**Can You Drink My Cup?**

**The Word**

Read together Mark 10:35-45

**The Big Idea**

Jesus models a new form of leadership wherein we use our power and influence to serve and build up those in our paths even at the expense of our own status or comfort.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. On Sunday we discussed how Christians should participate in politics to propose the goods of God’s kingdom values for all people–-to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8). How would you articulate the way Christians should (or should not) engage in the political process in America and what the goal of political engagement should be for the Christian?

2. If you can, share a recent story in which you witnessed someone using their power and influence to serve others in a meaningful way.

3. On Sunday we talked about different contexts in which we have power and influence (politics, work, family, friendships, etc.). You may not have thought of yourself as possessing power in this way, but as you reflect on that, what context in your life surfaces as one in which you possess significant power and influence?

4. On Sunday we talked about different ways we can use our power to serve: the power of our words, of giving someone our attention, of offering our friendship, of sharing resources, etc. As you consider your life currently, how might God be calling you to you use your power to serve another person or group of people, and what would it cost you to do that?

**Sermon Outline**

I. The image of a cup

 A. A recent archeological discovery at Petra, Jordan, uncovered a figure holding a cup

B. The cup in the Scriptures is often a symbol of salvation understood in the broadest senses: a symbol of forgiveness, of blessing upon us, of life-giving relationship with Jesus and one another, and of course, the gift of eternal life. In the scriptures, it is a symbol of all that God provides for us. Consider Ps. 23:5: “You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.”

C. Even today the cup is a significant symbol. Consider the Challenge Cup, the Stanley Cup, the World Cup. It is awarded to those who have overcome all opponents and obstacles and have risen to the top.

II. The context of social and political struggle in this scene

 A. This is Jesus’ final entry into Jerusalem, and the disciples are anticipating

a dramatic moment when Jesus will announce his kingship which they assume means

overthrowing the Roman rulers

B. Politics in its best form is a discussion about what is good for the city (“polis”)

C. Christians should participate in ‘politics’ to propose the goods of God’s kingdom values for all people–-to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8).

D. But James and John’s proposed good is very narrow to their own interests not the common interest.

III. Jesus’ teaching and modeling that redefines power and leadership

A. Immediately prior to this discussion with James and John, Jesus tells all the disciples for the third time that he will be delivered over and condemned to death. (Mk 10:32ff)

B. Before that, Jesus told the rich man to sell his possessions and share his power in a radical way with others (Mk 10:17ff)

C. Before that, Jesus just put children symbolically at the center--those with no cultural or political power (Mk 10:13ff)

D. And before that, Jesus held a child in his arms and invited his disciples to be the servant of all (Mk 9:30ff)

IV. We all have areas of power and influence

A. Consider your circles of power and influence: work, family/parenting, finances, social power/influence with peers, all of us have the power of the words we choose to speak.

B. We all experience obstacles to being able to influence (whether we’re the president or an ordinary citizen.

C. But to seek to be the servant of all does not mean that we have the power to serve

everybody or even many. It does mean we are called to serve any one in our path or just beyond it, especially those who do not offer us much in the way of power, who do not enhance our status, or obviously contribute to our good.

V. Jesus used his power to serve others, often at the cost of his own social status

A. He validates the woman whose hemophilia caused her to be ostracized from the community and allows himself to be “contaminated” by her

B. He invites himself to the home of Zacchaeus, whose cooperation with one circle of power as a tax collector caused his exclusion from another. Jesus risks his social power by giving Zacchaeus the power to host him.

C. In the home of the powerful Pharisee Simon, Jesus risks his status by allowing a so-called sinful woman to be the center of attention, to pour out her blessing upon him in the form of perfume, at great cost to his reputation with the powerful.

D. The cross is his most extravagant expression of serving us at the cost of his own status.

VI. Following in the way of Jesus

A. Through communion we participate in the extravagant way Jesus served us at his own expense, and we joyfully receive his act of service.

B. But also in drinking his cup, we are accepting an invitation to be Jesus’ friend in this, to walk with him among the crowds in our daily life, wondering what power or influence do I have and who needs a share in this.

C. At a daily level, this looks like walking into a room or setting, noticing the people in our path, and pondering, ‘what power do I have here to advance the good for others,’ and who needs it?

D. It might be the power of my attention, the power I can offer by my friendship, the power of the resources I can share with them. And sometimes, this will be the cost of my own reputation, time and resources, my standing, status or security.

E. The reward of this way of life is the joy of fellowship with Jesus, of friendship with Jesus. And it is also the widening circle of friendship we create in His name.