

Mark10:35-45

In our text today, before the death and resurrection of Jesus, the disciples want a share in the glory of Jesus. After the death and resurrection of Jesus, they joyfully share in the glory of Jesus.

In our text today, before the death and resurrection of Jesus, the disciples long to drink from the cup that Jesus will. After the death and resurrection of Jesus, they joyfully drink the same cup that Jesus does.

And when I put it like that it seems fairly redundant, and doesn't seem like much changed. They wanted glory and the cup, they got glory and the cup, good for them, I guess right?

But folks, in the death and resurrection of Jesus everything changes, and the disciples themselves do too.

Before the death and resurrection the disciples want a share in the glory of Jesus, but from a worldly and prideful perspective. They want thrones. They want power and authority and servants.

Before the death and resurrection the disciples want, and think they are ready for, a taste of the cup Jesus will drink. The Perspective of pride says "I can do that. I can accomplish that, yes, I am good enough, we are strong enough, we will take whatever cup of glory you are having Jesus, make it a double!"

They would simply like a nice big kingly goblet of wine brought to them as they sit at the right and left of their Lord in his victory in Jerusalem! That's not too much to ask is it?

Jesus says, "You don't even know what you are asking."

The pericope starts with us in expectation, wondering what the disciples will ask.

"Hey, do me a favor!" They say. And you kind of feel for Jesus, "Ummm, Well, before I say yes or no, I'd like to know the favor is, before I get stuck helping you move or something..." Yet when we hear their request, we also hear that it is really they who are ignorant, not Jesus. It's James and John who don't know what's going on here.

They have no idea what the cup, what the baptism, and what the seats in glory truly are. They want the cup of the Lord's *glory* but do not understand that the cup our Lord is referring to is the cup of *suffering* he must drink. It's the cup Jesus prays in the garden would pass from him, since it is so tough to drink. So painful. So humiliating. So cursed.

And we might say, "Well they weren't asking for *that cup of suffering*, they want the cup of *glory*." But the Gospels are so clear: that these are the same cup.

Jesus tries to tell them. He teaches the lowest are the greatest, and the humblest are the most glorified. And so, we might ask, when is Jesus, not according to the world

but to the Kingdom, when is he at his lowest, his most humiliating, and where is he serving the world the most in love and sacrifice? We know this! It is when he is seated, with nails and a crown of thorns in humiliation, and in pain, and in forsakeness on a cross. Where the bleeding heart of God goes out to the world as he is mocked and derided. That is where he is at his lowest, most shameful, where he becomes sin for us, where he becomes the curse for us. And therefore, since the lowest receive the greatest glory in God's kingdom, therefore that is precisely when he is most glorified.

And do we not give him all glory and praise for his merciful, servant, saving work there? We do. The Cup of Glory and Suffering are one in the same. We know it, the scriptures proclaim it.

Furthermore, when Jesus is seated in glory with nails and a crown of thorns to suffer as the servant of all, who is seated next to him there in that glory on his right and on his left? The thieves. "Those spots are taken, James and John, sorry. Too bad for you, I guess."

They had no idea what they were asking. And so on Maundy Thursday when it comes down to soldiers and trials and crosses, when they have every opportunity to share seats and cups with Jesus. They are gone. They don't want anything to do with that "glory."

And yet, and yet! After the resurrection we read: Acts 12:1-2 – “About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. 2 He killed James the brother of John with the sword.” Does James drink the same cup as Jesus - As Jesus said he would? Yes. And he did so, I’m sure, by the Power of the Holy Spirit, bold and brave and joyfully and therefore now, seated with the saints, does James share in the glory of the eternal victory feast? Yes, he does. But he does so not because any earthly or worldly pride or accomplishment or authority carried him. No, but because he shared in the suffering of his Lord, and served his Lord and the Lord’s people. And why would he do that? Because his Lord and ours paid his ransom price, so why wouldn’t he go boldly to death and drink that cup?

It's the same for John. He shares in this cup as he is imprisoned and exiled, as he serves the Lord’s people. He, after the death and resurrection, is not after vain worldly praise, no, he decreases that the Lord might increase. And he now shares in the glory of eternal life because of the work of his King, the ultimate suffering servant, Jesus.

Glory and the Cup of Jesus: it’s what they want before and after their Lord’s death and resurrection, but oh so much has changed.

They are changed. They are brave, they are bold, and they finally see the Kingdom of God is not a worldly competition, competency, or promotion based business.

No, it's glory is in truth, and mercy, service, and sacrificial love. Suddenly the glory of the world and its seats of honor have lost their luster, even as now they rust and fade with time, age, and corruption. Suddenly the victory over the grave won through suffering shines far brighter. They are changed by the death and resurrection of Jesus.

So too are we. Here we are after the death and resurrection. We have received this teaching. Are we immune to the ways of the world and its rubrics and vying for power and influence? Are we free from the temptation to overlook the lowly, the meek, the unsuccessful? Are we indignant at others who maybe aren't as pious as us? "They don't come as often, they don't serve as much!" Do we join in with the other disciples, "How could James and John ask for glory, the nerve of them!" Of course they, and we, if we are honest, want that prideful glory and recognition too, but at least we have enough fake humility not to ask for it so openly! Sheesh.

So may we repent. Worldly pride is a poor lens through which to study the Glory of God's kingdom. It won't add up, or rather, it will be the mirror opposite. The antidote, the way to see clearly is to focus on what changed James and John – the death and resurrection of Jesus. May we let that, along with his Word change us. Renew our mind, worldview, perspective, however you want to put it. May the Holy Spirit grant us to see past worldly authority, influence, wealth, and convenience. May he make in us hearts that long to serve not because that gains us

brownie points in the kingdom, but because we simply have been given hearts that care for the neighbor and the Lord's Church. May he give us minds that conform to his word of truth. May we decrease that others might increase. Why? Because Jesus gave his all for us out of love.

And there at a cross and empty tomb may we see what truly matters in life. May we see what truly matters in death. A risen Savior who offers something lasting. Who pays a ransom price no salary could ever cover.

And to that end, when the cup of suffering, strife, pain, sickness, fear, tragedy, when it comes our way. Instead of despairing that perhaps this means God hates us, or is uncaring, or not real. May we instead recall the cup of suffering that Jesus and his disciples drank. Do we not volunteer that suffering upon us as we partake of this cup here today that he gives us? It is a cup of suffering: his blood shed for you – that hurt. But is it not also a cup of glory for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life!? So be brave and drink.

Do we not share in his baptism? Romans 6 "Don't you know that all who are baptized into Christ Jesus are baptized into his death?" It's a baptism of suffering, of death, so why are we surprised when they come our way? As if Jesus wasn't good enough to suffer, but surely we are! Hardly! We share in the baptism he instituted, a baptism of death. But is it also not a baptism of glory and resurrection?

Romans chapter 6: For if we share in a death like his we will certainly share in a resurrection like his!”

James and John then were able to drink the cup of suffering, the cup of glory, Not because they are so great, but because their risen Savior is. You belong to that same Savior. He has paid the ransom price for you. He continues to serve you with his Word, the cup, and has in the font. He will not forsake you now, nor will he forsake you in times of suffering. He, more than anyone else, is qualified to usher his people through suffering to eternal glory. Because he has gone through it and overcome it – you, people loved by Jesus, will overcome too. Amen.