

## Mark 10 35-45

There has been a lot happening with Jesus and his disciples leading up to today's reading. James, John and Peter have experienced The Transfiguration of Jesus. They have seen him heal a boy possessed by an impure spirit. If that isn't enough Jesus has also told them about his death more than once!

I have struggled with this reading for the past few weeks. I have struggled with James and John for many reasons and then I have struggled with myself because perhaps at times I am not so different to James and John. I cannot move on to today's reading without reminding us of Mark chapter nine and what Jesus spoke to his disciples.

"See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise."

Jesus has told them now about His death three times and now He is telling them more details. He will not only be killed. He will be condemned, handed over, mocked, spat on, and whipped. These words have just fallen from Jesus' lips, and here come the disciples in our reading today with their request.

"Teacher, we want you to do whatever we ask." Jesus' disciples are busy displaying their ignorance. To some of us, their request of Jesus could almost be laughable. They call him "Teacher," which means that He is in charge, and He is the leader.

Where we get frustrated with people around us, Jesus has patience with them. "What do you want Me to do?" "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory."

What on earth were they thinking? It's like they are saying Jesus, you are number one, but make us number two and number three. Let us be with you, we have followed you now let us have some of the glory.

It's easy to see the foolishness and arrogance of James and John, isn't it, or is it? Jesus has told them three times about His death, and they are still looking for glory.

We could say they are foolish and inconsiderate of Jesus' and the other disciples' feelings. There was a lot of falling out and ill feeling between the

disciples. Snide comments such as "Who do they think they are? What makes you think you are better than us."

At this point Jesus would have stepped in and reminded them of who He is. So you want to be great, number two and three? Then instead of being first you need to put yourself last

He would have taught them yet again that, He had come to serve, not to be served, so serve one another!

So just what were James and John up to? Why did they want to be number two and number three? Maybe they wanted these positions so that they could soak up the glory they thought would be surrounding Jesus as he enters Jerusalem. Perhaps they wanted His glory for their glory. Soaking in glory isn't limited to just James and John.

We too are very much the same. We watch our favourite sports team, and the next day proudly proclaim, "We won!" Who is this we? What did we do but sit around on the settee and shout and cheer at our chosen team. There is nothing wrong with watching the game or shouting and cheering for our team. But it is the players that won. Yet, we say, "we won" because we want to soak up their glory for ourselves or at least join in with their glory.

James and John claimed that Jesus was Rabbi, Teacher, Number One. But then they presumed to be able to tell Him what He should do. How many of us do this? We pray and talk to God and then expect Him to deliver what we have asked.

Their words continue to echo through the centuries. I want you to do what I want, Jesus. This is what I want, so please do it.

As humans we are quick to want what we want, when and how we like it. Pay attention to me. We and our world are very much like James and John, we seek to serve ourselves. In fact, we are born enslaved to ourselves, our own wants, passions, and desires.

Jesus did come, but not to be served, He came to serve us. However, instead of giving us what we want, He gives us what we need. He gives us His own righteousness. He gave up His life so that we may have life. He was arrested, bound, and captive to the cross, that we may be set free.

Our freedom is something that we all take for granted.

We only have ourselves to blame when we realise that we have trapped ourselves in this world. We want to be good at our job, we want to be noticed going the extra mile. We want the fancy house in the street with the car to match, that costs us all too much money. Each time we help someone is it because it comes natural to us or is it because we are going to benefit from it.....

We must no longer seek the glory of this world, which is about what shines on us from the outside.

We should be living in the glory of Christ, who lives inside of us. It is His glory that then shines out of us.

Instead of giving us what we want, Jesus gives us His own flesh. Christ said Himself , "For the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

Jesus has paid for all of our sins. We have freedom of choice because of this. We should not be taking this freedom for granted. We should remember that we do not need to be held captive to our lives in this world. Like James and John are we hoping to be number two or three or to be top dog and be number one.

There is nothing wrong in trying to be the best person we can be but instead of seeking to serve ourselves, to glorify ourselves, We need to remember that Christ has freed us to serve others.

In our daily lives. We serve others in our jobs, when we do good work for our employers and help our co-workers. We serve others in our home as we care for the members of our families. Children, you serve others when you obey your parents and teachers, and when you are kind to your friends.

Christ truly is the First and the Last. He is King of the Universe. Yet, He set all glory aside, and served all, died the most awful painful death, that we would be ransomed. Set free from the enemy, and free from ourselves. He who is first became last. He gave His life as our ransom. Now, we live in Him and in His kingdom, in a glory that lasts. We owe our lives to Jesus. How are we showing and sharing our gratitude, our love, are we ready to put ourselves last, will our pride handle that?

If any of us struggle with our pride and cannot see how we can put ourselves after all others then perhaps we need to remember that

Christ has died. Christ has risen. And Christ shall come again.

Amen.