

# *Alêtheia Christian Fellowship*

*July 26, 2020*

*“Intuitive? No!”*

*Sunday school at 8:30, in-person Indoor Service at 9:15, Outdoor Service at 10:45 with King’s Kids.*

## NEWS

Be respectful of others by allowing them to deal with COVID 19 in their own way.  
Church camp at Little Bitterroot Lake, August 14-16.

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Visit the website ~ [www.myaletheia.com](http://www.myaletheia.com)

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## **MATTHEW 20:20-23 ~**

The Bible identifies the “Sons of Zebedee” as the Apostles, James, and John.

James (known as “James the Greater”) was murdered in Jerusalem in 44 A.D. Acts 12:1&2, 21-23

John, the Apostle, not the Baptizer, wrote five Bible Books and died of natural causes in about 98 A.D.

Their father, Zebedee, owned a fishing business. His wife, their mom, was Salome. (Matthew 27:55&56, Mark 15:40, John 19:25)

The request itself, along with the timing of it, proves what Luke reported... Jesus’ followers didn’t get what He was talking about in His prophetic predictions.

*Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.*

*God Bless You!*

To them, the future Jesus talked about, was inconceivable... Yet, God was not taken unawares? Aren't we like the disciples?

In verse 22, Salome drops from the scene and Jesus speaks directly to James and John. Jesus told them that they had no clue what Christian leadership entailed.

They confidently responded that Jesus was basically wrong.

The "Cup" is a completely terrifying thing unless you can look beyond it to the Resurrection.

### **MATTHEW 20:24-28 ~**

Indignant is ἀγανακτέω (ägä-näk-tě-ō), meaning to be in tremendous mental pain.

The reason they were indignant was because they were worried that they were not going to be treated as well as someone else.

Salome, James, and John were wrong, but the reaction of the "Ten" was textbook self-centered sin. Jesus was gracious and tried to explain to them.

In God's economy, those in any type of leadership, submit themselves to God, but also to those whom He calls them to serve. You want to be disappointed and end up hating church? Come to be served. You want to never be disappointed and learn to love church? Change your thinking and be like Jesus - serve others.

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Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon/Elder

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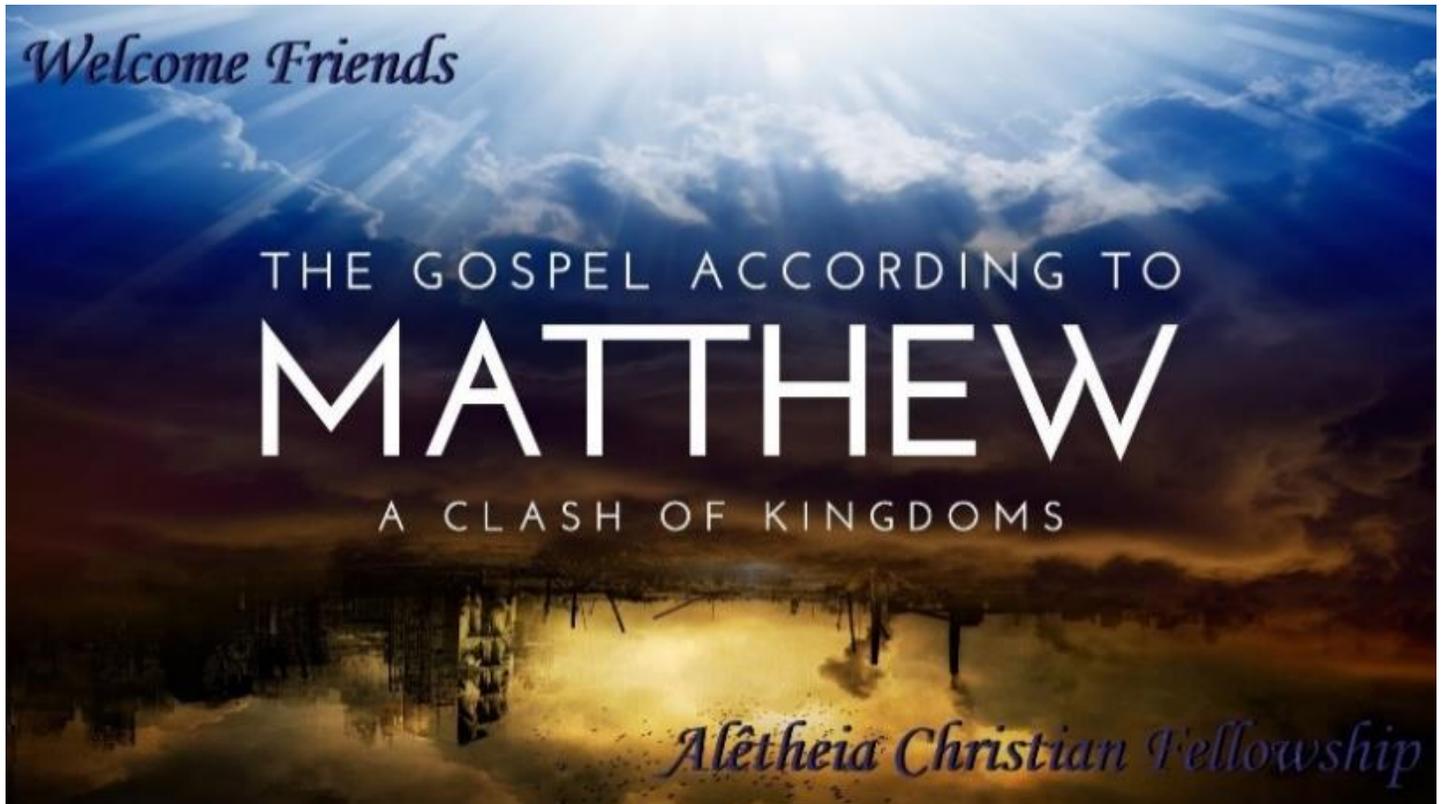


