

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPT 19TH-20TH, 2020 // BOOK OF MATTHEW

FORETELLING (MATTHEW 20:17-19)

THE FIRST BECOMING LAST

On the heels of Jesus' teaching that those that humble themselves will be first in heaven, Jesus once again predicts His death and resurrection in Jerusalem.

- **Jesus, the Creator of the universe, humbles Himself to the point of death, but out of His "lastness," He becomes the triumphant Savior.**

THE FORETELLING SHOWS JESUS' SOVEREIGNTY

Not only does Jesus know that He is going to be arrested and killed, but He had been willingly walking towards this gruesome death for the last 3 years.

- **Jesus is the all-knowing King that willingly walked out a mission designed to save and redeem anyone that would accept it.** Nothing surprises Him.

SUFFERING (MATTHEW 20:20-28)

MATTHEW INCLUDES THIS STORY FOR A REASON

Matt wants to connect the fact that Christians will suffer on some level like Jesus did. Second, the story shows that the disciples still hadn't learned Jesus' lessons on humility and putting others first.

- We are all slow to adopt these lessons, **but the Christian is called to be humble, sacrificial, and a servant to others.**

ZEBEDEE'S SONS

James and John's mom was probably set up by the brothers to ask Jesus about their rank in the afterlife. More than likely, they had told their mom about the 12 thrones mentioned in chapter 19.

- This shows us that **even at our best we can easily slide into selfishness, so we must stay connected to Christ.**

AUTHORITY ONLY COMES THROUGH SUFFERING

Jesus made it clear to James and John that great spiritual authority demands great sacrifice. **If we are to be good and righteous leaders of people, we must suffer and sacrifice for the things of God.**

- **There will always be people with worldly authority that are undeserving, but these people don't have spiritual authority.**

THE BROTHERS WOULD INDEED SUFFER

James and John were both sincere when they said "We are able" to suffer to be close to Jesus for eternity, but they had no idea just how difficult that commitment would be.

- James was martyred by "the sword" in Acts 12:2 and John would be boiled alive and exiled to Patmos where he wrote Revelation.

THE OTHER 10 BECAME "INDIGNANT"

The other 10 disciples were more than just angry. This competing to be first exposed the pride and selfishness in all of them. They were upset that they hadn't asked Jesus to sit next to Him first.

- **Jesus wants to address the pride in us. We need to be consistently checking to make sure our attitude honors God.**

WE ARE CALLED TO ACT DIFFERENTLY!

Jesus tells the 12 that the non-believers use power and prestige to "lord it over" people for selfish gain. He wanted to make it clear that Christians are to operate differently.

- **Jesus was not criticizing authority or structure, but the arrogance, pride, and insecurity that can breed from having power and influence.**

THE POWER IS GIVEN TO SERVANTS

Not only is spiritual authority given to the humble servants of God, but **because we are sons and daughters of the King, we are to act in a way that is noble and honors Him.**

- The calling of Christ is a stepping up. **We are able to come as we are, but Christ calls us to conform to His likeness and live at a higher standard.**

SO, WE MUST UNDERSTAND OUR IDENTITY

Because we have been "bought with a price," have become co-heirs to the kingdom, and are called to "be holy as He is holy," our identity must be found in Jesus above all things.

- **When we're convinced of our value as God's children, we can move on to properly loving others and living a life that honors Christ.**

JESUS WAS THE PERFECT EXAMPLE

Jesus didn't just tell us to be servants to others, He came down from heaven and modeled it. **Jesus gave up His rights and took on a responsibility that He was not obligated to take.**

- **Jesus came and died for a people that didn't deserve it and for many that would never accept it.**

FAITH (MATTHEW 20:29-34)

GETTING CLOSE TO THE CAPITAL

As Jesus and the 12 were leaving Jericho, about 16 miles from Jerusalem, 2 blind men heard that Jesus was near and cried out for Him to "have mercy on us."

- Because they were getting closer to a big city, the crowds started to get big. Also, because of the last 3 years, Jesus was more famous now than ever.

"THE CROWD DEMANDED THAT THEY KEEP QUIET."

Beggars were considered outcasts of society. Mark and Luke only refer to 1 beggar, which was probably the speaker for the 2. The beggar the other gospels mention is called Bartimaeus, which means Son of Excrement. Though Jewish law provided for the needy, religious leaders would have never interacted with a beggar.

JESUS WAS NOT LIKE THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Jesus came for all people, but the ones discarded by society are a particular focus of Christ because they have no advocate.

- **The key to salvation is faith in Jesus' identity.** The beggars cried out "Son of David," meaning they understood that Jesus was the Savior. **We must acknowledge our depravity and His ability to save.**

"WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO FOR YOU?"

Of course Jesus knew what the blind beggars wanted, but He wanted them to verbalize their faith in Him. This shows us **that a relationship with Jesus is a 2-way street.** Yes God knows what we need, **but we must communicate and put forth effort into a relationship with Him.**

"MOVED WITH COMPASSION..."

Because the blind beggars wanted to see and acknowledged that Jesus was their only hope, He "moved with compassion," "touched their eyes," and "immediately they could see."

- **Jesus has a desire to save and restore people, but we have to be willing to cry out and trust Him!**

"...AND THEY FOLLOWED HIM."

We may ask, "How could they not follow Him after being healed?" The unfortunate thing is how many people are touched by God but fail to devote their lives to Him.

- **Christianity is more than blessings. It is a life devoted to the teachings and mission of Jesus. It means we submit to the King.**

WHAT CONSTITUTES A CHRISTIAN?

- Though the percentage is rapidly declining, still roughly **68% of Americans claim to be Christians**, though only **25% claim to practice their faith.**
- **43% of Americans claim that they can be Christians without actually adhering to biblical lifestyles.** In other words, I can do what I want and still be saved.

STEP 1: WE MUST DESIRE TRUTH

The journey begins by looking for something bigger than ourselves (Rm. 1:20). We must also search with an open heart and open mind, **wanting to find the truth regardless of what it is.** Pursuing truth requires enough humility to admit that we don't know it all.

STEP 2: ACKNOWLEDGE OUR DEPRAVITY

When we come to a realization of how great God is, we should also realize how lost we are. The ways of mankind have always ended in depravity. We must come to a place that **no longer believes the lie that says that there is anything good in us apart from Christ.**

STEP 3: SEEK SALVATION & RESTORATION

When we realize our depravity, we should seek to be saved and restored. Yes, we are lost and broken, but **we have a Savior that wants to deliver us.** This is where we **repent** for our sins against God and **start building a relationship with Jesus.** Over time, we will experience restoration.

STEP 4: BE WILLING TO FOLLOW AT ALL COST

When we are given clarity to see, we must respond with **obedience and submission**, even when that choice brings suffering. We must deny ourselves and the lie that this life is simply our pursuit of personal happiness. We must understand that **there is an unfathomable reward on the other side.**