

Matthew 20:20-34/Jan.5/25

Teaching through God's Word verse by verse, and chapter by chapter is so critical and so necessary.....because it **KEEPS US** in context.....

When we look back at beginning of chapter 20 here in Matthew, and even before that..... We see that Jesus has been teaching us a lot about true humility.....yes, he has been speaking about rewards and treasures stored up in heaven.....but, that these can only be attained through true honest to goodness, godly humility..... what the grateful mindset, and attitude of each believers heart should be..... Humility, as the world sees it in a Christian, is **BEATING YOURSELF UP....or, LOOKING DOWN UPON YOURSELF...** But humility is simply looking, and being brutally honest about truly **WHO GOD IS.....and.....WHO WE ARE.....**

Ephesians 4:6 says.....there is.....

(2)Eph 4:6 - “**...one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.**”

And speaking of Jesus, Colossians 1:15-18 says.....

(3)Col 1:15-18 - “**He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.**

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.”

We see the magnitude of Who God is.....

So that's one part of true humility.....we know Who God is.....pretty magnificent, the Creator Of All, and **ALL POWERFUL.....**

Now who are we.....this is who we are, from the mouth of God Himself.....

(4)Gen 3:19 - *“In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return.”*

Polar opposites.....Who God is, Who Jesus is, and who we are.....

Yet.....God still loves us and gave us His only begotten Son to die for our sins.....

Let's keep this accurate description in mind, of WHO God is and who we are.....when we go through these verses today.....because each one of us, can be just like James and John here, and forget where we really come from..... And forget, Who it is.....ALL ABOUT.....

(5)Matt 20:20-21 - *“Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him.*

21And He said to her, “What do you wish?” She said to Him, “Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.””

Remember.....This is the mother of James and John....two very prominent apostles in the ministry of Jesus, that had left their father and left their life of fishing on the Sea of Galilee, and followed Jesus right from the beginning.....they had spent a couple of years with Him.....

And these two guys had also been with Jesus, as we read in verses 18 and 19, where Jesus says once again, I WILL BE GOING UP TO JERUSALEM, BE ARRESTED, CONDEMNED, AND KILLED.....THEN RISE AGAIN.....the most humbling and loving act EVER.....and the most selfless, sacrificial death EVER TO BE.....

And on the heels of them hearing that from Jesus.....in contrast.....these guys are wondering how honoured they will be in the Kingdom.....

THEY STILL DIDN'T QUITE GET IT.....but they will soon.....

And their mother, God love her.....she's just being a mother...

Looking out for her sons....wanting the best for them.....

*

But I'm not letting her off the hook either, because she had been around Jesus over His whole ministry.....she was a part of the group of women who ministered to His needs, along with Mary Magdalene and others.....

She heard Him say He was going to be killed at Jerusalem....

She and James and John, were **STILL** concerned with themselves, and believing that with their faithfulness in following Jesus, that they **IN AND OF THEMSELVES, DESERVED** some kind of rewards.....

But we can't judge any of these individuals can we.....

WE ALL.....can fall into the trap of...thinking we are starting to gain or attain some of our own righteousness.....that even though it maybe all **STARTED** with Jesus....I'm now getting some traction on my own.....I'm **GETTING IT.....**look how far **I'VE COME.....**

They didn't quite understand yet.....and some Christians forget....that Jesus is the **AUTHOR AND FINISHER** of our faith.....**IT NEVER STOPS BEING ALL ABOUT AND ALL FROM JESUS.....**

What is being asked of Jesus, is **HUGE.....**

Jesus had told them in the last chapter, verse 28, that the apostles would all sit on thrones to judge.....but these two wanted the highest thrones of honour.....

To sit on the left and right of His majesty on High.....

Remember what it means to sit at the right or left of the throne of power.....

Remember Daniel was put in a position of power in Babylon, in the book of Daniel, and in essence sat on the right hand of the throne because he was given all power and authority to

execute decisions for the king.....and also Joseph in Egypt, given the right hand of authority.....

But Jesus.... is sitting at the right hand of God in heaven because He has been given all power and authority.....

JESUS IS THE GLORY OF GOD.....so these two apostles, are desiring the greatest positions of power, authority in the kingdom that Jesus sets up.....and probably don't understand yet, that they are really asking to participate in His prestige and glory.....

They hadn't learned yet.....but they will....and we NEED TO learn.....that.....

Jesus is teaching us.....that as a MAN.....He wasn't ASKING for His position of glory and authority in heaven, He is just going about humbly serving as The sacrificial Servant He is.....and His FATHER, is glorifying Him.....

