

Loving Means Submitting

Scripture Reading — Matthew 20:20-28

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. — Ephesians 5:21

In a sermon I asked, “What is the best way to teach children?” And the congregation answered enthusiastically, “By example!” As a pastor, I had often quoted Albert Schweitzer, saying, “Example is not the main thing in influencing others. It is the only thing.”

Jesus taught by example what he expects from us. Facing the cross, he illustrated submission and leadership at the last supper with his disciples when he washed their feet and said they should now serve one another (John 13:3-17).

The concept of submission is often misunderstood. It isn't a matter of allowing others to walk all over us. As Paul applies it to marriage in Ephesians 5, submitting means that both the husband and wife seek their partner's well-being. It's not a hierarchy! It's not about authority but about serving one another—and doing so “out of reverence for Christ,” who gave up his very life for us.

When the mother of James and John asked for places of authority for her sons in Jesus' kingdom, Jesus explained that lording it over others is not the way of the kingdom. He urged them to follow his example: “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Whom can you serve and build up, for Jesus' sake, today?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you call us to live in relationship with one another, but sometimes it's so difficult. Help us see how we can serve and build up one another out of love for you. In your name, Amen.

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Printed on August 24, 2019

