

What do you want me to do for you?

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[0 : 00] Seeking the Lord's blessing, let's turn back together to Matt's Gospel and chapter 10. Matt chapter 10 and verses 35 and 36.

Matt 10 and verse 35. And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.

And he said to them, What do you want me to do for you? Thank you.

And of course, this is the great climax of the Gospel narrative.

And this is where we're very much being taken towards as we follow the Lord through the Gospel.

And as we see there, the great focus and the great climax of the Scripture itself.

[1 : 38] Taking us to reflect on Christ on the cross. Reflecting on his death. Reflecting on his resurrection. And ascending to be with his Father in heaven.

And we see, of course, here throughout the Scripture that there is this sense of anticipation of these events. And there is very much an anticipation in these chapters that we have.

And the reference to the journey to Jerusalem is recorded for us. And even in the Lord's own words, as we'll see together in a moment too. We have these references towards his going to Jerusalem.

And there is this sense of anticipation. And this consideration that his death is imminent. That it is coming. And on the way, there is, of course, a meeting with different people.

We see the rich young man in verses 17 to 31. And Bartimaeus, verses 46 to 52. Different encounters of Jesus on the way. But he is still on the way.

[2 : 42] And not only are there encounters, but that there is dialogue. That the disciples themselves are being taught what these things mean. Being referred here by Jesus about what has been said.

And explanations of the things that are happening. And into this situation, in verses 35 and onwards, we have here the request of James and John.

Two of the well-known disciples. And they bring this request or this question. And I suppose for us today, as we gather in a worship service together, as a preparation to remembering the Lord's death, that these elements all come together.

That the Lord here is speaking of his death. And we're anticipating it in the Gospel. And we're anticipating remembering it at the Lord's Supper. But, of course, the Friday was given to question.

And there is a question here in the form of a request. And we see the request with respect to what James and John say. But not only that, but there is reference to the other disciples too.

[3 : 52] And they're involved in this. There is a request or a question of what James and John and others want to do. And it comes to us directly after verses 32 to 34.

Where Jesus is speaking of specifics with regards to his death. Of the things that are to unfold in Jerusalem. And how the Lord is going to be treated. And a recognition there in verse 34.

That not only will he be put to death, but he will rise again. That the resurrection is spoken of too.

And when we come to examine immediately what follows this in verse 35.

Is James and John making this petition to Jesus. These two brothers. And what they're asking is that Jesus would do what they ask.

They're saying here, what will you do for us? And I want us to think about what they're saying here. And to think about what it means to us.

[4 : 54] And when we come and we look at James and John. We're trying to explore what did this mean to them? What did they expect from Jesus? Or rather, what did they demand from him?

Because they're saying in verse 32. Do whatever we ask you. And Jesus responds by saying, what do you want me to do for you? There is a specific demand here.

And I want us just to reflect on this. And to try and understand it for ourselves too. And first of all, to look at the demand. The demand that has been made by the disciples.

The two disciples mentioned here. Verse 35. The sons of Sebedee. These two men we're so familiar with in the gospel narrative. These two brothers who worked with their father. Just ordinary fishermen. Men who were going about their daily business. And Jesus told them to follow him. And they left the fishing. They left the necks behind.

[5 : 54] And they followed Jesus. And here they are somewhere in the region of three years later. And things are now coming towards their climax. And there is this anticipation.

That this is coming to his end. And the anticipation really is communicated through the words of Jesus himself. You'll notice how many times he refers to his death.

In chapter 8. In verse 31. He began to teach them. That the son of man must suffer many things. Rejected by the elders, chief priests, scribes. And be killed and rise again on the third day.

In chapter 9. Again verse 31. He was teaching his disciples. Saying to them. The son of man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. And they will kill him. And when he is killed.

After three days. He will rise. And again we've seen this already in chapter 10. In verse 33. That he is going to be put to death. Condemned. Put to death. And then he will rise.

[6 : 54] They will do these things. They will reject him. They will put him to death. And into this atmosphere. The disciples see that this is an opportune time.

To make this request. And so for us it seems. A rather bizarre time. To make such a request. But for them. They think this is the time. And the occasion.

Where they can bring this request to Jesus. Where they can communicate. What they want. And what they desire. And there is a certain degree of boldness.

About this. It is very bold in fact. To be able to say. What they are saying. To be able to come to Jesus. As he is talking about his rejection. And the shameful way.

He is going to be treated. And to be able to say then. Do what we ask you to do. Do it for us. Do what we want you to do.

