



SUNDAY CLASS

9/20/09

Matthew 20:20-28 (New International Version)

A Mother's Request

²⁰Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him.²¹"What is it you want?" he asked. She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom."²²"You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" "We can," they answered.²³Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father."²⁴When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers.²⁵Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.²⁶Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,²⁷ and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—²⁸just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Matthew 20:20 (Holman Christian Standard Bible)

Suffering and Service

²⁰ Then the mother of Zebedee's sons approached Him with her sons. She knelt down to ask Him for something.

Matthew 20:20 (New International Version)

A Mother's Request

²⁰Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him.

Mark 10:35-45 (New International Version)

The Request of James and John

³⁵Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask."³⁶"What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.³⁷They

replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory."³⁸ "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"³⁹ "We can," they answered. Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with,⁴⁰ but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared."⁴¹ When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John.⁴² Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.⁴³ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

[Luke 22:24-27 \(New International Version\)](#)

²⁴Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest
²⁵Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors."²⁶ But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.²⁷ For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

[Matthew 4:21 \(New International Version\)](#)

²¹Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them,

[Matthew 8:2 \(New International Version\)](#)

²A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

[Matthew 20:21 \(New International Version\)](#)

²¹**"What is it you want?" he asked. She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom."**

[Matthew 16:28 \(New International Version\)](#)

²⁸I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

Matthew 19:28 (New International Version)

²⁸Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Matthew 25:31 (New International Version)

The Sheep and the Goats

³¹"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.

Matthew 25:34 (New International Version)

³⁴"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.

Luke 23:42 (New International Version)

⁴²Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Matthew 20:22 (New International Version)

²²"**You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" "We can," they answered.**

Isaiah 51:22 (New International Version)

²² This is what your Sovereign LORD says, your God, who defends his people: "See, I have taken out of your hand the cup that made you stagger; from that cup, the goblet of my wrath, you will never drink again.

Jeremiah 49:12 (New International Version)

¹² This is what the LORD says: "If those who do not deserve to drink the cup must drink it, why should you go unpunished? You will not go unpunished, but must drink it.

Mark 14:36 (New International Version)

³⁶"Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

Matthew 20:23-25 (New International Version)

²³Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father."

²⁴When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers.²⁵Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them."

Acts 12:2 (New International Version)

²He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword.

Revelation 1:9 (New International Version)

One like a Son of Man

⁹I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

Matthew 20:26-27 (New International Version)

²⁶Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,²⁷ and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—

Matthew 23:11 (New International Version)

¹¹The greatest among you will be your servant.

Mark 9:35 (New International Version)

³⁵Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."

Matthew 20:28 (New International Version)

²⁸just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Luke 22:27 (New International Version)

²⁷For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

John 13:13-15 (New International Version)

¹³"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am.¹⁴Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.¹⁵I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

2 Corinthians 8:9 (New International Version)

⁹For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

Philippians 2:7 (New International Version)

⁷but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

Matthew 26:28 (New International Version)

²⁸This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

1 Timothy 2:6 (New International Version)

⁶who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time.

Titus 2:14 (New International Version)

¹⁴who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

Hebrews 9:28 (New International Version)

²⁸so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Ambition Corrected

"Here, is first, the request of the two disciples to Christ, and the rectifying of the mistake upon which that was grounded, Matthew 20:20-23. The sons of Zebedee were James and John, two of the first three of Christ's disciples; Peter and they were his favorites; John was the disciple whom Jesus loved; yet none were so often reproved as they; whom Christ loves best he reproves most, Revelation 3:19."

MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

Revelation 3:19 (New International Version)

¹⁹Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.

"Here is the ambitious address they made to Christ--that they might sit, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left, in his kingdom, Matthew 20:20-21. It was a great degree of faith, that they were confident of his kingdom, though now he appeared in meekness; but a great degree of ignorance, that they still expected a temporal kingdom, with worldly pomp and power, when Christ had so often told them of sufferings and self-denial. In this they expected to be grandees.

They ask not for employment in this kingdom, but for honor only; and no place would serve them in this imaginary kingdom, but the highest, next to Christ, and above every body else. It is probable that the last word in Christ's foregoing discourse gave occasion to this request, that the third day he should rise again. They concluded that his resurrection would be his entrance upon his kingdom, and therefore were resolved to put in request for the best place; nor would they lose it for want of speaking early."

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

*****Note. What Christ said to comfort them, they thus abused, and were puffed up with. Some cannot bear comforts, but they turn them to a wrong purpose; as sweets in a foul stomach produce bile.**

There was policy in the management of this address, that they put their mother on to present it, that it might be looked upon as her request, and not theirs. Though proud people think well of themselves, they would not be thought to do so, and therefore affect nothing more than a show of humility (Colossians 2:18), and others must be put on to court that honor for them, which they are ashamed to court for themselves. The mother of James and

John was Salome, as appears by comparing Matthew 27:61, Mark 15:40. Some think she was daughter of Cleophas or Alpheus, and sister or cousin to Mary the mother of our Lord. She was one of those women that attended Christ, and ministered to him; and they thought she had such an interest in him, that he could deny her nothing, and therefore they made her their advocate. It was their mother's weakness thus to become that tool of their ambition, which she should have given a check to. Those that are wise and good, would not be seen in an ill-favored thing. In gracious requests, we should learn this wisdom, to desire the prayers of those that have an interest at the throne of grace; we should beg of our praying friends to pray for us, and reckon it a real kindness.

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

Colossians 2:18 (New International Version)

¹⁸*Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.*

"It was likewise policy to ask first for a general grant, that he would do a certain thing for them, not in faith, but in presumption, upon that general promise; Ask, and it shall be given you; in which is implied this qualification of our request, that it be according to the revealed will of God, otherwise we ask and have not, if we ask to consume it upon our lusts, James 4:3.

James 4:3 (New International Version)

³*When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.*

There was pride at the bottom of it, a proud conceit of their own merit, a proud contempt of their brethren, and a proud desire of honor and preferment; pride is a sin that most easily besets us, and which it is hard to get clear of. It is a holy ambition to strive to excel others in grace and holiness; but it is a sinful ambition to covet to exceed others in pomp and grandeur. Seek thou great things for thyself, when thou hast just now heard of thy Master's being mocked, and scourged, and crucified? For shame! Seek them not, Jeremiah 45:5.

Jeremiah 45:5 (New International Version)

⁵ *Should you then seek great things for yourself? Seek them not. For I will bring disaster on all people, declares the LORD, but wherever you go I will let you escape with your life.' "*

Christ's answer to this address (Matthew 20:22-23), directed not to the mother, but to the sons that set her on. Though others be our mouth in prayer, the answer will be given to us

according as we stand effected. Christ's answer is very mild; they were overtaken in the fault of ambition, but Christ restored them with the spirit of meekness.

Now this is a good reason why we should not strive for precedence, because the cross is our banner, and our Master's death is our life. It is a good reason why we should study to do good, and, in consideration of the love of Christ in dying for us, not hesitate to lay down our lives for the brethren, 1 John 3:16. Ministers should be more forward than others to serve and suffer for the good of souls, as blessed Paul was, Acts 20:24, Philippians 2:17. The nearer we are all concerned in, and the more we are advantaged by, the humility and humiliation of Christ, the more ready and careful we should be to imitate it.

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

1 John 3:16 (New International Version)

¹⁶*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.*

Acts 20:24 (New International Version)

²⁴*However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.*

Philippians 2:17 (New International Version)

¹⁷*But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you.*