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Alêtheia ~ Matthew 20b ~ 072620  
“Intuitive? No!”

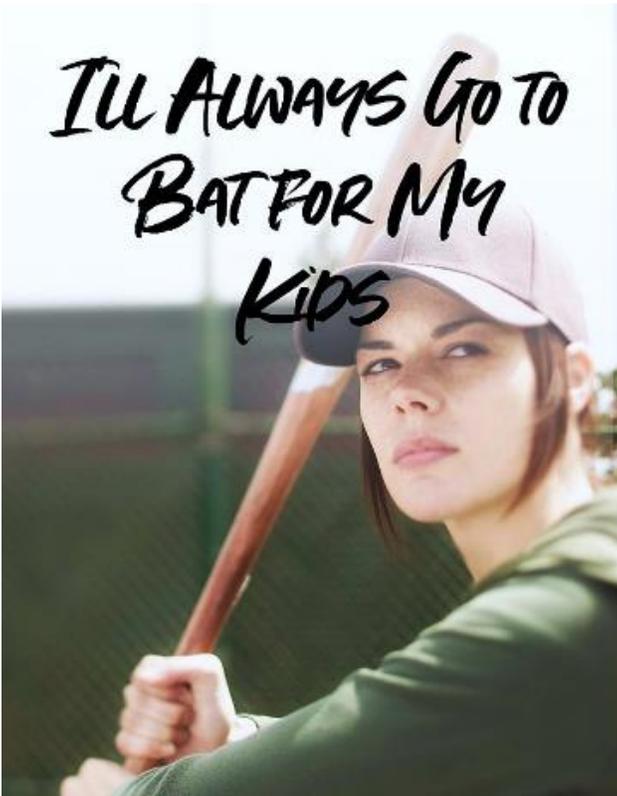


Last week we concluded with Jesus, once again, stating His fate... And yet, in perfect obedience setting His face towards that fate.

We saw that the way He did that was to focus on His Resurrection, rather than on His death. We must do the same. Nothing in this life is more important than your relationship with God through Jesus Christ our Lord empowered by the Holy Spirit... Nothing!

Pray, seek, strive, yield, be... Love.

*I'LL ALWAYS GO TO  
BAT FOR MY  
KIDS*



Matthew 20:20&21NASB,  
 20Then the mother of the sons of  
 Zebedee came to Jesus with her  
 sons, bowing down and  
 making a request of Him.  
 21And He said to her, "What do  
 you wish?" She said to Him,  
 "Command that in Your  
 kingdom these two sons of  
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Matthew 20:20&21NASB, 20Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons, bowing down and making a request of Him. 21And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Command that in Your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit one on Your right and one on Your left."

The Bible identifies the "Sons of Zebedee" as the Apostles, James, and John. Jesus had many disciples, He hand selected 12 to be Apostles, but then had what we call His inner circle. Peter, the leader and spokesman along with the brothers James and John.