[7 : 49] And they are trying to manipulate the situation. And demand of Jesus. Imposing their own expectations on him. Their expectations for themselves.

For themselves. And for their life. And for how it is going to be. And how their discipleship. Is going to be shaped. And I feel that.

It is very easy for us to be critical of James and John. And in a moment. We will try and see that. All the disciples are involved in this. But don't we do the same thing.

Isn't it true that. We follow the same attitude. And we make the same kind of requests. When we pray.

What do we do. And I know we all feel. Terribly insufficient. With regards to our prayer life. But the disciples did too. And they said. Jesus.

[8 : 46] Teach us how to pray. And he taught them how to pray. He taught them the Lord's Prayer. How many of us pray like the Lord's Prayer. Father. Full of praise. And the glory of God comes first.

And then the petitions come towards the end. Yet the reality is. When we pray. We're pouring forth our petitions. Our desires. We're telling the Lord.

How we want it to be. What we want to change. How we want life to be better and easier. How we're engaging in this way. Imposing our expectations of life upon God.

And on our spiritual journey. And that is a dangerous thing for us to do. Because it threatens our joy. Because no doubt when we're placing our will.

Over God's will. We will end up being disappointed. When life doesn't work out the way we expected. Or hoped. Or even prayed for. Because we've approached it in the wrong way.

[9 : 49] We've come in the same way. As James and John. And we've said. Do for us. What we ask from you. And they're placing their demands. And we see.

Even here. There is. In some respects. A certain context. That allows them to. Speak in this way. Jesus is dealing in verses 17 to 31.

With a man we call. The rich young ruler. And in verse 21. Jesus looked at this man. And he loved him. And he said to him. You lack one thing. Sell everything you have. Give to the poor.

And you'll have treasure in heaven. Come and follow me. And the man goes away. It is unheartened. And yet the disciples. Respond to this. In verse 28. Peter says.

We've left everything and followed you. And James and John feel the same way as Peter. They've left everything behind. A good living with their father.

[10:45] Working. And fishing. And going about their daily business. They've left all of this. There was a man. This rich young ruler. Who refused to leave these things behind. But they didn't.

And so. They're anticipating here. That they've made sacrifices. And surely there is a reward. And what's more. In verse 29. Jesus responds.

And he says. I say to you. No one who has left house. Or brother or sister. Mother or father. Children. Lance. My sake. For the gospel. Will not receive a hundredfold. That there is this reward. And so. This is facilitating. The anticipation. Of James and John. And their request. And they're wondering to themselves. What are we going to get? What are we going to get out of this?

Peter has already spoken. In these ways. In verse 28. We've left everything. And we've followed you. We've committed ourselves. We've committed ourselves. To you. So this is part of.

[11:48] What they see as their license. To approach the Lord in this way. And in some respects. We have to credit them for their faith. Because their request really is in verse 37.

Grant us to sit one at your right hand. One at your left hand. In due glory. They believe. In the kingship. Of Jesus. They believe in this.

And not only this. But they've been listening. Listening to the things that Jesus has said. Listening to the promise that there are thrones. In Matthew 19 verse 28.

Jesus said to them. Truly I say to you in the new world. When the son of man will sit on his glorious thrones. You who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones. Judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

And James and John have heard this. And they think we want these thrones. And we want the place of preeminence. The right hand and the left. We want to be right next to you.

[12:47] We've laid hold of these things. And maybe to a point too. Where later on. In the upper room. Where Jesus will say to them.

In John 15. Ask whatever your wish. And it will be done for you. And we're encouraged in many ways. To be bold in our prayer life.

And here are these men. Asking for what they wish. But that of course. Fails to appreciate. The context.

And the conditions. That are included in prayer. Even in John 15. If we had time to examine that. Even in of course. Our catechism. Answers the question. What is prayer?

And brings before us. The true important things. The offering up of our desires. And the things agreeable. To his will.

[13:43] That there needs to be this. Harmony there. And what we have too. Is the reality. That they're failing to grasp. The nature of this kingdom. And the nature of discipleship itself.

What it's all about. To follow Jesus. Because this is. The great demand. In verse 21. You sell everything. Come. Follow me. Follow me.

That's what Jesus calls us to do. That's what it means to be a Christian. We're following Jesus. That's what it means to be a disciple. We've left everything.

To follow him. To be his disciple. To engage in this way. And the reality is. That the overwhelming context. That we have.

