

# A Pair of Requests

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[ 0 : 00 ] Such a joy to be with you. See a lot of new faces today. My name is Ed, one of the pastors of Trinity Cambridge.! It's my greatest pleasure to preach God's word this morning.

Let's open up our Bibles as we continue on in our series in Matthew. If you don't have a physical copy of a Bible and would like one, feel free to raise your hand and we'd be happy to gift you one. You could take home and keep for yourself. Today we are in Matthew chapter 20. Starting verse 17 all the way to the end of chapter 20.

So, Matthew 20, 17 to 34. Matthew 20, 17 to 34.

Please bow your heads as we come before the Lord in prayer. Heavenly Father. Heavenly Father. We are weary, broken, and tired from this week.

[ 1 : 06 ] We come before the Lord who invited us. Come. Find rest for your souls. We want to hear from you.

We want to sit at your feet this morning. We want you to address us and to speak to us what we need to hear so that we would be more and more like you.

That we would know your love and that we love others. Lord, we pray that you would address us so that we would learn how to humbly serve one another just like Christ you served us.

Father, I pray that you would take the five loaves and two fish that I can offer and multiply it to feed the masses this morning.

Your people are hungry. So, please feed them. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. If you guys would rise.

[ 2 : 12 ] If you are able to honor the reading of God's word. What we're about to hear is really the only perfect part of this sermon. We're going to hear from God's infallible, inerrant word.

Starting from verse 17. And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the 12 disciples aside. And on the way, he said to them, See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes.

And they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. And he will be raised on the third day. Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons.

And kneeling before him, she asked him for something. And he said to her, What do you want? She said to him, Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.

[ 3 : 19 ] Jesus answered, You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink? They said to him, We are able.

He said to them, You will drink my cup, But to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.

And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers. But Jesus called them, called them to him and said, You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.

It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

And as they went out of Jericho, a great crowd followed him. And behold, there were two blind men sitting by the roadside. And when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David.

[ 4 : 36 ] The crowd rebuked them, telling them to be silent. But they cried out all the more, Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David. And stopping, Jesus called them and said, What do you want me

to do for you?

They said to him, Lord, let our eyes be opened. And Jesus, in pity, touched their eyes, and immediately they recovered their sight and followed him.

This is God's holy and authoritative word. Please be seated. In early 2010, a catastrophic magnitude 7 earthquake struck the country of Haiti, leveling the already poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, killing more than 200,000 people, and leaving 1.5 million people homeless. That summer with my church, I visited Haiti and saw the aftermath for myself. It was unimaginable the kind of living conditions people suffered there.

Sprawling tent cities with thousands and thousands of people living in an open field under makeshift tarps with no jobs, no safety, no money, no privacy, no running water, no electricity.

[ 6 : 13 ] So when the new president of Haiti, Michel Martelly, comes into power the very next year, you might expect him to do everything that he can to serve his people.

But instead, even while knowing millions and millions of people live like this, he gives himself a budget of \$20,000 a day to spend overseas, giving his wife and each of his family members \$7,500 a day.

He raises \$40 million in tax with \$25 million of that going unaccounted for. And this kind of corruption really is not anything new in the country's history.

Nearly every single president has been like this. I remember one conversation that I had with a local asking him what he thinks this country needs to change for the better.

And his answer was simple. We need leaders who serve us. Plainly put, one bad leader, just one bad leader, has a disproportionate power to inflict great harm.

[ 7 : 23 ] The Church of Jesus Christ has not been immune to bad leadership. Not all leaders in the church are bad. There are faithful pastors out there.

But in recent years, the church has suffered reports of moral failure by some of its most prominent leaders. And it's not just the pastors who are in the national spotlight.

These reports can come from big and small churches. From rich and poor churches. From denominational, non-denominational churches. Some groom others to commit adultery.

Misappropriate funds. Plagiarize. Bully people. What we need today, both in and out of the church, is not a wholesale change to remove leadership, but to transform leadership.