James was later known as James the Greater, to differentiate him from Jesus' brother James, who was called... You guessed it, James the Lesser. The Greater was murdered in Jerusalem in 44 A.D. Acts 12:1&2NASB states, 1Now about that time Herod the king laid hands on some who belonged to the church in order to mistreat them. 2And he had James the brother of John put to death with a sword.



King Herod, in this case, was Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great. He was raised and educated in Rome alongside his best friend Gaius, who you know better as the Emperor Caligula. Shortly after having the Apostle James executed, Agrippa died

horrifically. Acts 12:21-23NASB tells us, 21On an appointed day Herod, having put on his royal apparel, took his seat on the rostrum and began delivering an address to them. 22The people kept crying out, “The voice of a god and not of a man!” 23And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died.

The Jewish General and Historian Josephus is more graphic, writing at the time (Antiquities 19.8.2 343-361), “When Agrippa had reigned three years over all Judea he came to the city Caesarea... “His flatterers cried out... That he was a god; and they added, ‘Be thou merciful to us; for although we have hitherto revered thee only as a man, yet shall we henceforth own thee as superior to mortal nature.’ Upon this the king neither rebuked them nor rejected their impious flattery... A severe pain arose in his belly, striking with a most violent intensity. And when he had been quite worn out by the pain in his belly for five days, he departed this life.”



As a side note it was Jesus' brother, James the Lesser, who became a Christian after the Resurrection, went on to lead the Jerusalem church, and wrote the Bible Book bearing his name. That James was murdered by the Jews in 62 A.D.

The Apostle James' brother was John. Not the Baptizer, the Apostle who himself wrote a Gospel, three Epistles, and the Book of Revelation. The Apostle whom Jesus loved. John moved to Ephesus, on the coast of modern-day Turkey, sometime in the late 50's or early 60's A.D. He was brought to Rome and condemned to death by the Emperor Domitian in the early 90's A.D. When John was supernaturally prevented from dying the Emperor had him exiled

instead. After Domitian was assassinated in 96 A.D., John was released and went back to Ephesus where he died of natural causes, in about 98 A.D. He was in his early 90's.



Their father, Zebedee, was a relatively successful and therefore, well to do, entrepreneur. He co-owned a fishing business on the northern portion of the Sea of Galilee. His wife, and the mother of James and John, was Salome.



Church tradition records her being the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. The Bible supports that idea... Later in Matthew's Gospel we'll see that "Many women" watched the Crucifixion, "Among them was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph (that's Jesus' mom), and the mother of the sons of Zebedee" (Matthew 27:55&56).

Mark 15:40, tells us that the women were, "Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less and Joses (again, Jesus' mom), and Salome (James and John's mom)." John 19:25 gives us the final piece, "Standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and

His mother's sister (Salome, James and John's mom), Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.”

James and John were very likely the younger first cousins of the Lord - their mother, Salome, was probably Jesus' maternal aunt. It explains the affectionate closeness of Jesus to the two brothers, especially to John, as well as the boldness of their mom to make such a request.

So, Salome, who was herself a disciple of Jesus and undoubtedly a large financial supporter of His ministry, came up and made her request.



The request itself, along with the timing of it, proves what Luke reported... Jesus' followers didn't get what He was talking about in His prophetic predictions about the disaster that awaited them in Jerusalem.

Neither Salome, nor her two sons, nor anyone else in the group, could envision what was going to take place in Jerusalem. They were certain that the Kingdom of Heaven was going to be established here on earth, once and for all, in mere days, or at most, mere weeks.

They were actually right about that - just not even close to the way they imagined it... Who then could have comprehended that the Kingdom came by the King sacrificing Himself?

Salome, so confident here, would shortly stand looking at Jesus in horror as He breathed His last on an instrument of vicious, inhumane, sadistic, torture. All hope completely lost in a day... As the fear-driven humans did what fear-driven humans continue to do without pause... Disagree, worry, hate, abuse, plot and assassinate one another.

We see it everywhere all around us, but Jesus calls us to a radically different path.

He had just told them all explicitly that He was going to arrive in Jerusalem, He was going to be betrayed, He was going to be arrested, He was going to be mocked, He was going to be abused, He was going to be handed over to the Roman government, He was going to be tortured, He was going to be executed in a most ghastly fashion, He was going to be put into a grave... But, but then, that He was going to be Raised on the third day. They missed that part, which isn't surprising since they missed everything before that part as well.