And everything Jesus is teaching here. Is that he is speaking about his suffering. He is speaking about his death. He is speaking about his humiliation.

[14:41] And here they come right in the midst of this. And they say. Give us what we want. Do what we demand. From you. They're asking.

What's in this for us. And they're making these demands. Upon God. And upon the Lord. And what this tells us. Is that they've reduced their view.

Of their discipleship. And Christianity. And they're thinking. In worldly and carnal terms. That they're not thinking. Of the spiritual realities. Of the kingdom.

But they're thinking. Of comfort. They're thinking. Of position. They're thinking. Of authority. They're thinking. In verse 37. What it's going to be like. To sit on thrones. What it's going to be like.

To be there. In this place. And all they want. In the midst of it all. Is just that Jesus. Would acquiesce. With everything they demand. And give them. What they want.

[15:39] And this isn't far away. From how we think. And feel. We want the Lord. To give us. What we want. And for them. This is something.

Truly. Amazing. These ordinary. Common. Men. And they want. Thrones. These fishermen.

Want to be like. Kings. They want to sit. On the thrones. And they're qualified. Themselves. To be there. They've qualified. Themselves. For this honor. They've followed. Jesus. They've left. Everything. In fact. If we would look together. In John chapter 19. We learn. That their mother. And Jesus's mother. Are related. In John 19. Verse 25. And in fact. Their mother is actually. Engaged. And involved. In this request. If you see. In Matthew chapter 20. Verses. [16:35] 20 and 21. That there we have. That she's involved. In this request too. They bring her in. To put pressure. On Jesus. To respond to this.

And another man. Who was. Related to Jesus. John the Baptist. He was spoken of. In such glowing terms. This unique man. Who excelled. All the other men. And they think to themselves. This is our opportunity. To get our status. To get our position. To achieve greatness. What they wanted. They longed for greatness. And it's nearly here. The kingdom is to come. Jesus is on his way. To Jerusalem. And they're expecting. Thrones. They're expecting. The son of David. To ascend his throne. And they want. To be there. They want. To satisfy. [17:32] All the demands. Of self. What we have. Of course. As we move on. In verse. 41. The ten heard it.

And they were indignant. And what really. What we have here is. That there is a sense. Of rank. Or a sense. Of preference. And when you want something. To place yourself. In a greater rank. Than somebody else. It's to their detriment. That's why the commandment. Is that we ought not to covet. Because we're taking something. From somebody else. And this is what's happening here. They want to be. Promoted. Above others. And the response. Of the others. In verse. 41. Is anger. They're indignant. They're angry. With James. And John. Not because.

[18:26] They feel that. This is an unjust request. But because. This is exactly. What they want. They want the same thing.

They want these things. For themselves. In the chapter. Previous to this. Chapter 9. Verse 33. And 34. Jesus asked them. Where were you discussing.

On the way. Verse 34. Of chapter 9. They kept silent. For on the way. They argued. With one another. Who was the greatest. They argued.

Who was the greatest. They desire. Greatness. And what they're looking for. Is something. That is carnal.

And worldly. They're jostling. For position. Amongst themselves. Jesus rebukes them. In verse 42. You know. That those. Who are considered. Rulers of the Gentiles.

[19:23] Lorded over them. Their great ones. Exercise authority. Over them. But it shall not. Be so among you. You're not. To be like this. You're not. To adopt this. Carnal.

Jostling. For position. This worldly. Desire. This desire. That you will have. The first place. That you'll be better. Than your brother. That you will have.

This sense of comfort. And prestige. And authority. That you will live. Like kings. And others. Subservient. To you. This is the demands.

Of the disciples. But what Jesus does. Is he responds. To this. With the demands. Of discipleship. The demands. Of discipleship. Because there is.

A deeper question. Here. A question. Of what discipleship. Really is. What it really means. To follow Jesus. What kind of kingdom. Is this. And Jesus.

[20:18] Here is teaching. And these things. So they'll understand. That is not about. Serving. Self-interest. And so he. Speaks to them here.

And he is. Responding. To their request. And ensuring. Even here. At this late stage. That they understand. And comprehend.

What it means. To follow him. Because Jesus. Is concerned. With us. To change us. That the gospel.

Transforms us. Not just once. But it keeps. Transforming us. We're different. People. We're new. New creatures. In Christ.

We are. Transformed. By the renewal. Of our minds. God is shaping. And molding us. Like clay. Shaping us.