(6)John 17:1 - *“Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,”*

And....

(6)Heb 5:5 - *“So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him:*

*“You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.”*

Jesus, in ALL HIS GLORY.....in His human nature.... JUST LIVES PERFECT AND RIGHTEOUSLY, AND THEREFORE, IS GLORIOUS.....

How are Jesus and The Father, glorifying each other..... THROUGH SELFLESSNESS.....THROUGH THE CROSS.....

But as we saw in verses 18 and 19.....do these apostles understand also, the COST.....of receiving these positions, in God's Kingdom.....

Do WE.....understand the cost of following Jesus, and entering into His Kingdom.....

Yes, our salvation and eternal life, is a free gift.....but in THIS LIFE....if we truly desire to follow Jesus.... and draw

closer to Him, and be more like Him.....we pick up OUR CROSS.....

There was many people who wanted to follow Jesus and stay with Jesus, but He said, even the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head..... He said if you want to gain your life, you need to lose your life.....and remember what Brent taught a while back, when Jesus told the young rich man to sell everything so that he could come and follow Him.....and the young man struggled with that, because he desired SO MUCH of the comforts in THIS LIFE.....

Jesus wants all of us..... our whole self.... to surrender all to Him.....

It's understanding that He REALLY isn't asking us to give up all these luxury's.....He teaching us to see that the things of this life, are temporal and false comforts.....ONLY HE...HAS TRUE RICHES AND ETERNAL COMFORTS.....and we humbly come to Him, forsaking everything, to JUST HAVE HIM.....

As Paul said.....

(7)Phl 3:8 - *“Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.”*

Paul isn't just talking about losing STUFF.....He is talking also about losing or not clinging to, our positions, prestige, self importance, WHO I AM.....WHO I THINK I AM.....

Never forget what we saw true humility really is.....

Jesus didn't ask for His position....He LIVES IT....therefor HAS IT.....THIS IS WHO HE IS AND ALWAYS HAS BEEN.....

These apostles may have grown in their clean living, and lived a better life since knowing Jesus, and many of us have.....but still.....they were sinners in need of a Saviour.....and they would soon understand that it never stops being about God's grace.....

The parable of the vineyard workers spoke about the sovereign grace of God.....getting what we don't deserve.....but the part WE PLAY in it.....is HUMILITY.....

How can we receive the grace of God.....if we ALREADY BELIEVE WE DESERVE SOMETHING FROM HIM.....

Do they understand yet.....well....

Jesus asks them.....

(8)Matt 20:22-23 - "*But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"*They said to Him, "We are able."

*23*So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father.'"

They said.....*We are able*.....what I want to know is....how long did it take for them to answer this to Jesus.....

Was it QUICK.....WE ARE ABLE.....or was there a pause.....umm....ya.....umm...yes.....we are able.....

As I said, these guys, still didn't get the full picture.....

Their answer was a little naive..... it wouldn't be until after the resurrection, and after the day of Pentecost, when they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, that they would understand more fully what was going on.....

Jesus told them that He was going to Jerusalem to be arrested, tortured and killed.....then rise again.....

But MORE THAN THAT.....He was taking the wrath of God for the sin of mankind.....for your sin and mine.....He's taken UPON HIMSELF.....NO ONE COULD DRINK FROM THAT CUP....

UNBELIEVABLE.....this is SALVATION.....WHAT WE ALL HAVE BEEN SAVED FROM.....

(9)Rom 5:9 - "*Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.*"

NO ONE could drink the cup Jesus drank for us.....

Sure....these guys and the others, would die a martyrs death, or in John's case, they would TRY to kill him, but he would be imprisoned on the island of Patmos until he was an old man,

then released and traditionally believed to die in Ephesus.....

James would be the first to be killed for his faith in Christ.... So yes, they drank OF the cup that Jesus drank...they gave their lives for the cause of the gospel.....they SHARED in His suffering.....which is all we can do.....and it's what we do when we are persecuted for our faith..... it's really Jesus, who they are persecuting or making fun of or laughing at when they laugh at us.....that's why Jesus said to Paul on the road to Damascus.....

Acts 9:4 - "... ***“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”***

When Paul was persecuting these Christians he was prosecuting Jesus.....

Jesus was literally baptized into His death.....for us.....

He took the wrath of God FOR US.....

His body was beaten and bruised FOR US.....

And He let His Life blood drain out FOR US.....