It's interesting to say the least. Several times Jesus said that He would be betrayed. That meant that there

was a betrayer in their midst and none of them seemed to get it - including Judas himself.

At what point did Judas recognize that he was the betrayer Jesus had so often mentioned? I'm guessing it was after the deed was done - after Jesus looked into his eyes in the Garden. Judas was undoubtedly haunted by that look... When Jesus was handed over to the Gentiles, as He had repeatedly predicted, Judas felt remorse, and returned his blood money to the Jewish officials. Had he lived long enough to see Jesus Resurrected... Maybe his eternity would have been different. As long as there's life, my friends, there's hope.

Anyway, the outcome that awaited Jesus in Jerusalem was completely different from the outcome they all envisioned, even though they had been told.



To them, the future Jesus talked about, was inconceivable... Yes, I do know what that word means. Yet, God was not taken unawares? It was no surprise to Him. He had everything in hand - He knew precisely what He was doing. Aren't we like the disciples? Don't we pray for God's Will to be done and then stand in shocked horror when His Will is the different from what we conceived?

If we had the faith that we should have, given that He is God, we would never be worried, shaken, or discouraged about anything. No matter what happens - He's still got us - He's still on His throne - you're still

His beloved child and everything is going according to His plan - trust Him!

Realistically, for that group walking to the Jewish Capital with Jesus at that time, how could things have gone worse? He would enter triumphantly - the people would lose their minds - overjoyed that Messiah has arrived, shouting "Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord!" And then, a few days later, their shouts turning to "Crucify Him!" What?

And they don't just talk about killing Him - it isn't just a bad turn of events ending in a close call. Jesus was brutalized, humiliated and viciously murdered. He was as dead as a doornail - they buried the man! It's not only over - now, the emboldened Jewish leaders want to go after His Followers. Their lives are in danger... How does it get worse for them in that moment?

Yet, we know, that it was all in God's well-established, fully preplanned Will - God knew exactly what He was doing. Look what happened next. Glorious Resurrection, perfect Salvation, and the sending of the Holy Spirit to dwell inside of mere human beings.

Praise be to the “Author and Finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2).

So, once again, immediately preceding this exchange, Jesus said bad things are going to happen once we get to Jerusalem. We know from Luke’s account that His disciples did not get what He was saying. Now we know that that lack of understanding extended to His aunt.

She made a formal request of her Lord that was no doubt encouraged by her familial relationship to Him. “Command that in Your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit one on Your right and one on Your left.”



