

Call to Obedience #376
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA
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A Woman to Esteem

By Pastor Reimar A. C. Schultze

Mary is famous for giving us Jesus. Salome made her mark on history by giving us two apostles and by fielding one of the boldest questions that could ever be asked. *Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children [Salome] with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom* (Matt. 20: 20, 21).

You too may have some great questions for Jesus, some relating to life in general, some very personal. Whether your questions will be answered or not, may depend on how you come to Jesus with them. As a whole, your approach; your attitude towards Jesus will set the stage for *how much* or *what all* you may get from Him. So then, how should you come to Jesus? You should come as this mother, worshipping.

Neither the Pharisees, nor the scribes and Sadducees, nor even Jesus' siblings and mother came worshipping Him before His resurrection. But this woman came and worshipped Him. Oh, my friend when you come to Jesus in that way you can expect something. Observe those who came to Jesus worshipping:

- * The wise men from the east – Matt. 2:11
- * A leper – Matt. 8:2
- * A ruler whose daughter had died – Matt. 9:18
- * A Syrophenician woman – Matt. 15:25
- * A demoniac - Mark 5:6
- * A blind man healed - John 9:38

The ones who know Jesus rightly worship Him. They surrender to Him. Worship and surrender open the doors of heaven for our petitions to be purified and answered.

So Salome, the mother of the Zebedees, came worshipping. That was good. What else was good about her? Let's look at her background before we fall into the common criticism of her competitiveness or selfishness.

1. Salome produced two “sons of thunder.” They were known as such *before* they met Jesus. God likes thunder. He sent it at the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai, He sent it at the fulfilling of the Law at Mt. Calvary. When Jesus called the Zebedees away from their father and their nets even though they were yet in their teens, they followed Him immediately.
2. Salome stuck with Jesus with the same tenacity as her sons. She ministered to Him, she was there at the cross and she witnessed the empty tomb.
3. Salome wanted her sons not only next to Jesus in this life but also in the new kingdom, forever! What is wrong with this? If every woman would have Salome's vision of raising children, our churches would be as full of thunder as they were in the first generation. If every mother strove to have her sons on the King's list rather than on the dean's list what would the world be like? How sad that many mothers push their children into the things of the world. Mothers, will your children leave a mark in eternity?
4. Salome's inquiry gave Jesus an opening to teach one of His greatest lessons.

Downplay the obvious competitiveness and look at how Jesus knew the Zebedees: Men who had forsaken all, who had kept His word, in whom He was glorified (John 17: 6, 10), who were willing to die with Him and were later filled with the Holy Spirit. They wanted nothing but Him and all of Him. The fact that they went about it the wrong way did not bring a reprimand from Jesus but rather this: *Ye know not what you ask* (Matt. 20:22).

Jesus then told His disciples what it would take to get them to high places. Oh, how happy Jesus was that He had people who wanted to know! He had to teach these men that *His kingdom was not of this world*, that the best for now was not the top but the bottom. The best was not to become a someone but to become a no -one so that He could be all in all. The best was not to strive for the honor of men, but for the honor of God. The best was not to acquire learning and worldly recognition, influence and the power that goes with it, but rather to become meek and lowly and learn of Him. God watches us in how we are with little things. Our rewards will come out of *very* little things. *Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities* (Luke 19:17).

But ... whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister... (Matt. 20:26). The Greek word for *minister* here is “deacon”: an errand boy, a waiter, a helper. You can't get to Pentecost; you can't sit close to Jesus in His throne, unless you get to the bottom in the here and now.

Notice, Jesus said *let him be **your** minister*. We all want to serve the Lord. We sing for the Lord, we teach *for the Lord*, we preach *for the Lord*, we run errands *for the Lord*. Here Jesus smashed into smithereens this perverted notion

that we can serve God without serving each other. He said to them: For the last three years you have put everything into serving Me. You have done nothing in serving each other. I am dying to serve others. Now you too must get busy in serving one another and others. ***If you do not serve each other, you do not serve Me.*** Serve one another, in the mundane, insignificant, dirty, despicable things, in the things for which the world has no reward. Jesus demonstrated the depth of what He meant when He put on an apron to wash the disciples' feet. And should not this kind of serving begin in our homes?

So that is **kingdom greatness**. The men and women who will sit on Jesus' left and right may well be today's janitors, dishwashers, baggage carriers or errand runners. Aren't we church people so much like the gentiles, reveling in name recognition? When a soul has been won to Christ we want it known that we had a part. When our church building is paid for we would like it to be leaked out that we sacrificed for it. When we give money to a poor church member we hope that someone will notice. Oh, how we love the mention of our name! Too many of our good works lack inspiration unless they somehow gain us a higher status amongst our fellow men. Jesus told the Pharisees: *How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?* (John 5:44).

We have to get to the very bottom in order to end up on the top. Have you read these words lately? *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me* (Matt. 25:40). Jesus died for your brothers. What are you doing for them? To the extent to which you attend to your brothers need, to that extent will you know God. Knowing God, truly knowing God comes out of going and remaining at the bottom. That is why we have: *Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith (Gal. 6:10). *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* (1 John 4:20)

Then Jesus proceeds with *And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant...*(Matt. 20:27). This opens the door for us to become **the greatest of the great**. The Greek word "servant" really means "slave". A slave is **below** an errand boy or baggage carrier. He is a servant to servants. He is the man who runs errands for the errand boy and carries the baggage for the baggage carrier. If you serve those people, if you get beneath their needs you are headed for the very top forever. Jesus said: *Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many* (Matt. 20:28). *But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant [slave], and was made in the likeness of men* (Phi. 2:7).

Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. This is a noble petition from a noble woman, made more noble as the noble Prince of the universe cleansed it of all its impurities. Jesus said that the disciples did not know what they asked when they made this petition. Today we do know and we will be held accountable for knowing. Remember, He said *my kingdom is not of this world.*

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