And these apostles and us.....are baptized into HIS DEATH....by surrendering our lives....and dying to

self.....Jesus drank of the cup of wrath from His Father, and demonstrated for them and for us....a life surrendered and given.....Jesus said.....

(10)Matt 10:38-39 - "***And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.***

39He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it."

Let's be honest, this is.....even as Christians.....this is a challenge on our faith.....

Do we understand what Jesus is asking us here?

And do we trust Him.....that He isn't asking us to give up this wonderful life and all these incredible things that this world and this life has to offer us, and what an incredible sacrifice it is..... no, he's asking us to trust Him.....that the life HE HAS for us, cannot even be compared.....because it is so magnificent.....but it does go beyond this.....

Do we understand the depth of our surrender to Him.....and trust in Him.....What He bought back for Himself, on that cross.....

(11)1Cor 6:19-20 - *“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?”*

20For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

That is putting it plainly.....

My life is no longer my own.....it’s for Jesus, and His purposes.....and if I trust Him.....I KNOW.....it is light years better than any life I could forge out for myself in this world...

*We see also.....Jesus NEVER STOPS demonstrating humility and meekness....and trust in His Father....even though He is Mighty God.....

Because He says.....

to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father.....

My goodness.....JESUS, is the guy going to the cross....and He is the guy suffering....and He will sit on the throne of power.....BUT STILL.....He humbly submits to His Father and says.....I DON’T KNOW.....my Father will take care of that....

I remember getting to a place in my life in my late 20s and early 30s, where I had tried to carve out this life for myself, and fill it with all of my dreams and aspirations..... and ultimately it brought me destruction and disappointment and selfishness, and the whole trajectory of my life was downward.....and I surrendered to God.....”*God my life is yours..... I keep messing it up, so You take it from here”*..... And 30 years later, even though there has been many highs and many lows, and many trials.....hardly a day goes by.... where I am just blown away by what the Lord has done in my life and the life with my wife and kids.....

(12) *“He comes to do not his own will, but the will of him that sent him, and so he correctly says of rank in his kingdom, It is not mine to give. How thoroughly did our Lord take a lowly place for our sakes! In this laying aside of authority, he gives a silent rebuke to our self-seeking.” (Spurgeon)*

(13) **Matt 20:24-28 - “*And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers.***

25But Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them.

26“Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.

27“And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—

28“just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.””

We need to always be willing to submit to God’s sovereignty..... that HE will do as HE wills to do..... and I just need to be thankful that I am showing up somewhere in the mix.....that I haven’t been forgotten..... AND THATS IT.....

We saw in the parable of the workers in the Vineyard earlier in this chapter, that God would reward those who have only been walking with Him for a short time.... as much as He would reward someone who has been walking with Him for decades..... anyway..... The point is.....that it is up to Him..... he does things very different than the world.....We just need to be grateful to be somewhere in a part of His plan....and to be welcomed into His family.....

The world we live in right now is a power-hungry world.....

It’s all about power and position..... and all that brings is

division..... everyone is vying for, or jockeying for power and position..... look at our political world in the west here, and the lies and division that comes from this material selfish man made thinking.....

People say....why would someone like Donald Trump or Elon Musk want to get tangled up in political leadership when they ALREADY have all the money in the world.....POWER..... Forget about STUFF....the STUFF and riches of this world....that's EASY to get....but POWER....ahhh.... The great enemy Satan....is making his way to the heights of power in this world...because that is how he thinks and what he desires.....the anti-Christ will reach there.....wanting to dominate the people, and to force worship upon himself..... But it won't last for long.....

Look at the division that this kind of thinking from James and John has already brought into the apostles.....

I don't think it's any mistake that the Holy Spirit when writing verse 24 uses..... *when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two*..... Instead of just saying that the others were displeased.....it's THE TEN.....displeased with THE TWO.....

But God doesn't work that way.....

In God's kingdom there is no stepping over others to get to the top and only the ELITE get access.....

There isn't any religious elite access....

Sure we should respect one another and honour our spiritual leaders.....but Brent and the pastors and elders of this church don't have special access to God.....we ALL gained access when this happened...

(14)Matt 27:50-51 - "*And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.*

Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split,"

The veil that separated the Holiest of Holies, God, from us..... Was split and torn down

The separation between God and man through religious and worldly systems.....was destroyed.....

Now YOU....and I.....can go to Him DIRECTLY.....

Think of it that way..... God gave His only begotten Son, Jesus, so that nothing would ever again separate you and Him..... that's what happened.....just like me.....