And it's not just the change needed for all current and future leaders. These leaders only represent the sinful nature that's in every single one of us.

[ 8 : 29 ] If we were in their positions of unchecked power, how might we be corrupted? For there is a bent in every single one of us to stand above others, use others, compete with others, try to stuff others down.

Even in our lives today, in our social circles, we undermine colleagues, gossip about friends, keep score with our spouses, use the silent treatment, try to keep others down, and judge others.

Is this not how we try to lord it over and exercise authority over the people in our lives? Is it not our most natural, unlearned instinct to try to look out for number one at the expense of those around us?

And we know what that kind of treatment begets. Only more of the same right back at us, right? In an endless cycle of competition, envy, bitterness, and strife, for all our achievements in society, we still haven't found to break out of this cycle.

Left to ourselves, we never will. We need something, or rather someone, to break the cycle.

[ 9 : 51 ] That's exactly who Jesus Christ is. Though he be a great king, Jesus came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Then and only then, when we understand this, when we have been served by him, then we learn how to serve others. Begin to see that cycle broken. That's the main point of my sermon today, is to serve.

Serve because Christ first served us. And in turn, we'll observe really everything in this passage, how Jesus does everything to serve. He serves with his words, he serves with his very life, and he serves with his hands.

For the first time in Matthew, Jerusalem is not a distant future, but it's a near reality. It's not a place that he will go to, or must go to, but he is going to, as he goes up to Jerusalem.

Matthew accurately captures the vertical movement necessary when going to Jerusalem with that word up, because it was more than 3,000 feet of elevation over 17 miles.

[ 11 : 04 ] And it's these little details in the text that suggest to me that truly the gospel was indeed written by a first century Jew who lived at the time of Jesus.

And he just knew these cultural details. Not by religious zealots or liars or fakers who fabricated these texts centuries later. No, this was truly written by Jesus' disciples.

The gospel writers just knew these details because they lived it. Just like how we Bostonians, we Canterbridgeans, we just know that driving through I-93, the tunnels, will make you lose your GPS and probably make you lose your exit.

Or that the red line's AC is just down half the time in the summer. On the way, Jesus pulls aside his 12 disciples, presumably from the large crowd that is following him, and he confides to them his third and final passion prediction.

In chapters 16 and 17, Jesus has already predicted that he must go to Jerusalem for his death and resurrection. But knowing that the time is soon coming, unlike before, he prophesies with the greatest detail and specificity yet.

[ 12 : 22 ] He predicts seven specific things that will happen to him. That number one, he will be delivered over to the Jewish chief priests and scribes. Number two, be condemned to death.

Number three, because the Romans controlled capital punishment, the Jews will deliver him over to the Romans. Four, to be mocked. Five, flogged. Six, crucified.

And seven, most importantly, he will be raised on the third day. Jesus gives the play-by-play. He knows every detail down to excruciating details.

He would be hated by Jew and Gentile alike, a rare collaboration from these polar opposite groups. Like oil and water, these two groups have not historically mixed, but their hatred, their rejection of Jesus emulsify them together.

Together, they would mock the God who made their mouths, flog the God who made their hands, and kill the God who gave them life. Why does Jesus predict this up to three times with greater specificity?

[ 13 : 35 ] Right? The Bible adamantly refuses to give any notion that Jesus' life was taken against his will. His death was anything but a miscalculation or an accident.

To those on the outside, it may look like the Jews and the Romans had the last say, but these predictions really show the hidden truth that they were mere pawns in the master's hand.

Jesus wants to make it clear that he absolutely already knew the unimaginable suffering that awaited him. And yet we see him striving up that hill, fighting against gravity with every step, determined to get to the cup that he's determined, already determined, to drink.

