

Episode 4: Calm Before

This episode is especially heartbreaking as everyone mourns the loss of Ramah. Thomas obviously is taking it the hardest, but everyone feels regret and is struggling to comfort Thomas in his grief. James is questioning why Jesus didn't heal her or bring her back from the dead like Jairus' daughter. Peter points out a piece of wisdom from the book of Isaiah. Read the passage below.

- **Isaiah 55:8-9 (ESV)** – *8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

Does this verse comfort you in the unanswered questions you have? Does it make sense to you? Have you considered this before? Reflect on the verse below.

The disciples are taking Ramah's body back to her hometown, to her grieving father, Kafni. When they meet up with Kafni, he is not just grieving but is mad and bitter. He expresses his anger towards Thomas and Jesus. He curses Jesus and says he is going to tell everyone he is a liar and murderer.

Oftentimes when someone dies, we don't know what to say. Peter was struggling with how to be "a rock" during this very difficult and sad time. Jesus tells him, he doesn't need to say anything, he just needs to be there for Thomas. Jesus also said that because Peter had experienced loss himself, he could understand what Thomas was going through and be there for him in his grief. Peter knew there were no words that would help Thomas. He had to just be there for him. As you have gone through loss in your life, what has helped you through it? Can you help others through their loss?

A few months pass and we see Jesus performing more miracles, healing, casting out demons and preaching. He is continuing his ministry and word continues to spread. Gaius has been promoted to Praetor since Quintus was arrested for Ramah's murder. Gaius becomes aware of the growing hostility toward Jesus coming from Jerusalem. Concerned, he calls for Matthew so he can warn Jesus. When the Roman soldiers come for Matthew, Peter decides to go with him. Gaius warns that Jesus is safe in Capernaum, but not in Jerusalem, where the Pharisees are looking for a reason to arrest, harm or even kill him.

As they are talking, Peter brings up the servant boy and asks Gaius if he is still sick. Unfortunately, he is still sick. Gaius reveals he believes in Jesus and knows that he can heal his son, but he does not feel worthy. Recognizing the faith in his response, Matthew and Peter take Gaius to Jesus so his son can be healed.

Gaius asked Jesus for his servant boy to be healed. Jesus replies with a willingness to do so right away. But it is the centurion's response that surprised Jesus. Underline the centurion's response below.

- **Matthew 8:5-8 (ESV)** - ⁵ When he had entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, appealing to him, ⁶ "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly," ⁷ And he said to him, "I will come and heal him." ⁸ But the centurion replied, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed."

The rest of the story continues in the following passage. Read through the verses and underline Jesus' words to the centurion below. (Note this is also mentioned in Luke 7:1-10).

- **Matthew 8:9-13 (ESV)** - ⁹ For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." ¹⁰ When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, "Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. ¹¹ I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, ¹² while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." ¹³ And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed at that very moment.

Jesus didn't even come into contact with the servant. He didn't go to the house of Gaius and lay his hands on the boy. No, he commanded him to be healed, and it happened. And what was the source of the healing? It was faith. Jesus can do miracles in our lives even today when he is not physically in the situation. He just asks for our belief. He wants our prayers and faith so miracles can happen. Do you have a situation that needs a miracle? Write a prayer below, declaring your belief in Jesus and asking for your request.

Jesus is preparing for their next journey to go to Jerusalem. He tells all the disciples to get ready for another journey. James and John see the timing as an opportunity to ask for something they have been wanting, as prompted by their mother, to be seated at the right and left hand of God. In the show it is James and John who ask for this elevated authority. Circle in the passage below who asked in scripture.

- **Matthew 20:20-24 (ESV)** - ²⁰ Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked for something. ²¹ And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom," ²² Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" They said to him, "We are able." ²³ He said to them, "You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left it is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." ²⁴ And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers.

Jesus was not happy with the request. He feels the disciples are acting like gentiles and Romans wanting authority, when that is not what he has been preaching. In the passage below circle each form of the word serve.

- **Matthew 20:25-28 (ESV)** - ²⁵ But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ²⁶ It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, ²⁸ even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Jesus is calling us to serve others. He says the word over and over in this passage, as servant, slave, served, serve. Jesus is not calling us to power and authority. He is calling us to servanthood. He wants us to serve others, help them, love them and encourage them. We are not to elevate ourselves like James and John wanted, we are to elevate others by serving them.

Who do you currently serve? _____

What are your giftings and resources that can be used to serve others? _____

Do you feel God calling you to serve any particular group of people? Who is it? _____

Who can you bring alongside you to help serve others? _____

Think about your responses above. What is one thing you can do this week to better serve others? Use the space below for your response. Then write a short prayer asking God for guidance, and the right door to open for you.