I don't need or want a mediator between me and my sons.....

With most of the world religions, you need a priest or a prophet or an Imam, or some enlightened individual to go between you and God for you.....

But because of Jesus, we come to God boldly and humbly and He receives us...no ELITES.....

It's unbelievable to contrast God's ways, and Satan's ways, because they are always polar opposites.....

Paul said.....

(15)Phl 2:5-8 - *“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”*

He is God.....but He serves us.....

In verses 26 and 27 there's a progression.....

To be great..... become a servant

But to be first and to lead..... become a slave.....

So never forget.....if you need your lawn mowed or your car washed.....Just call up Brent.....his phone numbers on the website.....lol.....

But seriously if you had seen what I have seen over the last 20 years, of Brent leading this church.....he truly has been a slave and sacrificed much, so that we could be here today, hearing God's Word, and worshipping our Lord.....

Then, still demonstrating His servanthood, Jesus leaves Jericho...why?.....because He's heading for Jerusalem and the cross....

And on the idea of humility, these two blind men, humbly and passionately cry out to Him.....

“Take note of what they ask for”

(16)Matt 20:29-31 - “*Now as they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him.(side note.....the Passover feast was approaching, so a few million people were making their way to Jerusalem)*

30And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, “Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!”

31Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, “Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!””

They CRIED OUT.....

I believe...Jesus needs to be approached that way by everyone.....

We need to KNOW....that we NEED HIM.....

They didn't care what the crowds were saying.....they were more concerned about their need for Jesus.....

If you come to Jesus, ignore those around you who might laugh or mock.....you KNOW HE IS THE WAY FOR YOU....

Like these men, don't be afraid to call Him by Name.....

If you don't know Jesus yet.....I pray that you become desperate like these two.....KNOWING your need for Him....

To call Him out as the Son of David....is to declare their belief, that He IS THE MESSIAH.....

And they didn't say, “*HEY, LOOK AT THIS INJUSTICE THAT HAS HAPPENED TO US.....FREE US FROM THIS.....*”

No.....they say.....”*Have mercy on us.....*”

I've always felt that about our coming to the Lord.....

Because you've heard it said.....”*When you're ready, just invite the Lord in,*”or.....”*Ask Him to come into your heart,*”

Like WE'RE the ones in control, or have the final say....

But isn't it much more fitting to say.....

HAVE MERCY ON ME LORD.....

It's a position of humility.....

Knowing He is The King, and I am unworthy, begging for His mercy and grace.....

This humble attitude is played out with the criminals on crosses...on either side of Jesus.....

(17)Luke 23:39-43 - ***“Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, “If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.”***

But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?

“And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.”

Then he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.”

And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

So in a similar manner, Jesus responds to the humility of these blind men.....He sees the truly repentant heart....

(18)Matt 20:32-34 - ***“So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, “What do you want Me to do for you?”***

33They said to Him, “Lord, that our eyes may be opened.”

34So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.”

What an amazing question.....

What do you want Me to do for you?.....

The Lord is always helping us get to that place where we realize what our greatest needs really are.....

Before I ultimately surrendered to the Lord as my Saviour, He had spent my whole life up to that point in time, nudging me closer, and pulling me closer, to realizing my greatest need.....HIM.....

Just like these two men, I wanted the veil taken away from the eyes of my soul, and I wanted to see and know the

truth..... and He did the same for me out of His compassion..... He touched me and opened my eyes so I could see the truth.....that He would forgive me, save me and give me life.....

So just like these two blind men..... The Lord is right here standing still.....He's knocking on the door with someone.... RIGHT NOW.....and calling out to anyone here today or online that doesn't know Him..... and saying.....

What do you want Me to do for you?.....

If He's calling you right here and right now.....

Respond to Him.....He can hear you.....

In your own words, say something like this to Him.....

Jesus forgive me..... have mercy on me..... I know you went to the cross to die for me, and to pay for all of my sins.....

Then you rose again.....

I give you my life.....it is Yours... and I want you to be the Lord of my life.....amen.....

If you prayed something like that..... God says you are now His..... Jesus has forgiven you..... and you now have peace with God through Jesus..... and you are born again...and you will live forever with Him in paradise.....

Can you think of anything greater?

So if this is you and you've prayed something like that to Jesus....come tell me, or tell one of the pastors or someone here at the church, or one of the people praying upfront or send us an email and let us know because we want to encourage you and help you in this new life.....we just want to be there for you.....

Let's pray.....