

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? It should. 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 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.

It's interesting to note that Jesus DIDN'T JUMP all over James and John. The other disciples **"became 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 A MESS of the situation. **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 want You to 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** in heaven? James and John weren't content to JUST SHARE in **God's glory**. They wanted some of that glory FOR THEMSELVES. They wanted to be publicly acknowledged as being MORE IMPORTANT than the others.

"You don't know what you're asking," Jesus told them. HOW OFTEN does 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**. He asks them, **"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 my/your life is to GLORIFY and SERVE GOD – not draw attention to ourselves. The purpose of my/your life 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 had 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 declares. ***"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** – 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. ***"Not so with you!"*** 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 on earth. When Jesus said, ***"Not so with 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 our **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 or sinners from our sin, 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 justify myself before God – that I can't make excuses for what **I've done** or the **way I've treated** God and other people? These verses don't deal with **simple** WEAKNESSES on our part 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 kills. 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. Hear it again – ***"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! He humbled Himself and came here to SERVE US! He did everything to save us. Jesus lived for us the **sinless**, UNSELFISH life we owed God. Jesus WILLINGLY took the blame for the sins of the whole world and was punished in our place. Jesus sacrificed His life IN EXCHANGE for our lives. Jesus was **“forsaken”** so we COULD GO FREE. Jesus shed His blood to cleanse us from **all** our sins. 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, **“Not so with you!”** Think for a minute if Jesus had acted like we often do or had used some of the LAME EXCUSES we try. 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 what I've **already done** for them.” Jesus could have argued, “I DON'T FEEL like it. It's THEIR PROBLEM – **not Mine!**” Jesus could have asked, “THEY GET forgiveness but WHAT DO I get out of it?” 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 Jesus isn't always appreciated the way He should be – **no denying** Jesus has done far more than we can 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 can we understand the purpose of **Jesus'** life. **Only there** we can 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.”**

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