But that's not just to defend himself. I think with these three predictions, the always serving Jesus is looking to serve his disciples by drilling these words into their heads, by the power of repetition. For repetition is the hammer that drives the nails of truth deeper and deeper and deeper into our hardened hearts. And especially on those days, those days filled with grief and suffering, the muscle memory of reciting, hearing, memorizing God's word, it's lodged into our hearts by the sheer force of repetition.

[ 15 : 07 ] It fills our mouths with truths that we need most when we can't possibly drum it up ourselves. And that's exactly how Jesus intended to serve his disciples with this repetition.

He knew that the suffering, it was coming for him, but he also knew that the sadness, confusion, the shame that disciples would experience at the death of their master, that was coming too for them. So he repeats this prediction again and again and again. Three times so that when the bottom fell out, they would be anchored by these very words.

And be reassured that Jesus truly was the Messiah. Jesus wanted them to know that he was in control over his suffering. Not just in control, but that he would have ultimate victory over it. Raised again on the third day in triumphant victory. Repetition can have that kind of power in our darkest of days. As an example, I think of Todd Beamer.

[ 16 : 16 ] On September 11th, Todd was aboard Flight 93 on a routine work flight when four Al-Qaeda terrorists hijacked the flight. Their plan was to crash the plane into a building in Washington, D.C.

After realizing that they were not going to get out of this alive, Todd and the other passengers courageously decided to storm the cockpit and jump the hijackers. But not before he recited the Lord's Prayer in Psalm 23 out loud with the other passengers.

Here's Lisa Beamer, his wife and the mother of his two children that he left behind, recounting the story. Although I'd never heard of, I'd never before heard of Todd reciting the Lord's Prayer in pressure situations, I wasn't surprised to hear he had quoted it.

Recently, our pastor had taught a 12-week series of lessons on the Lord's Prayer. Todd had known the prayer since childhood, but each line of it had become more and more special to him as he understood how fraught with meaning it really was.

And she goes on to say, interestingly, Psalm 23 wasn't a mantra that Todd recited often, but it was resident in his spirit because he had learned it as a child.

[ 17 : 43 ] When the crisis came, Todd was able to tap into a deep reservoir of faith that he had been storing up for years. once he found courage in those words, in God's words, he took a deep breath and said to his fellow passengers, are you ready?

Okay. Let's roll. And stormed the cockpit with a food trolley and prevented the terrorists from hitting their intended target. That's the power of repetition.

still so far, it doesn't seem like it has its intended effect on the disciples. Right? The disciples show again and again that they still don't get what Jesus is saying.

After the first prediction, Peter makes a fool out of himself telling Jesus that this would never happen to you, Lord. After the second prediction, the disciples debate who will be the greatest. we'll see how this pattern continues then after this third prediction. It starts with meeting an unfamiliar character with an unusual request.

[ 18 : 57 ] The mother of the sons of Zebedee, James, who's not to be confused with James the half-brother of Jesus, and John the beloved apostle who wrote many books of the Bible, their mother enters scene for the first time.

She bows her knee before Jesus. people back then didn't typically kneel before an ordinary rabbi or a teacher. This was a posture of someone standing before a king.

In Jesus, by faith, she rightly sees that he is going to be the next king of Israel. So after being prompted by Jesus, she makes an extraordinary bold request.

say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand, one at your left, in your kingdom. Before everyone else, make my two sons the most honored persons in your world changing, systems breaking kingdom.

It's interesting to note that in Mark's account, the mother is actually absent, and the request comes directly from the sons themselves. I think this hints that while mom was the one to approach Jesus, as any good mama would do to vouch for her sons, the sons, it seems like, were the masterminds.

[ 20 : 23 ] Jesus confirms this by quickly bypassing the mother and directly addressing James and John. And if you know anything about them, it fits their profile perfectly.

These are the same men who asked Jesus if they should call down fire to obliterate a Samaritan village that rejected them, and whom Jesus nicknamed the sons of thunder for their boisterous, blustering personalities.

