

Mark 10:32-41 –Jesus Rejects a bad prayer

Rienecker, TSK, Handfuls, Gill, GreekLexicon, Robertson, Poole, Family, PNT, JFB, Geneva, Gaebelein, Hanna, Henry, Barnes, Trapp,

Beloved in Jesus Christ: The rich young ruler who came to Jesus did not have faith in him and could not have eternal life. **He showed he did not have eternal life by his inordinate love of money.** So he had no spiritual riches in this life and the next.

Jesus' disciples, hearing that, then asked Jesus what they would get, having already given up everything - their land, employment, family, and comforts of this life - to follow him. **(This showed they had faith in him and had eternal life. This is what caused them to give up things in this life.)** Jesus told them of earthly and heavenly rewards (赏赏) . Jesus told them that they would have the honor of being judges of Israel.

But that was not the end of that story. **After learning that the disciples would judge the twelve tribes (支派) of Israel, James and his brother John took it one step further.** They were not content with those great rewards Christ promised. They **wanted the best rewards.** So they directly asked Jesus (which was a prayer) for the best rewards. This is what we will examine today. (We will not focus on Verses 32-34, because we have referenced those verses already.)

Our headings are:

The Request by the Brothers

The Reprimand (斥责) by the Lord

The Response by the Others

Our goals are: That **you will be moved to ask God for great things that you can use to expand his kingdom,** and **that you will become more willing to endure persecution (逼迫) on his behalf,** knowing what Christ has done for you.

The Request by the Brothers

35 Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, **we want You to do for us whatever we ask.**" 36 And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?" 37 They said to Him, "**Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory.**"

1. Because of their own positions of being close to the Lord, and being two of his earliest disciples, John and James thought that they could ask for better privileges (特权) in Christ's kingdom.

They actually came with their mother, according to Matthew 20:20, to ask Jesus for these favors.

2. But note the preposterous (反常的, 荒谬的) nature of the request: That Jesus would promise to give them their request before they mentioned what the request was.

But the Lord, in true wisdom, did not promise to give them whatever they asked for. He simply asked them to state their request.

3. James and John then asked the Lord for them to rule on his right hand side and his left hand side in his coming kingdom.

Remember, Jesus had just told them that **they would rule in his kingdom,** so they wanted to **get into good positions early.** And even though Jesus had just told them that **he was going up to Jerusalem to die. They simply did not believe he was going to literally die.** John and James **saw Christ's kingdom as earthly...not heavenly.** So they ignored Jesus' statement about his coming death. They were dreaming of worldly glory and grandeur (伟大) , like Israel's days 1000 years before under King Solomon. **So their theology was bad. And bad theology (神学) influenced their foolish requests.**

4. But don't get too upset with James and John for their selfishness; They had real faith in the Lord and in his words.

According to Matthew, they came worshipping, bowing down to Jesus, knowing he was really God. They knew who he was.

Matthew 20:20 Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him.

They believed that Christ was the true King and that he would really come in power and glory.

They didn't know when!

2Timothy 2:12 If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.

5. Lessons:

a. Bad theology always leads to bad prayers. You must therefore learn to be a good student of the Word of God.

b. Be ready to condemn bad theology (not your brothers and sisters), so that those misled will get their doctrine (教义) straight and pray better. Show them **how bad theology hinders (拦阻) prayers.** Bad prayers mean you don't get the tools you need to do the things God has called you to do. Henry: "**It is folly to pre scribe to God,** and wisdom to sub scribe."

c. Don't be afraid to ask God for big things. He is rich. He is willing to give you everything you are able to manage: A wife, a house, a job, a new career, knowledge...things you need in order to do the work he has called you to do. Sometimes people don't get big things because they don't ask.

d. But ask for good things. God is too good a God to give a baby a steak. If you are a woman, don't pray to be an elder. Pray that God might call your husband to serve as an elder and pray that he might get the desire to prepare for that task.

The Reprimand by the Lord

38 But Jesus said to them, "**You do not know what you ask.** Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism (洗礼) that I am baptized with?"

1. Jesus told James and John that they did not realize what they were asking.

This was a gentle, fatherly rebuke for their selfishness. Jesus saw their faith, **so he was gentle in their sin.**

2. Then Jesus challenged them to know what they must continue to do in this life: be able to drink from his cup, and be baptized with his baptism, in order to get the greatest reward after death.

3. What did Jesus mean when he asked them about their ability to drink of his cup and be baptized with his baptism?

a. "Drink the cup that I drink" is a Hebrew expression meaning that has two common meanings. **It can be a cup of pleasure.** We say something similar today. We might say: "His cup overflows with joy."

