time, we allow the Bible to be a mirror, and we see our sin, and we see the way our idols have come out, and our longing for status and pride have come out. And then each morning we say, Lord Jesus, I'm so sorry. I've done it again. I'm so sorry. And at the heart of evangelical spirituality is that moment when we say, like the prodigal in the pigsty, I've sinned against heaven and against you. I'm no longer worthy to be called your son. And as you confess your sin, that is when you feel God's embrace.

Brother. Sister, how are your morning quiet times going? Are you allowing the Bible to be a mirror and showing you your sin and then saying, Lord Jesus, I'm sorry? And then you experience the father's kiss, his embrace. That's the heart of it. And it draws us away from self-centeredness to say, no, I must serve. You know, worldly leadership is a pyramid at the top of the leaders, the rulers, and everyone else is beneath. But Jesus turns that on its head and says, you who would be leaders must be servants. You must be under them all, bearing up their weight. T.W. Manson, the scholar, said, In the Kingdom of God, service is not a stepping stone to nobility. It is nobility, the only nobility that is recognized. And so the symbol of authentic Christian leadership is not the purple robe of the emperor. It is the towel of the Lord Jesus as he washes the disciples feet. So we have to choose power or service.

In two thousand, I was a young evangelist. I went to Amsterdam. Billy Graham called ten thousand evangelists to Amsterdam. That was pre 9-11. It couldn't have happened afterwards in terms of that. Many meetings from all over the world as we did from every country, two hundred countries. And Richard Bewes, my boss at All Souls, Langham Place, was asked by Billy Graham to do the final address and he picked a little passage from revelation chapter five. He'd written a commentary on that. It was a twelve minute talk. He prepared it and prepared it with us. It was almost the pinnacle of his ministry for Billy to say, Will you send off the ten thousand evangelists? Amsterdam, two thousand. Billy was ill. He couldn't get there, so he'd asked Richard to do that. His doctor said that, Billy, doctors said you can't travel. He said, Richard, you send them off. So there we were. And it was that last, that last one. And I'd been, I, you know, I was I was just on staff with Richard, but I'd watched him prepare and memorize this talk. And then the music group were given eight minutes to sing and they took twenty, and they took his whole twelve minutes. Um, I've forgotten their name, but they were from World

Vision. Anyway, there you go. That's fine. It was great. But they took, they took, they took, they took his whole talk. They took the whole twelve minutes. And so he gave a one minute thought, had to do the communion because all the buses had to leave. And so it was just he'd been, you know, we prayed he'd been waiting for that moment to give that send off to ten thousand evangelists. And after it happened, I walked around the back of the center, around the back, and I found him having a cup of tea. And I said to my boss, I said, oh, Richard, you know, the music group went on, you weren't able to give that talk. It was a brilliant talk. And he looked at me and he said, oh no, no, Rico, we're servants. We do whatever we asked. If it had been me, I'd have gone well, the Word of God wasn't preached. And you know what about God's Word? But really, underneath that I said, what about my platform? What about my platform? And Richard just looked at me. He said, oh no, no, no, no, we're servants. We just do what we're asked. He had already dismissed it. This platform, ten thousand evangelists, all the preparation, memorizing it, written a commentary. We're servants. Do you know, brothers and sisters? I would have walked under a bus for that man. That level of self-forgetfulness was a staggering thing he had, you know, he just was so humble and so unlike me. And I often think, you know, as I think what happened that night, I think, I wonder if the Lord allowed it to happen just to just teach me such a searing lesson. Oh, no, Rico, we're servants. We just do whatever we asked. Power or service. And we've got to get that model right.

Well, lastly, lastly, as we come to this passage. So we've got self-seeking or self-sacrifice. We've got power or service. But lastly there's security or suffering. You know, in asking for thrones and glory, James and John were wanting not only honor and power, but also comfort and security again, in leaving their home and their family in the Sea of Galilee, they'd become vagrants and vagabonds. They didn't like it very much. They didn't like the insecurity, and they were confronted with a choice. So to their request for thrones, Jesus replies with a rebuke and a counter-question can we see verse thirty eight as we look down, brothers and sisters, verse thirty eight, Jesus said to them, you do not know what you're asking. Are you able to drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with? Well, they're on a roll now, aren't they? And they said, oh, we are able. And Jesus said to them, the cup that I drink you will drink. And with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized. So he answers their request with this counter question. You know, you don't know what you're asking. Can you drink the cup I drink with, baptized with the baptism I am baptized with? They say we can now of course. They don't know what they're talking about. They're blind. It's this theme of blindness. Blindness? You know. They don't know what he meant. Jesus, when he talked about his cup or his baptism. We know because in the Garden of Gethsemane, a cup was presented to the Lord Jesus, and it was a cup of suffering, and in particular, it was the cup of the wrath and judgment of God at your sin and mine. And that was the cup that he drank down. As verse forty five. He was a ransom for many. Likewise, the language of baptism also represents suffering under God's judgment. In the Old Testament, it means overwhelmed by water, as in the days of Noah or Pharaoh's army. In the Red sea, baptism meant suffering, and in Luke twelve verse fifty, Jesus says, I have a baptism to undergo and how distressed I am until it is complete. But James and John are almost certainly thought the cup referred to the wine that they would drink at the messianic banquet in the kingdom of God, and they were probably thought of the baptism referred to the banquet bars that Herod indulged in. And Jesus doesn't

enlighten them. He just says to them, you'll drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with. And both indeed did share in Jesus's sufferings. So in acts two twelve, verse two, James is put to death by the sword by King Herod. So James is the first day apart from Stephen, but the first apostle to die is he's put to death by the sword. John, by contrast, is the last apostle to die. His calling is to endure decade after decade of suffering, as a young church is persecuted and he ends up in prison on Patmos. one is martyred, the other has to endure, but both suffer, and neither are able to live a quiet, undemanding life surrounded by possessions and position which their father's fishing business could have provided. Neither of them were allowed to build heaven here, and Jesus calls his followers to suffer for him to put service before security, to put hardship before ease.

