



Matthew 20:20-23 New Revised Standard Version

²⁰ Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favor of him. ²¹ And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." ²² But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. **Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?**" They said to him, "We are able." ²³ He said to them, "You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father."

Notes _____



Today, we begin a new series of sermons focused upon knowing and following Jesus versus being a casual fan. We start by considering a mother's request on this Mother's Day.

I can't help but wonder if it was their mother's idea or if it actually came from James and John. There is a tendency for children, even older children, to have a parent ask a favor of someone. How many parents have sold candy, magazines, or wrapping paper on behalf of their children? I can't say much. I once did the same thing! Perhaps it removes the embarrassment or takes away the pressure to go up to an adult (especially someone who is perceived as being in authority).

The "mother of the sons of Zebedee" confronted Jesus with a favor. She didn't ask anything of Jesus, but rather "cut to the chase" and said, "**Declare** that my sons will have special seating in the Kingdom." That seems a bit forward and assumed her sons were worthy of such placement. However, Jesus was never one to grant people's wants and he pressed the motivation behind people's inquiries at times. Of greater importance than where James and John should be seated in the Kingdom was their willingness to "drink the same cup as Jesus." Their seemingly rapid response indicates enthusiasm to do whatever was required of them. At the same time, they do not appear to have grasped what this cup would involve. It would prove to be more than a memento from their time with Jesus.

- 1. Position can never be the starting point for devotion.**
- 2. Enthusiasm is not the same as long-term commitment.**
- 3. Jesus expects nothing less than he himself will do.**

Prayer Pebble: Lord, help my desire to "drink the cup" be more than emotion and concern for self. Amen.