This is the kind of people that they are. Where do they get such a request? From last week's passage, Jesus' promise rings in their ears.

Truly I say to you, in a new world, when the son of man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Considering what we read in our passage today, I think we catch x-ray vision into the son's hearts when they hear this promise.

James and John are no-name Galilean fishermen, who are sons of a no-name Galilean fisherman. These men are the obscure of the obscure.

[ 21 : 35 ] If Jesus hadn't chosen them as disciples, their legacy, their memory would have quickly been erased off the face of the earth. But instead of being floored that even they, even they get to sit on thrones in the new creation, we see that in the heart of hearts.

In their heart of hearts, it was not enough. Jesus' grand promise doesn't satisfy their insatiable, greedy appetites.

consider, too, that if they sit at the right and left hand of Jesus, then where will Peter sit? Maybe that's just their point.

Perhaps they saw Peter as vulnerable, the chosen leader, his head will fall. After all, he did just get rebuked and called Satan four chapters ago.

maybe they think it's their time to take the top spot. To all this, Jesus has one simple response to this political power play.

[ 22 : 45 ] You don't know what you are asking for. Jesus knows that these slow disciples still think and hope that Jesus is going into Jerusalem guns blazing to inaugurate the era of military and political peace for the nation of Israel.

But really, there's more to their misunderstanding. In Jesus' mind, they completely misunderstand the nature of leadership. For to Jesus, leadership is not to be first in line to be glorified, but it's first in line to suffer.

If you wish to be seated in the heavenly places, in the highest places, be ready to suffer. God, he asks, do you know what you're asking for? Do you know that positions of power and authority come with all the burden of power and authority?

Do you know that to be at the center of attention means that you are at the center of attention and with all the scrutiny that entails? Do you know that in earthly kingdoms, importance is defined by how many people serve you, but in my kingdom importance is defined by how many people you serve?

Do you know that glory only comes after great suffering? Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink? Here, Jesus so clearly ties the ascension of glory to the drinking of a cup.

[ 24 : 22 ] And what cup is this? We all know it's the cup that Jesus refers to in the garden, the garden of Gethsemane. He knows that his one mission is to drink down to the dregs the undiluted cup of wrath on behalf of God's people.

And it's this cup that would cause Jesus incredible suffering. A cup that he asked to be removed from him, not once, but twice. A cup that even the thought of causes Jesus to sweat great drops of blood.

Notably, the only other time this exact phrase, one on the right and one on the left, is used in Matthew is when Jesus is hanging on the cross. When Jesus is enthroned as king on the cross, when his title, King of the Jews, is plastered in multiple languages so that all can see.

When people cry out, Hail, King of the Jews! Matthew 27, 38 says, then two were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.

But these are not James and John, or Peter or Andrew, or any of the disciples as a matter of fact. They confidently say, we can drink this cup.

[ 25 : 42 ] But when push comes to shove, and the cup gets passed to them, when the prospect of death stares them right in the face, not one of them stands next to Jesus.

They all run off, scatter off in the middle of the night to abandon their Lord, to leave robbers and criminals the honor of dying next to Jesus, one on the right, one on the left.

But just like Peter has his redemption story, these other two will, and it's remarkable that we think that a redemption story is to die. Jesus knows that they will eventually partake of this cup, not to drink down to the dregs the wrath of God on behalf of other sinners, but truly the cup of suffering. For James will be executed in Acts 12 at the hand of Herod, and John will be cast out on the island of Patmos in exile. But even then, it is not Jesus' place to grant them to sit at the left, to sit at the right, but it's only the fathers.

Jesus models this self-effacing humility. It's confirmed by these famous verses in Philippians 2. do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

[ 27 : 08 ] Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

The sons of thunder grasped at something that wasn't theirs. Jesus refused to grasp at something that was rightfully his.

As the incarnate son humbles himself in total submission to the father, though they are equal, fully equal in intrinsic power and essence and authority, he humbles himself.

