

Mark 10:35-45 DO FOR US WHATEVER WE ASK!

PRELIMS. We continue our studies of a cursory look through Mark. Christ is on His way to be crucified! He has for the **third time** just announced His impending death! Yes, the **third time!!** Not even the fact of His mentioned the **resurrection** does anything to **excite** them! They do not even take up the subject.

THE QUESTION

James and John (and their mother according to Mat 20:20), ask Jesus “*we want You to do for us whatever we ask of You*” [35]! Are we reading correctly? Does **nothing sink in** to the minds and hearts of the disciples of Jesus? They had just been **rebuked** for their lack of **humility** after seeking **exaltation** by discussing ‘Who among them was the **greatest?**’ [9:34]. They had been told they must receive the kingdom “*like a child*” [15]. They had just been told that “*many that are first will be last, and last first*” [31]! And **yet** they are **still concerned** about getting what **we want!** This is **serious!**

When Xns believe that Xnity is about getting what **we want**, one needs to **question** their **understanding** of Xnity! This passage shows us the **tendency** among God’s people to think like this! It is **natural**, even with a renewed heart, to be **self-centered**. Justification does not eradicate all the evil within our hearts/souls! Sanctification does that!

So this passage shows us the need for Xns to be constantly **corrected** for Xnity is actually about **correction!!** X’s words, **if** they were not **informative**, were almost **always corrective**. X’s teaching was about the correct way to **think** and **live!** The epistles are **all about correction** regarding Xn living and church life! You know, the problem with the world today, is **not** the world - it is the Church, it is the Xns. Xns are not the salt and light they are meant to be! God has appointed the people of God to be the leaven that leavens the whole lump! [Gal 5:9] Jesus and Paul taught about the working of leaven!

Some people believe that if you have **enough faith**, and just ask in the Name of Christ, God will do **anything** for you! They even say that God has **bound** Himself to do it! They quote the Bible

“whatever you ask of the Father in my name, He will give it to you”!
[John 16:23] Well, the fact is, it is **not true** that God will give us **anything** we ask! Prayer is **not a blank chequebook** for us to ask for anything **we want!** Prayer is a **means** of our obtaining what **God** wants for us - **after we** have come to want what **He wants!** Our desires must **coincide** and **merge** with His Divine will and purpose! True prayer is **asking** God for **‘light’** regarding what is ‘agreeable’ to His will! *“Not My will but **Thine** be done”!* Prayer is a **means** of our gaining God’s will through **fellowship** with Him!

Of course Jesus, in hearing their request did **not** commit Himself **immediately**. He did not say ‘Yes, my children what would you like Me to give you? ‘Hendriksen says ‘he did **not** make **blind** promises’ - He wanted to know **exactly** what the request was before He would make a promise! It is only people like **King Herod** that makes rash promises in a drunken moment which they later regret!

Jesus challenged them to spell out exactly what they wanted. *“What do you want Me to do for you?”*[36] ‘I might - or **might not** be able to help! You see, even Jesus Christ does not have **full authority** over all things. He Himself is **subject** to the **Father’s** will! There **are** some things, says Jesus, *“that are **not Mine** to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared **by My Father**”*[Mat 20:23] So even the Son of God submitted His wishes for the Father’s **approval!**

CHRIST’S ANSWER to JAMES & JOHN

If you were promised to get anything you wanted - what would you ask for? If you had Solomon’s dream, what would you ask for? Well, it seems that the **whole family** of James/John were **united** in their one request. It was actually a **wonderful** request!! Could anyone ask for anything **more spiritual** and **God honouring** than to have the highest place in heaven among humans? They did not want anything **material** or **secular** or **sensual**, like houses/yachts/holidays, fun!

But the Bible teaches this: You can desire **good** things, even the **best** things, for **wrong reasons!** While their request was not material or secular, (like Solomon’s request) it seems it was full of **pride** and

personal glory! They professed interest in X's honour, "*in Your glory*"[37], but **they** were to be there **sharing** that **glory** - they wanted to be **'in there' with Him!** There was **no humbling** of themselves and **giving X all** the glory! There was no "*Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to Your name give glory*" [Psa 115:1]

There **was** great **pride** in their request because they wanted **position!** That is what Satan tempted X with when showing Him all the kingdoms of the world **and their glory!** 'Just bow down to me'! The glory of position! It is **because** fallen humanity **loves glory**, that Satan tempts us so much in this area! The world is full of **opportunities** to gain the praises of men. In **sport, politics, business, show-business!** The **celebrity cult** is powerful!

And all this **in spite** of the knowledge that high positions/**popularity** requires great **discipline!** To be able to handle success and not to fall shipwreck in the aftermath of success requires strong principles. How many celebrities (a great many) have **ruined** their own lives because of their **inability** to handle and cope with success?

James/John had this spirit of seeking glory from men, with the slight difference of desiring the praise of **regenerated men**, of **Xn** men, of the Church. Many try and impress their **subculture elite** - even the **ecclesiastical elite** of our subculture. Many Xns want to impress those they think highly of **in the Church!** If certain people are around that we admire, we want to impress them!

But apart from that, they were **entirely ignorant** of the **conditions** for **position!** No one is just 'placed' in a high position! Yes, of course there are the **Gentiles** who "*lord it over...and...exercise authority over*"[42] others and operate on different standards "*But it shall not be so among you*"[43] 'Not so in My Kingdom', says Jesus!

What James/John did not appreciate is that **position** in X's kingdom has a **particular** path! There is a **particular** road that **must** be travelled on before such eminent positions are granted! Jesus used an OT cliché which they would know well, 'Drinking the cup' and 'Being baptized' to convey what that road really meant "*Are you*

able to **drink the cup** that I drink, or to be **baptised** with the baptism with which I am baptised?”[38] ‘Yes, James and John, that position is reserved for those who drink the cup that **goes along with it!** I do **not know who** the people are for whom it is reserved - maybe it **IS reserved** for you two! **ARE YOU** prepared to drink the cup?’ No one can occupy these two places but those who have **fulfilled the conditions** and **carried the responsibilities!** In Christ’s kingdom there is no such thing as **honour** without **responsibilities!!**

It is as if Jesus is saying ‘Gentlemen, the road to these two seats is the road of **suffering!** Even suffering **unto death!** We might call it **voluntary suffering** - because **not all** Xns **choose** this path. Not every Xn is prepared to be a **servant** - most prefer “*to be served*” rather than “*to serve*”[45] Most prefer to be first in this world rather than last! Even although they have been **told** ‘The 1st **will be last!**’

THE GREAT EXAMPLE

In [v39] they said “*We are able*” to drink from that cup -but that was before it was **explained** to them! We **don’t know** if James/John continued to ask Him for that place which required such **sacrifice!** **APP** What would **YOU** have said?

The beautiful thing is that James **was killed** “*with the sword*”[Acts 12:2] and John **was imprisoned** for **Jesus sake!** Whatever they felt then, when the test came, **they did willingly suffer** for His sake!

But Jesus **inspired** them - and us - by what He said next! He told them about the **Prime** and **Great Example** - Son of Man! Himself!

He told them that He came “*to serve*” - to serve **everybody** - Jew and Gentile! But He came to do more than just serve! He came “*to give His life as a ransom for many*”[45] Jesus **offered Himself** a **sacrifice** to God. Try and imagine that: Jesus **offering Himself!**

The power of example! The reason the disciples were like **wimps** before the crucifixion, and **so brave** after the crucifixion, is because they had the **example** of Jesus before their very eyes! ‘**Action** speaker **louder** than words’ is a Biblical Truth! Your actions too!