Psalms 23:5 You prepare a table before me...anoint膏抹 my head with oil; My cup runs over满溢.

It can be a cup of punishment. If one were about to die, or waiting to die, he was given a cup (of wine) to drink. Here Jesus was speaking of this cup – one of suffering. This was similar to Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Matthew 26:42 - Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done."

So when Jesus asked James and John if they were able to drink the cup he drank, he was asking them if they were able to take similar suffering as he. What was Christ's suffering like? Peter

described Jesus' suffering.

1Peter 2: 21 For to this you were called, because **Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example**, that you should follow His steps: 22 "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; 23 who, **when He was reviled (被辱骂) , did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten**, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously (公义地) ; 24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—**by whose stripes (鞭伤) you were healed.**
Philippians 2:8 - And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and **became obedient to the point of death**, even the death of the cross.

b. Be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with...

"Baptism" symbolizes our unity with Christ.

Romans 6:3 Or do you not know that as many of us as **were baptized into Christ** Jesus were baptized into His death?

So when Jesus asked James and John if they would be able to be baptized with the baptism with which he was baptized, Jesus was really asking James and John if they would be able to go through the same kind of suffering as he.

Luke 12:50 "But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished!

So these 2 things mean the same thing: James and John need to be ready to suffer before receiving their reward – whatever God determined their reward to be.

4. Lessons:

a. A literal interpretation of the all texts will get you in trouble. Baptism doesn't literally mean baptism with water. Baptism simply means to be united with or be similar with.

b. Note the gentleness of the Shepherd to the foolish – look how much love he showed to his not so smart sheep.

c. Suffering is normal for the Christian. Be prepared for it. The Devil would not leave you alone if you are serving the Lord. If you love Jesus you must expect you will have some persecution. But don't expect all people will suffer at the same level.

The Response of the others

39 They said to Him, "We are able." So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized;

1. Both men said they would be ready to suffer for Christ, and they were right.

2. Christ realized that they were speaking truth and history confirmed that they were.

James was one of the first martyrs殉道者 of the church, being sawn in two by Herod who wanted to please the Pharisees 法利赛人 and the Jews who hated Jesus. John was forced into exile (放逐) – which in and of itself can be more painful than being cut through. It is also believe that he was put into hot oil and then rescued.

Acts 12:2 Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

40 "but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give,
but it is for those for whom it is prepared."

3. Yet Jesus refused to give James and John confirmation about their request to sit at his right and left side in his kingdom.

Why? God made no specific promises...as that would act contrary to what was good for them. If man knew that he would have a certain confirmed position in the future, he would tend to be careless of his duties now. So it is the grace of God that Jesus refused to tell them.

41 And when the ten heard it, they **began to be greatly displeased** with James and John.

4. James and John's selfish request for the highest prominence (卓越) in the kingdom caused the others to become very angry with them.

They grumbled against James and John. The unity of the brothers was threatened. It is good and pleasant when brothers dwell together in unity.
And shouldn't they have put others above themselves.

5. Lessons:

a. Don't be distracted by rewards; focus on duty. Rewards will come. Rewards are sure. Rewards will never be destroyed.

b. Let humility (谦卑) guide your path. Promote others who are better than you without becoming guilty of showing false humility.

Philippians 2:3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

Conclusion:

What a request James and John made! Why would they make such a foolish request? **First, they were ignorant.** They were expecting an earthy kingdom where they hoped they would be great judges. Their bad theology left them ignorant. Second, **they thought of themselves as better than they really were** and they therefore deserved (配得) a place of prominence. So they made a foolish prayer.

So brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Before you make pray, know for what you may properly ask! Don't be ignorant. Learn what things are good. Ask for good things for yourself. Ask for things you need to do the work God has called you to do.

2. Put others above yourself-ahead of yourself. The work of Christ's kingdom is much bigger than you!

3 Be prepared to join Christ in his "cup" and in his "baptism." Join Christ in his suffering. To do that, understand what Christ did for you – how he saved you, how he

obeyed for you, and how Jesus died for you. Be prepared to face hardships and persecution. This is why there are 4 Gospels in the Bible – 4 times you learn what Jesus had done for you. God knows how much you need to see Christ's love...And 4 times you learn how you must be willing to suffer for the Lord. **How much are you willing to suffer?**

Finally, a word to those who are not Christians! James and John believed in the resurrection复活 after they died. They knew of the reality of heaven and hell. They knew of Christ's work (his obedience and death) for all who believed. **Do you now realize that your death is not the end?** Do **you** realize today that there is life after death and that **only Christ's death in your place will guarantee you a good life after death?** **Do you want this life?** If you do, ask! God will give you new life now and a guarantee of life eternal afterward.