

Mark 10:42

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

Analysis

But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them (οἶδατε ὅτι οἱ δοκοῦντες ἄρχειν τῶν ἐθνῶν κατακυριεύουσιν αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ μεγάλοι αὐτῶν κατεξουσιάζουσιν αὐτῶν, oidate hoti hoi dokountes archein tōn ethnōn katakyrieuousin autōn kai hoi megaloi autōn katexousiazousin autōn). Jesus contrasts two models of leadership—worldly domination versus kingdom servanthood.

The phrase "exercise lordship" (κατακυριεύουσιν, katakyrieuousin) intensifies the verb κυριεύω (to lord over)—it means "to domineer, rule tyrannically, subjugate." The prefix κατα- adds the sense of "down upon"—exercising power over subordinates from above. Similarly, "exercise authority" (κατεξουσιάζουσιν, katexousiazousin) means "to wield authority oppressively." Jesus describes Gentile rulers' pattern: hierarchical authority structures where those at the top dominate those below.

Jesus doesn't condemn all authority or leadership, but the self-serving, domineering style characteristic of pagan rulers—those who use positions for personal benefit, demand submission, and assert superiority. This describes Roman

imperial governance, Herodian dynasty politics, and typical ancient Near Eastern kingship.

Historical Context

First-century disciples lived under Roman occupation, experiencing firsthand the oppressive exercise of imperial authority. Roman governors, client kings like the Herods, and local rulers often used positions for personal enrichment and power consolidation. The Pax Romana ('Roman peace') was maintained through military might, crucifixion of rebels, and harsh taxation. Jewish people chafed under Gentile domination, longing for messianic liberation. Jesus' statement that His kingdom operates differently than Gentile rulers would have surprised disciples expecting a political-military messiah who would exercise power like earthly kings.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' description of Gentile leadership patterns expose worldly models of authority as fundamentally self-serving rather than serving others?
2. What contemporary examples of 'lording over' and 'exercising authority' exist in churches, businesses, or families that contradict Jesus' servant-leadership model?
3. How do you use whatever authority you possess—to serve those under your care or to advance your own interests and preferences?

Interlinear Text

ὁ	δὲ	Ἰησοῦς	προσκαλεσάμενος	αὐτῶν	λέγει
G3588	But	Jesus	called	over them	to him and saith
	G1161	G2424	G4341	G846	G3004
αὐτῶν	Οἶδατε	ὅτι	οἱ	δοκοῦντες	ἄρχειν τῶν
over them	Ye know	that	G3588	they which are accounted	to rule
G846	G1492	G3754		G1380	G757
ἐθνῶν	κατακυριεύουσιν	αὐτῶν	καὶ	οἱ	μεγάλοι
over the Gentiles	exercise lordship	over them	and	G3588	great ones
G1484	G2634	G846	G2532		G3173
αὐτῶν	κατεξουσιάζουσιν	αὐτῶν			
over them	exercise authority	over them			
G846	G2715	G846			

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 5:3 (References Lord): Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

Luke 22:25 (References Lord): And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.