John Stott has written these words. Where are the Christians who are prepared to put service before security? I tell you, there are thousands of pioneer tasks in the Third World and in the inner cities waiting to be done, which challenge our middle class conventionality and call for vision, courage, endurance, and commitment. The richest parish in England evangelical parish is in Saint Nick's, Sevenoaks, and eighty five evangelical ministers applied to be pastor there. And I have a friend, Henry Corbett, in the inner city of Liverpool, and he's not found anyone to go and work with him in the last twenty years. Isn't it amazing? Eighty five evangelical pastors in England felt the Lord calling them to Saint Nick, Sevenoaks. And as followers of the Lord Jesus, we can never make safety first. Our motto we can never be in the safe zone. Jesus didn't stay in heaven. Though he made himself vulnerable, he had nowhere to lay his head. He suffered pain, rejection, and death. And to follow him is to embrace suffering, not security. We have to choose, as I know so many of you in this room do.

Well, I'm going to finish. And as I do that, you can see the amazing contrast here between James and John, the sons of Zebedee and Jesus the Son of Man, James and John covered in honor. Jesus was exposed to shame and humiliation and crucified naked on the cross. James and John were hungry for power. Jesus came to relinquish it and to serve James, and John demanded comfort and security. Jesus came to suffer and die for you. And on the one hand, we have honor, security, power, and on the other sacrifice, service and suffering. And we can't avoid the challenge. We have to choose because of the dramatic ness of those words in verse forty three. Not so with you. Not so with you. And you know you can't make a real commitment unless you accept that it's a choice that you have to keep making day after day. The trouble is, some here you've made brutal choices in giving or going away to serve whatever it is you've made them. But you sort of think, I've made those choices for thirty years. I'm going to have a bit of a break now. It's amazing how many in the in the Bible finish badly. But the Christian life is not about self-seeking. It's about self-sacrifice. It's not about power. It's about service. We have to choose.

And some of you here will be very powerful people. Well, remember, you have a boss, the Lord Jesus Christ, who calls you to serve. Tomorrow as you walk in. And you are the most powerful person in that firm and you own it, but you have a boss and you're called to go to that place and to serve. You're accountable to him. So use your power, my dear brother sister appropriately. Others are young. You're on the threshold of life. How will you spend your life? How will you use your gifts? Will you give your life in service? It's a privilege here to have heard stories of

some of those missionaries here in brutal situations. There's Chris here who you send to my church in Ealing. We love Chris and Savannah and they are a remarkable Christian servants. It's so humbling to have them. Thank you for them. Thank you so much. And some of us just very simply have to just look at the opportunities to serve. Brianna's highlighted them tonight and you've got so many other choices you could make that are just lovely. And this will be hard. And you've got to choose. But the key here is the right model of greatness. It's the model of Jesus as expressed in service. We must fix our eyes on him and let him transform us. As James and John were transformed, one died first, the other died last. They both suffered and served. It won't be easy. As we share his cup and baptism. But it is wonderful. He's the ball. This is my favorite quote from John Stott of all his commentaries. This is my favorite quote. He writes this in his commentary to the Thessalonians. Listen to it. ***It's a wonderfully liberating experience when the desire to please God overtakes the desire to please ourselves. And when love for others displaces love for self. True freedom is not freedom from responsibility to God and others in order to live for myself, but freedom from myself in order to live for God on others.***

I'm so far from that. But I love it. I love the goal of it. We have to choose and we've got to get the right model of greatness. The right model of greatness is expressed in service. And again, James and John were transformed. And it won't be easy as we share Jesus's cup and his baptism. But there is no greater privilege than to follow him who came. Verse forty five, not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. And we must never forget that for the cross that for the symbol of the followers of Jesus is not a throne, it's a cross. The symbol of following Jesus is not a throne, it's a cross.

Let's pray. Well, we have a moment now just to do business with God. And maybe he has spoken to us, as he's called us, to forsake the way of James and John, and adopt the way of Jesus to come down off the throne and up on the get up on the cross. Brother, sister, are you willing? We've got to choose. Self-seeking or self-sacrifice? Power or service? Security or suffering? Our Lord Jesus, we desire to thank you for your wonderful example to us, your humility, self-sacrifice, and service. And thank you too, that as we follow in your footsteps, we're cleansed from our egotism and status seeking and love of ease. Thank you that we're forgiven afresh, cleansed afresh, and given the gift of your righteousness. Please forgive us for the times when we've been so self-seeking rather than self-sacrificial. And Lord, we bring our lives to you now. Lay them at your feet and ask that you would give us grace, not just in the emotional fervor of the moment as your word has been opened, but in the days of head ahead. Please, for the rest of our lives and then in heaven as we worship, please may service be our great overwhelming ambition. Hear us for the glory of your son. We pray.

Amen.