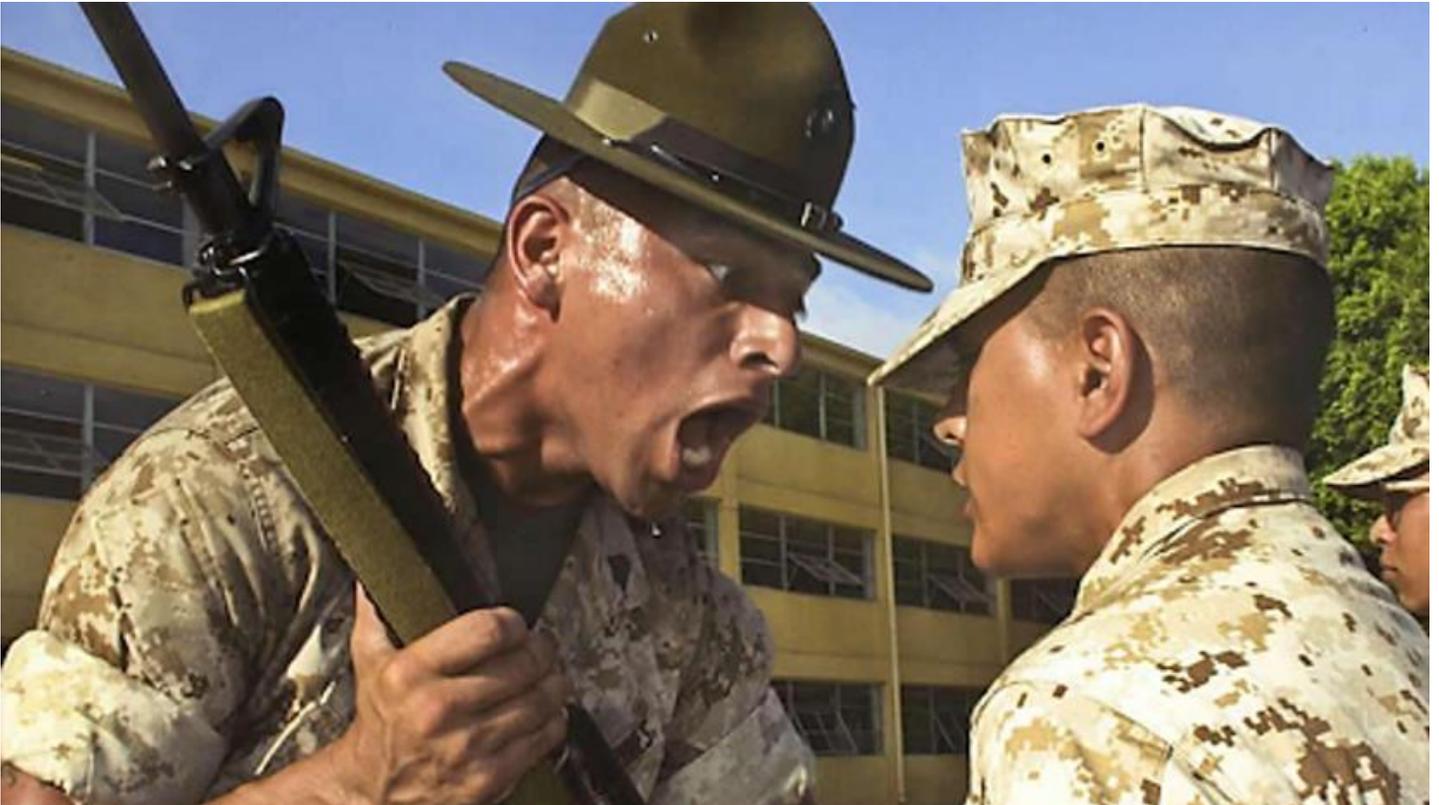
Matthew 20:22&23NASB, 22But Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?” They said to Him, “We are able.” 23He said to them, “My cup you shall drink; but to sit on My right and on My left, this is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by My Father.”

In verse 22 there is a shift in the dialogue, Salome drops from the scene and Jesus speaks directly to James and John. That confirms what we already know from Mark’s account, that both sons were part of the request. It wasn’t just mom taking the initiative and embarrassing her boys.

What becomes obvious is that Salome and her sons have discussed this among themselves prior to the request... They had talked about it, and thought it was a good idea, and had decided the best way to approach it, was to have her bring it up as a respectful request of her nephew.

Speaking directly to James and John, Jesus says you guys are way in over your heads here - you have no idea what's going on. Bottom line? Neither of you know what Christian leadership looks like, but you are about to...

They confidently tell Jesus that they do know what's going on and that they can handle it.



