



10/7/26

I love reading the stories in scripture. I learn so much from them. I love to look for the attributes of God and see why He's so worthy of worship. I also like to look at the people in the story and see who I relate to. I wish I could say I don't relate to the characters of James and John in this passage, but sadly, I do. That's why I am so thankful to see the attributes of Jesus... even in His teaching with His very misunderstanding disciples, He continued to be gentle and kind while still speaking truth. I love that about Jesus.

*Blessings,
Jonna*

Mark 10:35-45

James and John, called "Sons of Thunder" (Mark 3:17). Jesus once had to rebuke them because of their offer in Luke 9:54 in response to Samaritans not welcoming Jesus ~ "And when His disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do You want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" Ummm... guys... have you been paying attention to how Jesus treats people? The "thunder" boys definitely earned their title. I'm not sure that's one I'd like to have. Sounds tough... but it doesn't emulate the heart of Jesus... our "gentle and humble in heart" Savior.

So... here we are in Mark 10. This account records James and John making a request to Jesus. Matthew 20 records that their mom was with them, asking for them... but it seems that they were good with her doing it.

The request was ~ "Give us what we want." Oh, I've made that request many, many times. Jesus said, "What do you want?" Ahhh... teachable moment.

Request... "Grant us to sit, one at Your right hand and one at Your left, in Your glory." Yikes! That is a very bold request!!!

Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I

drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?"

The boys said, "Yep... Sure are!" They DIDN'T know what they were asking. At this point, the disciples didn't understand that Jesus was gonna suffer and die a brutal death. They thought He was going to take over the Roman government and take His throne right away. They were saying, "Yeah, I'd like to have some of that glory and power sitting right next to You, Jesus."

Let's not forget that when Jesus was arrested a short time later, ALL the disciples scattered! They abandoned Jesus. Even John, who stayed somewhat close on the night Jesus was betrayed, followed from a distance.

No. They didn't know what they were asking. And I don't think they understood what Jesus was telling them, either. He said, "The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, but to sit at My right hand or at My left is not Mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." They probably thought Jesus was saying, "You may not get to sit directly next to me, but you're definitely gonna have glory and authority and power." That's not what He was really saying. He was saying, "You're gonna suffer for My glory... more than you could ever imagine. Don't even worry about where you're gonna sit someday. You have a loonnnggg road ahead of you and it's not going to be easy."

They didn't get it and Jesus didn't clarify it. This is a really important point for me to camp on for a moment. Why didn't Jesus insist with them how bad they were going to suffer until they got it? I think it's because He doesn't give grace to handle the situations ahead of us until we get there. He gives us ample grace for what we're facing today. He never runs out of grace, and I need to learn to trust that it will be there when I need it. It's God's protection that I don't see everything that I'll face. He prepares me for it, but He doesn't make me live in it until it gets here.

I know this is a small example, but I had a request for the Lord 13 years ago... when I got my dog, Toby. We called him Tobiah because it means "the Lord is good." It had been a really hard year. My husband had been diagnosed with a brain tumor. My stepfather who I loved so much went to be with Jesus. I had lost my beloved dog, Teddy, just a few weeks earlier. I had been in a bad bicycle accident with lasting effects that still touch me today. So I prayed, "Lord, please give me what I want." "What do you want?" "I want this puppy to live for at least 14 years." He didn't tell me right then that He would take my sweet Toby on his 13th birthday.

But last January, He began to prepare my heart. I learned that Toby had something wrong his liver. Because of his age, we decided that his quality of life was more important than his quantity of life. So we told the vet we wanted to keep him as healthy as possible without putting him through biopsies and possibly chemo. So, I started praying the Lord would let him have as best a life as we could give him even if it meant we didn't get to have him until he was 14.

I prayed that all the way up until his 13th birthday. He came and got me for our walk at 5:00 in

the morning as usual... and then without very much suffering, the Lord took him. The Lord prepared my heart but He didn't give me the whole picture until it was time. And then He gave me His grace and comfort as I held my baby boy for the last time.

I could tell much more painful stories of how the Lord did that... like losing my very beloved father-in-law and almost losing my own life and my baby's when I was pregnant, not to mention all the stuff I said that happened in 2013. But we all have those stories. And when we let Him, the Lord proves to be faithful and give us the grace we need every single time. Praise His name. He grieves with us and comforts us and faithfully walks us through it.

So... it was God's grace that James and John didn't get it, though the rest of the disciples might not have thought of it like that. They got MAD! How dare James and John ask for this! Do they think they're better than everyone else?

Ope. Teachable moment... and humbling moment that I'm sure deeply affected all of them and especially John who, before Jesus died was called a "Son of Thunder", and after Jesus rose again would only call himself "the disciple who Jesus loved." He wasn't saying Jesus didn't love the other disciples. He was saying that the only thing that now mattered to him was the fact that he was loved by Jesus.

What's the teachable moment? Jesus heard how indignant the disciples were toward James and John and He called all the boys over to Him. "Boys... I think you're missing something. Those who consider themselves rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones, those who are over the rulers, do the same thing to them, exercising their authority over them." I love how Jesus says, "Those who CONSIDER themselves rulers..." Revelation 1:5 (written by John) calls Jesus "the ruler of the kings on earth." Jesus knew who the one with all the authority really is... Himself! And yet He didn't flaunt it. But these rulers and those over them did. They saw power as an opportunity and right to bully others.

That was not how Jesus used His authority and it's not how He wanted the disciples to, either. He said, "That's how they do it. That's not how you're gonna do it." I wonder if they only heard, "Oh! I'm gonna have authority! Cool! Go on, Jesus."

Jesus said, "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." Yikes! The same one who said in John 10:18, "No one takes My life from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again", is the one who stood before these disciples and said, "You will use your authority to serve as I have." You will serve others, not demand from them. That's what makes you great before the Lord. What makes you "first" is not getting the place of honor, but becoming a doulos, a voluntary bondservant/slave to ALL.

The word "all" means "whole, every, entire." God makes me great by helping me to become a servant, a voluntary slave, not just to those who are over me in title, but to ALL... not just to

those are easy to serve but to ALL. Whoa... this is a far cry from calling fire down on people.

I know from John 13 and Luke 22, on the night of Passover, just a few hours before Jesus was arrested and then crucified the next day, that this teachable moment fell on deaf ears... for the moment. I know this because right after Jesus washed the disciples' feet and said He wanted them to do that for others, and right after Judas left to betray Him, they started fighting again about who was the greatest. Ummm, can anyone say, "Jesus! Jesus is the Greatest!"

But after Jesus rose from the dead, they definitely got it. Both Peter and John wrote their letters with amazing humility and call to serve. Both devoted the rest of their lives to serving the Lord and all the people He put in their path. This is another teachable moment for me... Even when I feel like such a loser believer... don't give up. Jesus knows His plan for me and He's not giving up on me.

O Lord, please help me to see serving others for Your glory as a privilege. Help me to remember that I'm totally allowed to tell You what I want, but help me to have the wisdom and understanding to know that if Your answer is no it's because You have a better yes for me. It may not look better according to the world's standards, but it is absolutely better. Thank You for knowing that I may not understand right now, and I may not even ask for the right things... but You in all Your patience and mercy walk me through my stupidity with gentleness and love. I love You, and I truly want to be Your faithful, voluntary servant. Thank You for faithfully and voluntarily serving me all the way to salvation and all the way home to You.