



Daily Reflections

July 25, 2018

Scripture

Matthew 20: 20-28

The mother of the sons of Zebedee approached Jesus with her sons and did him homage, wishing to ask him for something.

He said to her,

"What do you wish?"

She answered him,

"Command that these two sons of mine sit, one at your right and the other at your left, in your Kingdom."

Jesus said in reply,

"You do not know what you are asking.

Can you drink the chalice that I am going to drink?"

They said to him, "We can."

He replied,

"My chalice you will indeed drink, but to sit at my right and at my left, this is not mine to give but is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father."

When the ten heard this, they became indignant at the two brothers.

But Jesus summoned them and said,

"You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great ones make their authority over them felt.

But it shall not be so among you.

Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant;

whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave.
Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served
but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Our Scripture Reflection

James and John knew that their desire for seats of honor was self-centered and arrogant so they got their "Mommie" to do the dirty work of asking on their behalf. Jesus had just forecasted His passion and death and they want a free ticket to glory! How shameful. Jesus instructs them that granting places at the Kingdom table was at His Father's discretion. Suffering was the price that made one worthy of such a seat of honor.

Food for your Journey

There's a reason Jesus said "You shall be my witnesses," and not "You shall be my marketers."

Almost no one in America could fail to recognize that marketing -- both its language and culture -- has become an epidemic. And that, more unfortunately, it has become a significant means of "promoting" the church and the gospel in American Christianity, with billboards, soundbites, slogans and come-ons. The language and practice of marketing so saturates the Christian world, it is difficult to remember a time when it was not so fashionable.

Should it surprise us that in this church-marketing era, members demand more and more from their churches, and if churches don't deliver, they take their spiritual business elsewhere? Have we ever seen an age in which church transience was such an epidemic?

Should it surprise us that in this era, pastors increasingly think of themselves as "managers," "leaders" and "CEOs" of "dynamic and growing congregations," rather than as shepherds, teachers and servants of people who need to know God? And that preaching has become less an exposition of the gospel of Jesus' death and resurrection and more often practical lessons that offer a lot of "take-away value," presented in an efficient, friendly manner, as if we were selling cheeseburgers, fries and a shake?

How can we possibly communicate the radical, self-giving love of God to our culture if we continue to use a method that by its very nature replaces the notions of sacrificial service for an exchange of goods and services?

--Mark Galli, "Do I have a witness?," Christianity Today, October 2007.

A Prayer from the Heart

Precious Lord, I love You and I want to spend eternity with You in Heaven. Help me, Lord, with Your Grace to live a life whereby I will be found worthy to enjoy Paradise one day with You. Amen