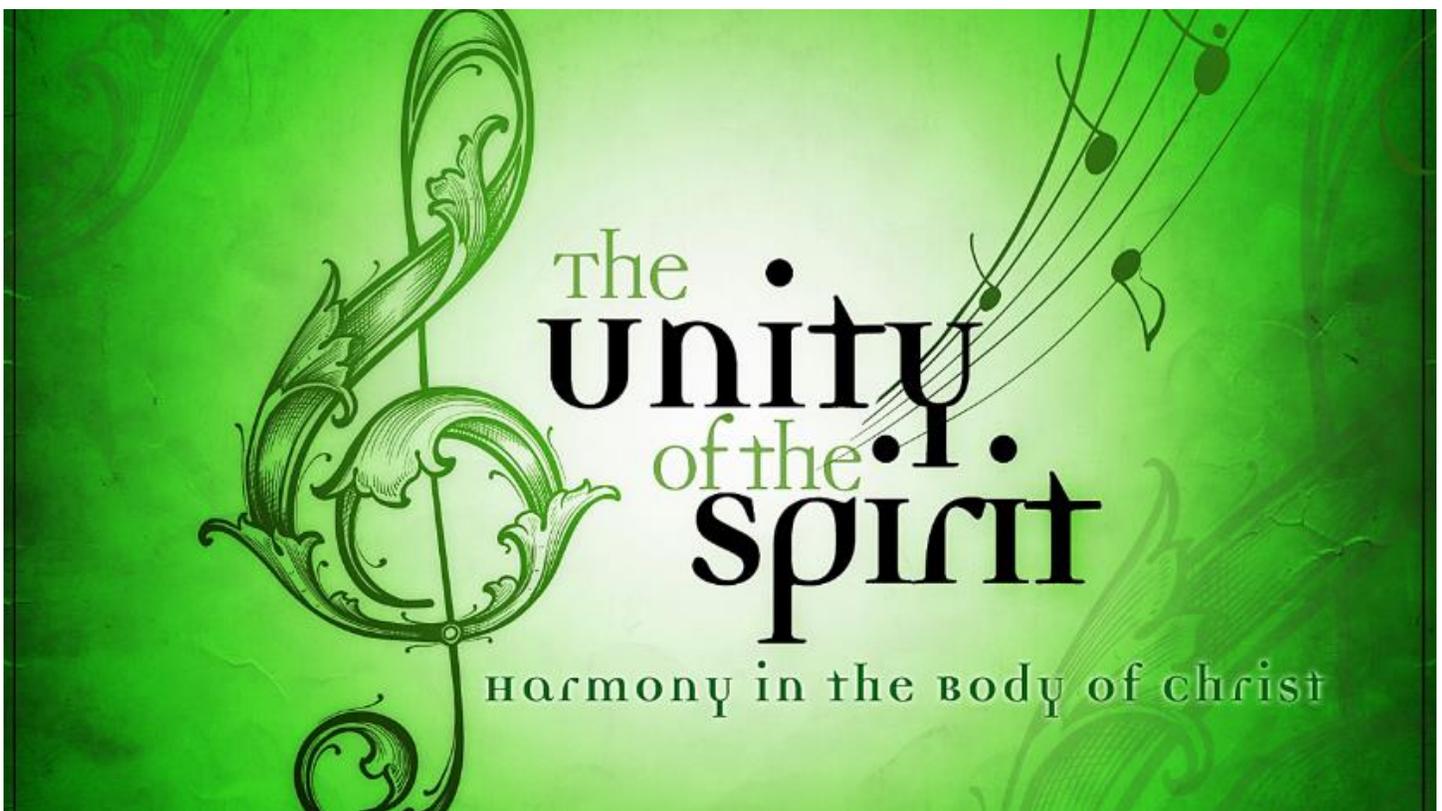
On the eve of my departure from Kalispell to San Diego for an all expenses paid vacation on the beach, Tom Snyder, my Marine Corps recruiter told me, “Scott, when you get there it is going to be a shock.” I cut him off... “No, I’m fully aware of what I’m getting myself into - good grief, I’m 18 years old, I’ve got it all figured out - nothing can shock me.” I did not have a clue. Well, neither did James, or John.



In verse 23, things turn ominous for those of us who already know the rest of the story. The “Cup” is a completely terrifying thing unless you can look beyond it to the Resurrection.

Jesus could do that... Can you? I don't know what “Cup” you must drink, but I can tell you what “Cup” you must be ready willing and able, through the power of the Holy Spirit to drink. Can you drink the “Cup” of Jesus? If that is what the Lord needs you to do, can you do it? At what point do you say, “No” to Him. “No Jesus, You're asking too much of me - I won't drink that Cup.”

In a moment, we'll continue that line of thought, but Jesus interjects a reality check at the end of the passage... The Kingdom of Heaven is at the very least a joint venture. Jesus confirms that the Kingdom will be handed over to the Father and it will be His place to make appointments.



As soon as I say that, we begin to think of the Kingdom in human terms... Appointment - "Right hand," "Left hand," position, power, authority, responsibility, and then the inevitable prestige associated with rank.

That is absolutely not the way it works... Please erase any thought you have of the Kingdom of Heaven functioning like a human institution.

In fact, as a general rule of thumb... Anytime you are dealing with Christianity take the first thought you have and know that the Truth is probably the exact opposite. Trust God when He says, "My ways are not your ways." We will all be in one harmonious accord... Jesus will not unilaterally make a decision about anything - all decisions (and even that word is misleading) will be made in concert.



Matthew 20:24-28NASB, 24And hearing this, the ten became indignant 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 their great men exercise authority over them. 26“It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, 27and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; 28just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

I mean, if this doesn't prove that the Apostles were human, nothing does. None of the others were related to Jesus and as soon as they catch wind of the request, they are filled with fear... Fear that Jesus will give the brothers more than the rest... It is a fear that they won't be paid as much for the same work.

