



## Grain

“Be attentive, be intelligent, be responsible, be loving, and, if necessary, change.”

## Field

30 They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; 31 for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again." 32 But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him. 33 Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" 34 But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. 35 He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." Mark 9:30-35

## Thoughts

Who was going to be the first to admit they didn't know what Jesus was talking about when he pointed to his future suffering and death? No one. Maybe the disciples' admission of what they didn't understand would have left them too vulnerable. Instead, they started arguing about which one was the greatest among them. Posturing is always a good shield. Jesus said that to be great they'd have to be servants of all. That's when I would have liked them to ask questions. Servants of all?

The word servant can trigger reactions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century America. We have a raised awareness of how one individual trying to dominate another into being like a servant is a form of emotional oppression. We know about the great damage caused by forced servitude of entire groups of people in our history and today via labor and sex trafficking within our own state. Servanthood that marks discipleship is about something else, but what? I think it has something to do with noticing others.

When we serve, we are positioned to offer our attention to people. Doctors notice their patients' health; wait staff, their customers; choir directors, their choir's voices, government officials, the needs of its citizens. We can feel it when others also notice us as human beings. Pay attention to God in others and don't get caught up in competing for status is part of the message in Mark's lesson.

Help in time of disaster and when other needs arise. We fumble as the disciples did, afraid to be vulnerable with what we don't know and sometimes too focused on our own success, to the exclusion of serving others. Jesus brings us back again, offering a path that untangles us from any hardness of heart related to how we engage with one another and whom we notice in our advocacy. Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy