

**Life Group Notes**  
**Sunday 05 November 2017**

**Speaker:** Richard walker  
**Series:** Disciples of Jesus  
**Title:** Prayer  
**Passages:** Mark 10:35-52

We're looking this week at prayer, our text considers two requests made by Jesus. They made their requests face to face, but we make our requests through prayer, and prayer at its simplest form is talking with God.

Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem and he has told his disciples that the time has come for him to be crucified (10:32-34). The disciples are terrified by this for once they are done with Jesus, will the authorities not then turn on Jesus' followers in an effort to "cleanse" the nation of his teaching? Along with this fear the disciples' sense of self-importance is bubbling up to the surface.

James and John figure that if they are to suffer with Jesus they want to be guaranteed some kind of reward in the next life so they "ask" if they can be enthroned next to him in eternity. They had spent three years with the greatest person who has ever walked the earth yet instead of imitating his example, they want to use their privileged position with him to secure stuff for themselves.

Jesus, knowing the tumble of emotions going on within them, indirectly and lovingly rebukes them. Heaven is a world of love, where there is no grabbing at status or compensation, instead all serve one another for that is what love does. Those who seek positions and honour have not yet truly understood or been perfected by love. Love serves all without finding fault.

Mark then shows us perfectly how Jesus is full of love and recounts the healing of blind man, Bartimaeus. Bartimaeus in Aramaic meant "son of impurity". Due to, amongst other things, a misinterpretation of Leviticus 21:16-23, the culture of Jesus' day looked down on disabled people, not just as less useful, but as spiritually unworthy people. In healing this man, Jesus not only gives him the precious gift of sight, but symbolically makes him fit for worship and service to God.

The disciples are too busy wallowing in their sorrow, fear and sense of self-importance to hear this cry of faith and desperation. In calling Jesus the Son of David, Bartimaeus is expressing faith that Jesus is the Messiah and that he has power to restore all things – including his sight. And when his sight is restored, he beholds the saviour of the world. Imagine that moment.

Jesus asked the same question to both James and John and Bartimaeus, but he got very different responses. He asks, not because he doesn't know the answer, but because he wants us to lay hearts bare before him and for us to realise what is in our hearts. What do you want Jesus to do for you today?

Let us learn to ask like Bartimaeus in faith and humility, recognising our true and desperate need and seeking mercy and grace. And as we ask like Bartimaeus, let us be like Jesus – laying down our lives in service to all not dictating the terms, but obeying whatever it is that Jesus asks of us, not just to the people we like or who are like us or who we think will be useful to us at some point, but to all without finding fault in them without expecting anything in return and seeking their true flourishing as we lead them to Christ.

There is abundance of grace, but there is not abundance of choice, we either pick up our cross and follow Jesus in humble service or we don't. There is abundance of grace, but there is not abundance of time. In eternity, time will be a luxury, but in this life it is a precious resource, don't waste it – choose obedience and choose it quickly.

### Questions

- What would have been going through your mind if you were one of the disciples following Jesus to his death in Jerusalem?
- In what ways are you tempted to dictate to Jesus the terms of how you serve him?
- What had James and John not yet understood about love? Have you understood it yet?
- Who are the Bartimaeuses in your life, can Jesus trust you to bring them to him or are you too busy wallowing in your own world?
- What do you need the Holy Spirit's help with as a result of thinking on these things?