“Indignant” is ἀγανακτέω (ägä-näk-tě-ō), it means to be in tremendous mental pain - so mental distress due to something being so wrong in your mind you are incensed, angered over the injustice, vexed, annoyed, displeased, “Indignant.”

When we see what we think is a gross unfairness - especially when we're the one being unjustly treated, it gives rise to our competitive spirit... To say the least.

The other 10 were “Indignant,” and that’s the best word to describe their feelings... The reason they were indignant had nothing at all to do with Jesus, or the Father, or with what was best for the Kingdom... It only had to do with them feeling slighted and them being worried - fearful - that they were not going to be treated as well as someone else.

Do we do that? I’ll be honest with you. It has taken the Holy Spirit a lot of time and effort to help me get to the place where I’m happy when I see others blessed more than it seems that I am blessed.

And that right there is the key... More than it seems like I am blessed. When we compare ourselves to others, we always get the comparison wrong... Always. No other person is nearly as blessed as we assume, and we are never as unblessed as we feel.

Arrogant ingratitude is the opposite of humble gratitude and it is the leading cause of, and result from, an entitlement mentality. You cannot be that person unless you are self-centered... It, as a wrapped-up enchilada, is sin and the cause of evil.

Salome, James, and John were wrong, but the reaction of the “Ten” was textbook self-centered sin. Jesus was gracious and tried to explain to them.



I see it all the time. People in churches behave like the 10, and a leader within the church goes to them and gently tries to help them see things from a Godlier perspective. The next time you're upset, and a Christian gently tries to help you see it from a different angle... Think back to this.

Jesus explained that the Kingdom of Heaven does not in any way operate like the kingdom of men. He's been telling them that since His ministry began... The Kingdom is a place where the ambitious are lost and

the humble are elevated. Where you give away without any thought of reward and you cannot contain the reward. Where you seek to live and you die, but willingly die and you live.



In the “Fallen and depraved” world of men, those with power, money, and influence get more... Those without it, get less. The gap grows and the first group begins to disdain the second as being inferior and less valuable, while the second group begins to resent and despise the first group as being unworthy oppressors.

In the history of man, the goal of the elite, is to stay elite. To accomplish this, they have used a wide variety

of techniques over the millennia, to keep the bottom 99% in their place. Fear is the most successful weapon - make people afraid, whether through starvation, disease, war, whatever hardship or panic available. Second only to fear is disunity - "Divide and conquer," as well as "Divide and rule," was used by Alexander the Great's father, to unify Greece more than 23 centuries ago. Julius Caesar was even more famous for its use. If you can get the unwashed masses to trust each other even less, than they trust the elite they are easy to oppress.

Part of the genius of the American experiment, was to instill the idea that anyone could become elite - it was a weapon of hope. However, when hope is lost, so is control. Then you must revert to fear and division. Fortunately for the elite, the masses are easily manipulated and play their part well.

In the Kingdom of Heaven, as we saw before, we are all one together unified. Yes, individuated persons, but in one completely harmonious accord of pure love. There is no elite and the rest, there is no bourgeoisie, and proletariat, no patricians, and plebeians, no aristocracy, and peasants. There is simply family.

We humans have positions, like the office of president. The person who fills that office, is then the president. In Christianity, a person is presidential and because they are, they do the work of president.

Many people think that a pastor is the person who has that title and position... Biblically, the pastor is a person, who is called and equipped by God, to pastor and so they perform those functions - they do the work... Some people recognize that, and so, they submit themselves to that pastoring... It's not a submission to a position, or to a person, but to God's ministry working through a person who is pastoring.



