

**Buxworth 8.15 only
18.10.15**

**ISAIAH 53:4-END
MARK 10:35-45**

BEING IMPORTANT

There are all kinds of ways in which we recognise important people. It may be by certificates or awards; it may be by having letters after your name; it may be the clothes they wear; it may be by having your name on some kind of board or in a big book that others will look at; it may be by having your own chauffeur or sitting on the top table or having people talk about you in speeches.

James and John want to be important. I'm sure they've got good motives in terms of supporting Jesus but they would also like to be absolutely sure that they get noticed, recognised, respected, honoured. So they ask for the top table seats. No wonder the other 10 are 'indignant!' 'Who do they think they are?' (probably because they wish they'd got in first).

Lesson 1- most of the really great people in the world don't *ask* for greatness and position, they are given it and then the world watches to see how well they do. 'this isn't for me to grant you' says Jesus. If God wants it, then it will come. We take what God gives in terms of our position and work with that the best we can

Lesson 2- James and John don't really have any idea what's in store if they go side by side with Jesus. 'Can you take my baptism?' asks Jesus. 'Yes, we can!' they cry. 'Alright then...so be it' says Jesus. This isn't just about a little initiation ceremony. Baptism represents drowning – the old life has to die. The song of Isaiah shows just that – Jesus was killed for the sake of his cause and his love. If you want to be great, if you want to be important, then it's going to cost your life. Do they really recognise that?

Lesson 3- being important, in Jesus' way of looking at things, is about being ready to serve people, not have them wait on you. It's not so much top table as kitchen staff.

The really great person, Jesus, shows that to become important meant more about the character than any achievements. He was despised and rejected for *not* being the person people expected and when he was dying on the cross, he didn't look very important and he didn't look very successful. No book, no awards, no top table, no grand entrance. Jesus instead has his name remembered in every generation, a crown of eternal life to offer, a place at the heavenly banquet, and a welcome for everyone who doesn't feel important now but matters immensely.

If we want places of honour, we have no more ability to get them than John and James had. But we do have the gift of God who offers a place with Jesus for everyone who honours him and tries to live with him, whatever the world thinks.