
WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO FOR YOU?

SERIES: ANSWERING JESUS' QUESTION

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Scripture: Mark 10:35-45; [read later] 10:46-52

Purpose: To consider our prayer requests from God's point of view.

Introduction:

1. We are jarred by the insensitive demand posed by the disciples, James and John.
 - a. Right after Jesus tells His followers that He will be mocked, spit on, flogged and killed, the two brothers make a childish request.
 - b. They said, "We want you to do for us whatever we ask."
2. The disciples sensed the climax to Jesus' ministry was near.
 - a. They imagined Jesus sitting on a throne of power.
 - b. They asked to flank Him on both sides—positions of power.
3. The other disciples were angered that James and John would demand honor.
4. Clearly none of the twelve disciples understood Jesus' mission.
 - a. He must have been deeply disappointed in their request for authority.
 - b. What a contrast between who Jesus was and what they wanted.
Ralph Earle paints the contrast, "While He was thinking of a cross, they were thinking of crowns. His burden was matched by their blindness, His sacrifice by their selfishness. He wanted only to give, they to get. His motive was service; theirs was self-satisfaction."

I. Jesus was remarkably patient with His power thirsty followers.

- A. “What do you want me to do for you?” He asked.

- B. When they asked for positions of power in His Kingdom, He replied, “You don’t know what you are asking.”
 - 1. Then He asked another question, “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?”
 - a. The word translated “baptism” means submerged.
 - b. Jesus told them they would be submerged in His suffering.
 - 2. He was asking,
 - a. “Can you submit to the suffering and agony of a selfless life?”
 - b. “Can you bear up under intense suffering?”
 - c. “Will you endure the unfair treatment of others?”
 - 3. The brothers’ response was as brash as their request.
 - 4. Evidently they were partially accurate.
 - a. Jesus acknowledged they would undergo severe suffering.
 - b. Acts 12:2 records that Herod slaughtered James with a sword.
 - c. In Rev. 1:9 John records the suffering he experiences in exile.

- C. Positions of authority are given to those who are prepared for the use of power by their character and by their spirit.
 - 1. When the disciples began to fight among themselves as to whom should be the greatest, Jesus talked about the misuse of power by officials.
 - 2. He declared that authority was not to force others into compliance.
 - 3. Greatness is found in doing the work of a servant.
 - a. Greatness is not in how many serve us.

- b. Greatness is found being servant to others.
- 4. If we want to be first, we are to be last.
- 5. Then Jesus gives testimony to His own life purpose, saying, “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” (45).

D. Jesus would never usurp the authority of God.

- 1. Jesus had no right to assign places of power to the disciples.
- 2. Jesus lived His life in submission to the authority of God.

II. Jesus heals a blind man.

A. A blind man, Bartimaeus, was begging beside a road leading out of Jericho.

- 1. When he heard Jesus was with the crowd, he began to call out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”
- 2. This is the first time Jesus was referred to as the Son of David, a clear Messianic label.
- 3. That may have been the reason people tried to quiet the shouting man.
- 4. The crowd may have feared the consequences of proclaiming Jesus as Savior.
- 5. Though they tried to hush him, he only yelled louder.
- 6. Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.”
- 7. Bartimaeus jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

B. Jesus asked the same question, “What do you want me to do for you?”

- 1. This was the same question He asked the disciples.
- 2. The blind man answered, “I want to see.”
- 3. Jesus responded, “Go, your faith has healed you.”
- 4. “Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus.”

III. Why didn't Jesus answer the disciples' request?

- A. Jesus asked the same question, "What do you want me to do for you?"
 - 1. In the case of the disciples, Jesus said He could not grant their request.
 - 2. For the blind man Jesus did not hesitate, He gave the beggar sight.

- B. Jesus treated a stranger better than His closest friends.
 - 1. What kind of friendship is that!?
 - 2. They had given up work to walk with Jesus.
 - 3. They deserved special treatment; they had earned a favor.

- C. Jesus could have done the easy thing and granted power.
 - 1. Healing a blind man is a lot harder than saying, "Favor given."
 - 2. Jesus turns their simple request into a big lecture.

- D. Jesus does not grant every request.
 - 1. Some requests are unworthy of His answer.
 - 2. The requests that reflect the Father's mission get an answer.

- E. Jesus looks at the motive behind the request.
 - 1. The disciples wanted honor, position and power;
The blind man wanted to see.
 - 2. The disciples sought for control over others;
The blind man wanted to be free to walk and not fall.
 - 3. The blind man's faith made him whole;
The disciples' self-centeredness made them blind.

Conclusion:

- 1. God looks at our hearts when we pray.
- 2. God answers the prayers He can.
- 3. Be assured God is still asking, "What do you want me to do for you?"