[21 : 14] In the midst. Of all our experiences. It's not our circumstances. That the Lord. Is trying to change. It's us. Through the transforming. Power of the gospel.

The power. Of the new life. The power. Of the new way. Of living. The new way. Of thinking. The new way. Of acting. The power. Of the gospel. That is new. In us.

And here they are. In the midst of this. And they are saying. Give us thrones. And what he said is. Follow me. Where's his throne?

We call ourselves. Christians. But to say. That we're Christians. Is to say. That we're Christ ones. Are we really like Christ? Christ. The demand is placed on him.

But it's us. Who the demand is upon. Jesus is placing the demand. On them. It's not about what we're demanding. From him. But about what he is demanding.

[22 : 14] From us. Discipleship. Is different. He is telling them this. Again and again. In verses 42 and 43. It shall not be so. Among you.

It's going to be different. In verse 44. This is what it's like. Whoever is going to be first. Among you. Is going to be slave. For the son of man.

Came not to be served. But to serve. And again in verse 31. He says there. Many who are first. Will be last. And the last will be first. They're talking about. Preeminence.

And jostling for position. And he says. This is what it's like. To have first place. In the kingdom. You serve. You take the last place. You're not like the world.

You're different. It's a different kind. Of following. The Lord. A different kind. Of preeminence. In verse 42.

[23 : 10] He's saying. You're not going to be like the Gentiles. The worldly. Lording over it. But to have. This great place. In the kingdom. To serve.

Not to be a tyrant. It shall not so. Be so among you. Whoever will be great. Among you. Must be your servant. This is true. Greatness. And this is what the Lord.

Is calling. Each. And every. One of us. To. He calls you. To true. Greatness. Not the position. And place. Of this world. Not in everything.

It's got to offer you. Not in its. Thrones. And its money. And its ambition. And position. But in something else. To be a disciple of Jesus.

Is to follow him. What does that mean? What does it mean to you and me? It means first of all. That we need to have the right view of the kingdom. It is not a worldly kingdom. It's a spiritual kingdom.

[24 : 10] And to follow Jesus. Is to give ourselves to his demands. To be what he wants us to be. The kind of people he wants us to be.

To do the kind of things he asks us to do. James and John have come with a wrong attitude. Asking him. To do what they want to do.

To be at their bidding. But discipleship. Is different to this. It's completely different. And this is the way Jesus is responding to them. And he's asking them.

To truly follow him. A different kind of discipleship. True greatness. In verse 38. Do you know what you're asking?

And then he explains. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink? Or to be baptized with the baptism. With which I am baptized. And they said we are able.

[25 : 12] And even there. It's full of misconceptions. And misunderstanding. They're so bold. They think they can do this. You know what he's talking about. When he's speaking about the cup.

And baptism. He's talking about suffering. He's talking about suffering. And they're saying. We can do this. And he responds. And says in verse 39.

Jesus says to them. The cup that I drink. You will drink the baptism. Which will I am baptized. You will be baptized. You will suffer. And to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

We're called to suffer. This is what true greatness demands from us. Discipleship demands absolutely everything from you.

It demands that you deny yourself. And you take up your cross. And you follow Jesus. It demands that you give him absolutely everything. And your calling is.

[26 : 14] You're disengaging with this world. You're putting sin to death. You're engaging with something that is far different. They think they've qualified themselves.