And because of that submission, Jesus says, that's why he says, to sit at my right and left is not mine to grant, but it is for those to whom it has been prepared by my father. At its very core, what these brothers get wrong is summed up by theologian Francis Schaeffer.

Christ says, we are to take the lowest spot, but we like to take the higher. But this is not the Lord's way. Leadership is not to be sought.

[ 28 : 29 ] Leadership is to be waited for. To the extent we want power among men, to that extent we are in the flesh and not the Holy Spirit.

The extent to which I demand leadership, I am not ready to be a leader. leader. It is a noble aspiration to pursue leadership for the sake of serving others, as the Apostle Paul affirms in 1 Timothy 3 regarding eldership in the church.

But the manner by which you do so is of utmost importance. Are you seeking the power and the prestige of leadership, leadership, or are you seeking the cup of suffering that leadership entails? This fundamental mistake isn't exclusive to James and John. When the ten hear this, they are fuming mad. They're indignant at the brothers.

They're probably bickering with one another. Probably they're already scheming on how to get back at the brothers. So the ever-patient Jesus, their teacher, he calls them to him and says these words, you know that the rulers of the Gentiles lorded over them and their great ones exercised authority over them.

[ 29 : 53 ] The Jews know precisely what Jesus is talking about. Under the boot of Roman rule and oppression, the Jews suffered greatly.

In the original Greek lorded over and exercised authority over, both are words that start with the prefix Kata, which means down.

The picture is clear. Their leaders stuff others down, keep others down, so that they can prop themselves up. They treat their people like mere stepping stones.

But Jesus says clearly, it shall not be so among you. Instead, if we want to be great, we ought to be one another's servant.

Not just a servant, but a slave. And what do servants do? What do slaves do? They assume the lowliest of positions, willing to do the lowliest of tasks, and they serve.

[ 30 : 58 ] If we want to be great in the kingdom of God, there needs to be an eagerness, a hunger, a yearning to serve in any which way that we can.

At home, at church, at work, wherever we go, we ought to have a maximalist view of how much we can get to serve. Not a minimalist view, just trying to squeak by with the bare minimum.

At every opportunity to serve one another, the question shouldn't be, why should I serve, but why shouldn't I? But some object, oh, but I don't have that gift.

I can't serve in that way. Or others object, but other people don't serve as much as me. Others still, when I serve, it's never appreciated.

this is not the acceptable language of a servant slave. Luke 17 shows us what the acceptable pattern of speech of a slave is.

[ 32 : 09 ] Jesus says, will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, come at once and recline at table. Will he not rather say to him, prepare supper for me, dress properly, serve me when I eat and drink, and afterward will eat and drink.

Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, we are unworthy servants. We have only done what was our duty.

Last week, Sean introduced Jim Elliott, a martyred! a martyred missionary to a tribe in Ecuador. I quote him again this week saying missionaries and really all Christians are very human folk, just doing what they were asked.

Simply a bunch of nobodies trying to exalt somebody. But if we are serving that much, shouldn't we be concerned with burnout, burning out?

Yes, absolutely. We shouldn't burn ourselves out. We absolutely need sleep. We need Sabbath rest. But we don't primarily guard ourselves against burnout by first guarding our calendars.

[ 33 : 27 ] We guard against burnout by guarding our hearts. We don't burn out primarily because we mismanage our calendars and we don't take enough Sabbaths.

We burn out primarily because we mismanage our hearts. And now a mismanaged heart often results in a mismanaged calendar, but the source of the error is not in the planning, but it's in the heart, in your loves.

For we serve really out of so many wrong reasons. We serve Jesus to be good enough for him, to get something for him, to pay him back, or because we think he needs us.

We serve others to impress them or to feel like we belong. And if you're feeling burnt out this morning, and I mean more than just feeling physically tired, but emotionally, mentally, spiritually tapped out, you might struggle with one or a few of these wrong motivations to serve.

