

Home Church Study Guide—March 28, 2010
Events Leading to the Cross (Luke 22, 23)

In every action of Jesus in all of His life, He is demonstrating true power and might. He came to serve, and give His life as a ransom for many—therein is true power. Observe carefully, drink deeply. Even as Jesus willingly walks into death, He shows us how to fully live.

Jesus introduces a new kind of leadership. We now overuse or even misuse the term—servant leadership. In God's kingdom, where things have been made right, it is the servant who leads. The Gentiles use power to lord over others, but disciples of Jesus will clearly reign in a kingdom given to them, but their reign will be manifested through service, not coercive power. Gentile leaders insist on being recognized as men of benevolence—they must be recognized and acknowledged as leaders. But in the kingdom, it is the table waiter who truly embodies greatness. It is difficult for us to be impacted by this discussion as were the disciples. They were shocked by Jesus' words. In that culture, the table waiter was the lowest of all, even lower than a bond slave. A bond slave had no choice but to serve—a table waiter served by choice. This was below the dignity of humanity. Not so, Jesus articulated, in fact, the one who chooses to serve embodies the greatness of Jesus Himself.

How do we bow to such lowly service? Again, Jesus points out that those who humble themselves and serve will someday be served at the heavenly banquet table. The story does not end with lowly service but exalted glory. As Jesus has received a kingdom, so shall His faithful followers. But the way to greatness is not the way of the world, but a road to the cross of self-death and committed service.

Jesus did not open His mouth against His accusers. Herod and his soldiers then began to make fun of Jesus and mock Him. Jesus' self-control is amazing. He willingly accepted the scorn and the shame. We have to be impressed with Jesus' integrity and strength. Most evident is his unwavering faith in God. He allowed every possible abuse to be inflicted on Him, and though He had the power to strike back, He did not. Peter tells us this is the example he left for us (1 Peter 1:21)—to suffer and not seek vindication. How could He do this? Because He trusted in His Father to do that which needed to be done. Only in a world where God is active and involved would Jesus' behavior make any sense. We seek to defend ourselves and defend our rights likely because we do not think God will do so. Jesus left us an example of incredible faith. If God would allow His Son to die so that we might have life, should we not be willing to do the same?

The Lord walked to the cross in tremendous pain, yet full of joy. He would suffer deep and agonizing pain, but would never lose sight of a loving Father using His faithful Son to redeem the world. He would cry in agony, "Why have you forsaken Me?" and yet he commended His spirit to His Father's care. An unwavering faith leads to our certain salvation! Hallelujah!

“So What” for Home Church discussion:

1. We often talk about the willingness of Jesus to die. What about his willingness to serve even when he was mocked, beaten, and shamed? What can we do to embody this attitude and spirit?
2. How do you understand greatness? Do we show it through service? How might we better serve those in our lives?
3. How does the story of the cross influence the way you live your daily life?