And we're just like them. But the reality is. More is demanded. In John chapter 15. He tells them. That the world is going to hate them. Because it hated him. And you're in an ever increasing hostile environment to the gospel. The world is hating you more and more every day. And you're to come and to realize. This is a badge of honor. Because this is what Jesus is calling us to embrace. To embrace our discipleship. To embrace our calling. To embrace our suffering. Paul says in Philippians 3. That I might know him. And the power of his resurrection. And might share in his suffering. [27 : 15] Becoming like him in his death. Paul says I want to be like him. I want to be Christ like. I want to be his disciple. I want to be his disciple. And I'll embrace the suffering that brings this. In Acts we're told that it is through great tribulation. We enter into the kingdom. James encourages us in our suffering. He says count it joy when you meet with trials. Peter does the same thing in 1 Peter chapter 4. That you might rejoice in your suffering. And whatever you're going through now Christian. In the difficulties and tension that you're facing. And how you're suffering. You rejoice in your suffering. Because God is at work. You are becoming more and more like him. You are being shaped in this way. Embrace your calling. Reject this world. And follow this different path. This different way. [28 : 14] Embrace it. And rejoice in it. Because the greatest temptation of all. Is to reject suffering. To run away from it. To find a different path. And it was there for Jesus. And Peter took him aside. And told him to stop talking about these things. And Jesus said. Get behind me Satan. He didn't want to hear this. For the joy that was set before him. He endured the cross. His face was set to Jerusalem. This is where he was going. To embrace his suffering. To redeem a people for himself. And he calls you and me. To follow him. To follow him. And to fulfill true greatness. Verse 43. [29 : 14] Whoever will be great among you. Must be your servant. And he's dealing with the issue. Of our pride. Verse 39. Verse 39. We are able. Are you really? We say these things in boldness. Thinking we're strong and powerful. And in just a few moments. We're running away with them. Running away from Jesus. In the midst of his trial and suffering. And so. This is the very problem. Our pride. Standing in the way. Of our fulfilling. Through greatness. It's what causes us to fall. Like they did. And to fail. And at the cross. Jesus is dealing with everything. Even our carnal attitudes. And the disciples. Are humbled. [30 : 16] And it doesn't. It becomes no more about self-promotion. They're seeking through greatness. And humility. And through greatness. In service also. Where they're called. To serve. And this again. Is the spiritual nature of the kingdom. The great reversal. Of the standards of this world. It's not about sitting enthroned. And exalted. It's about taking the towel. Washing your. Friends feet. It's about following the example. Of Jesus. It's about abasing yourself. Preferring others. It's about following Jesus. Who sacrificed. For the interests of others. Who poured himself out in love. Who tells us in verse 45. [31 : 15] The son of man came not to be served. But to serve. And we're called to prefer the interests. Of others. To make sacrifices. For one another. To love each other. To prefer each other. To pour ourselves out. And the Bible teaches us. That this is the place to do it. The church. And the opportunity. You see. To serve. To pour ourselves out. You see. Jesus is calling you and me to more. To give. And to give. And to give. To serve. To pour ourselves out. Paul says. If I don't have love. I am nothing. Not I have nothing. I am nothing. Jesus gives the great example. When he washes their feet. And he says. I have given you this example.

[32 : 12] He is calling you and me. To true greatness. To serve. Verse 44. Whoever would be first among you.

Must be slave. Of all. The slave is owned. And controlled. He has a master. He does what he is told.

He is obedient. This is what Jesus is calling us to be. And it runs contrary to everything. We have ever imagined. In our own natural. Carnal minds.

And it is greater. And better. Because Jesus is calling us. To be like him. And not the world.

And to find true greatness. And James and John learned it. James was beheaded.

[33 : 12] Early in the book of Acts. And we leave John in exile. On the island of Patmos. All for the testimony. Of their saviour. To serve the Lord.

And his people. To give themselves. Humbly and fully. To the service of the Lord. Jesus is demanding. Everything from us.

Don't hold anything back. Deny yourself. Bear your cross. Have a discipleship. That's obedient.

And reflect on who he is. And the kingdom he's called you to. Reflect on it. And remember. That he died for your sins.

This is what he did for you. What will you do for him? Will you follow him? Will you follow him?

[34 : 15] Let's pray together. God our Father in heaven. We give thanks to you for your word. With all its demands. Grant to us Lord. We pray your grace.

For we bring before you. Our own admittance of our weakness. Forgive us Lord. Our sins. And all we ask. Is in Jesus name. Amen. Our final item of praises.

In Psalm 131. On page 422. Psalm 131. And we're singing the whole Psalm. Verses 1 to 3. My heart not.

Sorry. This isn't a Scottish saucer. Psalm 131. My heart not haughty is. O Lord. Mine eyes not lofty be. Nor do I deal in matters great. Or things too high for me.

I surely have myself behaved. With quiet spirit and mild. As a child of mother wind. My soul is like a wind child. Upon the Lord. Let all the hope of Israel rely.

[35 : 14] Even from the time that present is. Unto eternity. This is a psalm. And the psalmist is communicating. His own spirit of humility. We're singing the whole psalm. We're standing to sing.

To the praise of God. My heart not haughty is.

O Lord. Mine eyes not lofty be. Nor do I care.

When my church came. For things too high for me.

I surely love myself behaved.

[36 : 11] With quiet spirit and light. But child of mothering.

My soul is like a weakened child. Upon the Lord.

Let all the hope. Of Israel rely.

In from the time. Life that present is.

Unto eternity. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[37 : 14] The love of God. And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Be with you all. Amen.