So then, how do we serve sacrificially without feeling weary, discouraged, or bitter? The key is in this critical verse, verse 28, that the son of man, this son of man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

[ 34 : 53 ] Serving is the very DNA of Jesus' purpose and ministry. We see it throughout the passage today, we see it so beautifully displayed in John 13 when he washes the feet of his disciples.

Can you imagine this? The God who laid the foundations of the world, who tells each lightning bolt where it should go, who keeps the Leviathan on a leash, this same God has a towel around his waist.

This man about whom John the Baptist rightly declared, I am not worthy to untie even the strap of his sandal, he kneels and washes my feet.

Surely that's as far as the Christ would go to serve me, right? someone who is as proud, self-serving, rebellious as me, surely a king like Jesus would do no more than to kneel and wash my feet.

Surely there must be a limit. But there's no limit to how far Jesus would go to abase himself for the many he would ransom.

[ 36 : 10 ] For he showed the greatest display of love that we know by trekking up that hill, being locked, flogged, crucified. This God endured treatment that we would find inexcusable for our very own pet dogs.

But he subjected himself because he knew that his blood was the only way for sinners like you and me to be ransomed, to be redeemed from our bondage to sin and death.

Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Some in church history have posited that money could ransom a man. Johann Tetzel, the early 16th century Dominican friar, peddled indulgences that if one gives money to the church, he can free a soul from purgatory, which doesn't even exist.

But the famous rhyme, as soon as the coin hits the coffer, or as soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs. Reformer Martin Luther was absolutely right to denounce this as a greedy, manipulative, false teaching.

Even if you were to amass all the wealth of the world, could you not even pay back for one sin? And as we read from our assurance of pardon, it was not with perishable things, such as silver or gold, you were redeemed, but with the precious blood of Christ, the lamb without blemish or object, nothing but the blood of Jesus.

[ 37 : 43 ] Others in church history have posited that good works, that human effort could functionally ransom a man. Pelagius in the fourth century argued that even without God's transforming grace, human beings innately have the ability to do good.

We innately have the ability to earn our standing before God. Augustine was absolutely right to denounce this as a presumptuous, man-centered, graceless, false teaching.

You cannot obey God without the grace of God, and even if you were able to spend every single minute of the rest of your life doing good deeds perfectly, could you not pay back for one sin?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus. So knowing that this was the only way to free us from our miserable bondage, even knowing that we had nothing to offer him, Jesus came.

He came not to be served but to serve. Do you see that you will never in your life out serve Jesus? You will never out serve him.

[ 38 : 50 ] That he gives far more to us than we could ever give back to him. Only when your mind is blown by that fact, when your heart is burning, do we then only learn how to serve.

we serve our fellow brothers and sisters, washing their feet, humbling ourselves, taking the lowliest of positions. Only then do we serve like lowly servant slaves that the world has never seen before. And the world has certainly never seen anyone like Jesus, who serves with his words, his very life, and finally with his hands in this final section.

Jesus and his crew leave Jericho, which is the final destination of a typical Galilean pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The narrative's focus shifts now to two blind men.

They're sitting by roadside, presumably begging for money. It seems like they're seasoned in their craft, for it seems like this was a strategic time and place.

[ 39 : 58 ] This was during the week of Passover, when many would be traveling to Jerusalem, Jerusalem, and they felt a particular need to be generous. But once they hear that Jesus is coming, they drop everything and they begin to cry out, Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David.

Although Lord could be a mere formality, a nicety like sir or ma'am, they undeniably portray their faith in the Messiah by calling him Son of David.

Lord. We've already seen this Christological title in Matthew already. It's a loaded label designated that Jesus is the long-awaited Son to come in the lineage of David to be the messianic king.

Although physically blind, they have the spiritual eyes to see that Jesus really is the king. Maybe even more than a king. For in the Old Testament, there is no record of any prophet or servant restoring the sight of the blind.

