Pentecost 22 Mark 10:35-45
October 24, 2021 528-471-303/457-458

When Will I Get This Through MY Head?!
I. The purpose of my life.
II. The purpose of Jesus' life.

Dear Christian friends,

Does all this sound familiar? Just four weeks ago we had a **similar situation**. Jesus had caught the disciples arguing over who was ***"the greatest"*** among them. Now we have this.

This had to be frustrating for Jesus. How could the disciples BE SO DENSE?! Here they were heading to Jerusalem. **Time and again** Jesus had taken them aside and explained in UNMISTAKABLE WORDS that He was going there to **suffer and die** to take away the sin of the world. And ONCE AGAIN the disciples were arguing over who was the ***"most important!"*** WHEN would they get this through their **thick heads**?!

Before we JUMP ALL OVER the **disciples** we should realize that we too can have PRETTY THICK heads. As we study these verses we need to ask ourselves, "WHEN will I get this through MY head?" The **"this"** is 1)the purpose of my life and 2)the **purpose** of Jesus' life.

I. The purpose of my life.

Notice that Jesus DIDN'T JUMP all over James and John. The other disciples ***"were angry"*** with them but NOT Jesus! Jesus responded with LOVING PATIENCE. James and John were WAY OFF BASE and Jesus had to tell them so. But Jesus didn't RIDICULE them or GIVE UP on them. Theirs was a **faith** COUPLED WITH IGNORANCE. **In faith** they looked to Jesus as the **mighty Messiah**. **In faith** they trusted that Jesus could do this for them. It was their ignorance that MADE THE MESS. **Some people** foolishly don't use the PRIVILEGE of **prayer**. **Others** just as foolishly ABUSE it. James and John wanted a SIGNED BLANK CHECK from Jesus. ***"Teacher, we wish that You would do for us WHATEVER we ask."***

Then they spelled out **just what** they wanted. ***"Promise that we may sit, one at Your right and one at Your left, in Your glory."*** ANY PLACE in heaven is better than NO place **at all**. But simply being grateful for **being in** heaven was now replaced with WHERE do I **get to sit** heaven. James and John weren't content to JUST SHARE in **God's glory**. They wanted some **glory** FOR THEMSELVES. **They wanted** to be publicly acknowledged as being MORE IMPORTANT than the others.

"You do not know what you are asking," Jesus told them. HOW OFTEN doesn't God have to answer our prayers with that! We may think **our request** is INNOCENT ENOUGH, yet it turns out we are praying foolishly. We PROPERLY GO to God for help but **we ask** for the WRONG THINGS.

James and John wanted recognition and **glory**. Jesus offered them SUFFERING and a **cross**. ***"Can you drink the cup that I am going to drink or be baptized with the baptism that I am going to be baptized with?" "We can,"*** they confidently answered – and THEY WOULD! ***"You will drink the cup that I am going to drink and be baptized with the baptism that I am going to be baptized with,"*** Jesus assured them. James would be the FIRST apostle **martyred**. John would suffer exile, beatings, etc. ***"But to sit at My right or at My left is not for Me to give,"*** Jesus continued. ***"These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared."***

Following Jesus is the **promise** of ETERNAL LIFE in heaven. It's not the guarantee of an EASY LIFE here on earth. And life – MY/YOUR life – doesn't center on me/you. The purpose of **our lives** is to GLORIFY and SERVE GOD – not draw attention to ourselves. The purpose of **our lives** is NOT to be

appreciated and **applauded** but to be helpful WHETHER we're **appreciated or not**. WHEN will I get this through MY head?!

The other disciples were NO BETTER. They became angry with the two brothers. "The NERVE of those guys to think they deserve those places! Who do they **think they are**?!" It's FUNNY how **people can be**. We can be angry with a SIN IN OTHER people while we allow ourselves to **indulge** in that SAME sin. We complain about **other people** NOT HELPING but then we make all kinds of excuses for our **own laziness**.

So ONCE AGAIN Jesus has to explain greatness in His kingdom – that greatness is found in HUMBLY SERVING other people. That's the opposite of the **world**. The world has its PECKING ORDER of **how many people** you can boss around. And it's not just adults who **think** this. **Often** older children think they have some GOD-GIVEN RIGHT to boss around their **younger** brothers and sisters.

"But that is not the way it is to be among you," Jesus flat out declared. ***"Instead, whoever wants to be great among you will be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you will be a slave of all."*** WHEN will I get this through MY head?! I'm not to be concerned about being NOTICED OR **taken advantage of** – not to worry about others NOT DOING their **fair share**. MY BIG CONCERN is to be how can I better glorify my **God** and help **others**. I'm not to worry about WHO'S SERVING ME but whom can I serve – where can **I help**? So much damage is done in the **church** – in **marriages** and **families** – in **society** – when this spirit of SELFISHNESS and LAZINESS infects us. SO MUCH GOOD can be done when we FORGET ABOUT OURSELVES and **instead** focus on glorifying God and helping our **neighbor**.