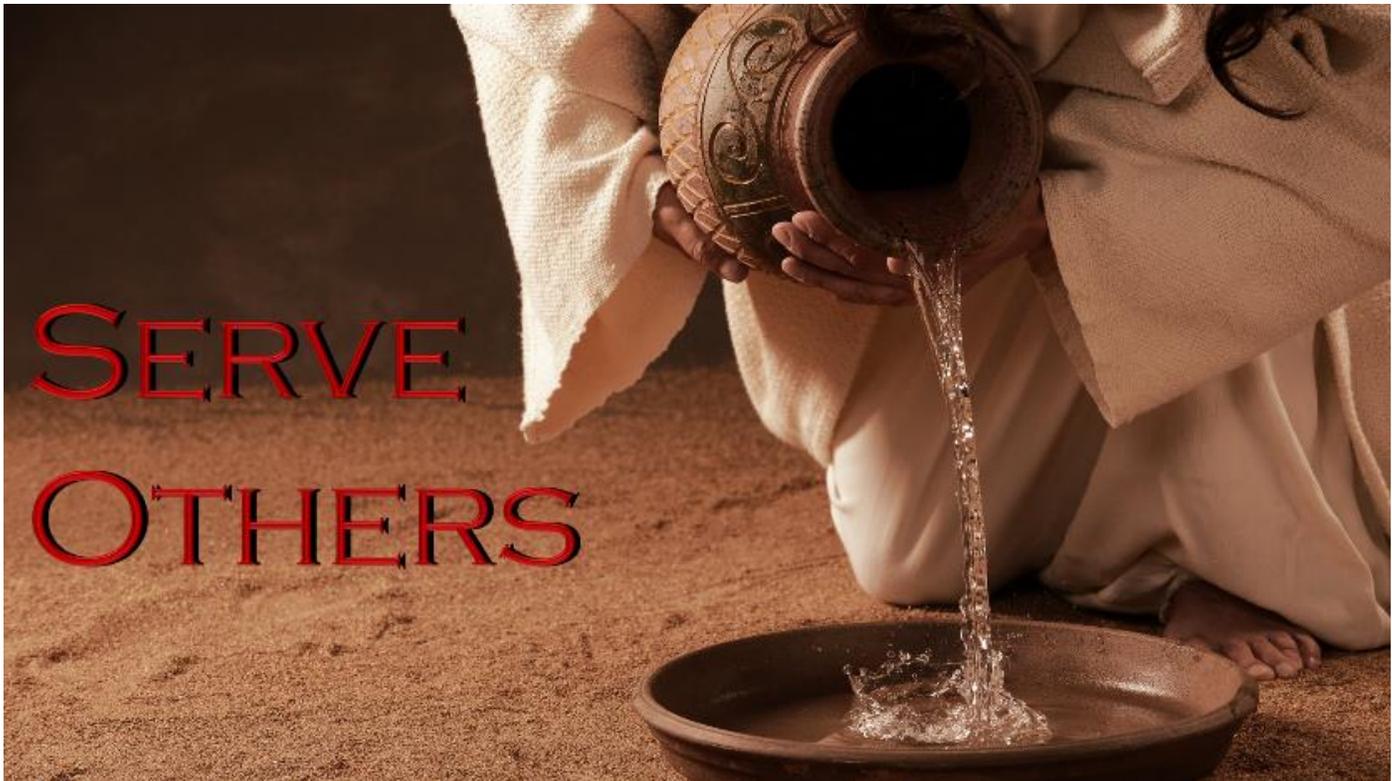
You might need to work through that one a bit...  
Bottom line, in God's economy nothing works intuitively for humans - it is upside down and backwards to our native thinking.

In God's economy those in any type of leadership submit themselves to God, but also to those He calls them to serve. A pastor must be humbly submitted to those whom God places in his care. He would lay down his life for his congregation as Christ did for His church as every husband must do for his wife.

Because we are Americans, we don't have a huge problem thinking less of our Christian leaders... For us, the problem is thinking far too highly of ourselves.

Very few of you are submitted to me in the way the Bible demands... Some not at all, others a bit, as long as I meet your expectations, most only if I don't irritate you too much.

We are all to submit to each other in the unity of the Holy Spirit - in the harmonious oneness of God's love. Sure, there are problems, but that's why He has given us the Holy Spirit.



Jesus, the Word of Almighty God made flesh and blood, did not come to be served, but to serve to the point of giving up His life... How many of us are here today to serve in that way if necessary? How many of us are here to be served?

Yet, we know that we are supposed to be like Christ... Right? Doesn't it make sense to stop thinking like a human - stop thinking of church as an entity to serve you - to make you better - to encourage you and instead, think like a Kingdom of Heaven citizen and be motivated to serve others.

I have talked to a few people over the years who have drifted away from church... Every one of them did so

because they were focused on being served and were disappointed with the service they received.

You want to be disappointed and end up hating church? Come to be served. You want to never be disappointed and learn to love church? Be like Jesus.

Service to others, is a demonstrated love for God who commands it, and love for them you serve. In the craziness of God's economy - it is the only way you will ever truly be served.