

3/18/2018

## “What Do You Want Me to Do For You?”

Scripture: Mark 10:35-45 (46-52); 1 Peter 5:1-7

Lenten Series: Questions Along the Way

Fifth Sunday in Lent

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**Theme: Jesus asks the question of each of us that causes us to search and discern our desires and ambitions.**

Can you imagine for just a moment what it would be like to be God in trying to answers prayers?

Here's a humorous clip from Bruce Almighty, in which Jim Carey does just that:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0cG11ITS1E>

As we continue our Lenten journey and sermon series of “Questions Along the Way”, today’s gospel passage from Mark encompasses two different encounters or interactions with Jesus. In these encounters, Jesus asks the same question, under different circumstances, to different individuals, who obviously have different desires for seeking something from Jesus.

† **The first encounter** (v. 35-45) immediately follows Jesus again – for the third time – telling his disciples what would soon happen to him in Jerusalem (v. 32-34). This time, he took the Twelve disciples aside from the others and told them more specifically:  
*“We are going up to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.”*

Some of the Twelve now seem to get the picture, at least that last part about rising again. So, as Mark records (v.35):

*Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.”*

*And so he asked them **“What do you want me to do for you?”***

*They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.”*

Now their question, and the indignance of the other ten, as described by Mark, leads Jesus to again affirm the necessary attitude of humility on the part of his followers, and especially those who would be great or lead in his place. He asked them:

**“Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?”**

In other words, he was asking them with familiar metaphors of cup and baptism, if they could experience the fullness of the life which he would drink, and be immersed or submerged in the persecution and suffering which he would bear.

And, although they reply in the positive, he informs them that their request was not for him to grant. Then, he goes on to again describe the purpose and attitude of service with which he came into the world. The attitude is to be the same for his followers: He said:

***“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.”***

Those who most closely follow Jesus or aspire to be like him often want to share his glory with authority and power, by “sitting at his right or left hand”, so to speak. Christ does say we can share or participate in his glory and power (the sending of the seventy, and later after Pentecost), but not for selfish desire or personal ambition, privilege or prestige.

† And the **second encounter** (vs. 46-52) from today’s reading occurs soon after the first. As Jesus and his followers journey further along the way to Jerusalem, they enter the city of Jericho, some fifteen miles northeast of Jerusalem. It is situated about five miles west of the Jordan River and north of the Qumran community and the Dead Sea. As you may recall, it was the ancient place of the famous battle in which, over a thousand years earlier, Joshua and the Israelites fought and conquered with God’s mighty help.

In Jesus’ time, it was home of many thousands of priests and others who served in the Jerusalem temple in bi-weekly shifts to make libations, sacrifices and praise to God. As the great Passover Feast approached, many of them, along with thousands of others, would have been journeying up the road to Jerusalem.

Then, as Mark records:

*. . . As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (that is, the Son of Timaeus), was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, **“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”***

His use of the title “Son of David”, was an acknowledgment that Jesus was the messiah, the hoped for king of Judah.

*Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”*

*Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.”*

*So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.”*

*And throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.*

***“What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him.***

*The blind man said, **“Rabbi, I want to see.”***

***“Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.”** Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.*

**Notice the difference in the desire between the earlier disciples and that of Bartimeus.**

Baritmeus:

- acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, “Son of David”
- cried out for help and “mercy”, even when rebuked and told to be quiet by others
- responded immediately to the call of Jesus, “*Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.*” (Perhaps even stumbling because he was blind)
- wanted and believed that he could be healed (given sight) by Jesus
- followed Jesus even though Jesus told him to “Go.” (*in peace, under no obligation*)

**Remember, Jesus asks the question of each of us that causes us to search and discern our desires and ambitions.**

† ***“What do you want me to do for you?”*** Jesus asks us.

What do you hope and pray for?

The answer to that question in part depends upon our ambitions and desires.

Do you want. . .

- to be a good person
- simply to have a comfortable life: a better job or promotion, maybe start your own business
- to have a good family life
- to be forgiven and restored in relationship to God or someone else
- to be healed
- to see God more clearly, love God more dearly, follow God more nearly
- to make an impact and achieve something significant
- to have a life of service
- to experience as much of life as possible

Again, it's not that any of these things are bad. But, which do you want most? What do you want now? What and who do you place first in your heart and mind?

**What do you want Jesus to do for you?**

Maybe you want to sit next to Jesus just so that you can be truly close to him. He does call us to be close to him.

**But how do you feel about taking his servant path?**

Jesus asks each of us if we are willing to drink his cup of salvation and take up our cross to follow him to glory. I believe that I have done that in some ways already. And, I hope and pray that I am willing to do that in whatever way God calls me. Are you willing as well?

**Are you willing to serve others in his name?** I know that many of you are already. **How can you be an answer to someone else's prayer? In what way will you do that this week?**

Perhaps . . .

- call, send a note, or visit someone who might be lonely or hurting
- bring a meal to someone, or food for the food pantry
- invite someone to church or bible study / small group
- pray for the pastor and other leaders or for those on the prayer list (Prayer chain)
- or some other way

**What do you want Jesus to do for you?** What will you do for others in Jesus' name?

*Let's take a few moments to reflect upon today's message and questions found in your notes.*

May God's love and spirit abide with you, in you and through you now and always. Amen.