Oh, WHEN will I get this through MY head?! There's only one way that **can happen** – by focusing on **Jesus** and…

II. The purpose of Jesus' life.

Jesus had good reasons for saying, ***"But that is not the way it is to be among you."*** It WASN'T SO for Him! We properly believe that Jesus is true God from all eternity – ***"the Son of the living God."*** Yet look at Jesus' life here on earth. When Jesus said, ***"that is not the way it is to be among you,"*** He added, ***"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."***

You may have been a bit surprised by today's psalm. Psalm 22 takes us back to **Good Friday** and the **cross**. We hear the crowds **ridicule** Jesus. We hear Jesus cry out, ***"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"*** It's THERE at the cross that we must go to understand the PURPOSE OF JESUS' LIFE. Jesus did more than come here to be an EXAMPLE for us – more than come to teach us to PUT ASIDE petty pride and **selfishness**. No cross was needed for that. But the PURPOSE of **Jesus' life** was to glorify His heavenly Father by saving a world of **guilty sinners** from death and hell. FOR THAT the cross was unavoidable. Jesus CRUCIFIED **and risen** is the heart of our Christian faith. Christianity is NOT OUR SERVING Jesus **with such good lives** but Jesus SERVING us by sacrificing His life to pay for all our sins.

WHEN will I get it through MY head that I can't make excuses for WHAT **I've done** or the WAU **I've treated** God and other people? These verses don't deal with **simple** WEAKNESSES or some **minor** CHARACTER FLAWS. This is the sin of pride – the **sin** of laziness – the **sin** of selfishness. Really you can boil them down to the **sin** of IDOLATRY – putting myself AHEAD of God – thinking I'm **#1**. That sin – **like every other** sin – is not something we can BRUSH OFF as **no big deal**. Sin is defying God's will for our lives. **Sin** ruins our relationships with God and others. **Sin** calls for repentance BEFORE IT DAMNS us to hell.

WHEN I get that through MY head I will savor the PURPOSE of **Jesus'** life - ***"the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."*** A ransom is the PRICE PAID to set someone free. **With our sins** we had forfeited all rights to **life** and **heaven**. We were doomed to **be damned** to hell's eternal punishment with no one to blame but ourselves. But look what Jesus did FOR US – for ALL people! God's Son humbled Himself and came here to SERVE US! Jesus did everything to save us. Jesus lived for us the **sinless**, LOVING, UNSELFISH life we owed God. Jesus WILLINGLY took the blame for the sins of the whole world and was punished in our place. Jesus was ***"forsaken"*** so we could be forgiven. Jesus shed His blood to ***"cleanse us from all sin."*** BECAUSE Jesus came to serve us and die in our place we now enjoy God's forgiveness of all our sins – we can now confidently look forward to eternal life in heaven **the very moment** we die.

SO JESUS SAYS, ***"that is not the way it is to be among you."*** Think for a minute if Jesus had acted **like we often**. Then Jesus would have looked at His cross and said, "GET SOMEBODY else – I've done enough already!" Or, "NO WAY will **I do** that – they don't even appreciate when I've **already done** for them." Jesus could have argued, "I DON'T FEEL like it. That's THEIR PROBLEM – **not Mine**!" Jesus could have asked, "THEY GET **forgiveness** but what do I get out of this?" Jesus could simply have said, "It's NOT FAIR!" The cross **wasn't fair** for Jesus. He didn't deserve it. There's NO DENYING that Jesus isn't always appreciated the way He should be – **no denying** that Jesus has done far more than we could EVER DESERVE or **repay** - **no denying** that Jesus has been taken advantage of by us **so many** times. But NONE of that stopped Jesus. He loves us. He served us. He died for us. Is it SURPRISING that Jesus now says, ***"that is not the way it is to be among you"***?

Oh, WHEN will I get this through MY head! It's a life-long struggle **for all** of us. Selfishness – **pettiness** – **laziness** are RECURRING, NAGGING PROBLEMS in the church and in **life**. The only solution is to keep going back to **Jesus** and **His cross**. ONLY THERE **at the cross** can we understand the purpose of **Jesus'** life. ONLY THERE **at the cross** can we find forgiveness for all our sins. **Only there** AT JESUS' CROSS can we understand the purpose of OUR lives – to glorify **God** by humbly serving **others**. ***"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."*** Amen.

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