In the Old Testament, only God restores the sight of the blind. What is one of Jesus' most common miracles in the Gospels?

[ 41 : 16 ] To give sight to the blind. The beggars have genuine faith to believe Jesus can restore their sight. God restores the world. But this world loves to snuff out genuine faith, loves to prevent people from coming to Jesus at every opportunity.

You see it in chapter 19 when the disciples rebuke the families who bring their children. You see it in this great crowd that tells these blind men to be quiet, essentially to shut up.

But notice how resilient, how gritty their faith is. I love this.

These two aren't deterred by the crowd. They don't go on the defensive. They don't sulk. Woe is me. My life is already so hard and now no one will let me come to Jesus.

No, they go on the offensive. They don't let their circumstances determine how they respond. They ignore the crowd.

[ 42 : 24 ] They cry out all the more, Lord, have mercy on us, son of David. So we too, when Satan tries to attack us, discourage us from coming to Jesus, points to our habitual sin, tells us to be quiet, tells us to shut up.

What do we do instead? We yell, we cry out, we are desperate for Jesus to come, all the more. And notice too, their strategy really isn't any different.

There's no deceived notion that they can fancy up their prayer, try to offer anything Jesus needs.

They don't promise any foolish vows. It's just over and over again, Lord, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us. Lord, have mercy on us. D.O. Moody once said, some people think that God doesn't like to be troubled with our constant coming and asking.

The way to trouble God is not to come at all. In my prayer life, as we've been preaching through Matthew, especially on childlike faith, I find myself praying the same simple, desperate line over and over and over again.

[ 43 : 37 ] Please save my dad. Please save my dad. Please save my dad. Please show me what to say in the sermon. Please show me what to say. Show me what to say. I'm under no pretense that God will hear me because of my many words, but I still need so much help.

So I will repeat it over and over and over again, and I will keep repeating it over and over and over again until my God answers me, and he will.

And each one of these is an irresistible cry to the ever-serving Jesus. Jesus has a soft spot for people like me, those who are weak, unimpressive, needy.

So despite needing to go to Jerusalem, having things to do, he stops. Again, showing that the expectations of the many have no say over the compassion of Jesus.

Jesus stops to show that the good of these little ones take precedent over everything else to him.

Do we stop? Do we stop our plans, our agendas, to help those in need?

[ 44 : 56 ] Then unlike the corrupt tyrants of this world who won't even lift up a finger to serve their people, but as the servant king, he asks him, what do you want me to do for you?

This isn't the first time he's asked this question in this passage. Jesus asks both the two sons and the two beggars, what do you want? What do you want me to do for you?

One pair seeks glory, the other seeks mercy. One pair wants to be exalted, the other pair wants to be rescued.

One pair comes with an inflated view of self, the other comes knowing exactly who they are. So Jesus filled with pity, such a kind Lord, filled with pity, with great compassion, his heart welling up

with love.

He touches the blind men, restores their physical sight immediately, and as a result, they follow Jesus. In our desperate state of need, to each one of us, Jesus stops to ask us to, what do you want me to do for you?

[ 46 : 22 ] what do you want me to do for you? It's a question that exposes our hearts. Which pair will you be like?

When the rest of the world demands to be first, what will you ask for? When our colleagues get promoted above us, what will you ask for?

When your friends gain more recognition than you, what will you ask for? In your heart of hearts, what do you want Jesus to do for you most?

So we, like the beggars, who know our desperate state of need, who know that our sin is the greatest problem far more than anything else in this world, knowing exactly who we are, knowing exactly our helpless state, we cry out, Lord, have mercy on us.

Ransom us from our bondage of sin and death. Lord, have mercy on us. Then, and only then, having received that undeserved mercy, can we go through life serving others, asking them to, what do you want me to do for you?

[ 47 : 45 ] Let's pray. Amen. Father, we pray that you would transform us to be more and more like your son, that we would serve with everything we have.

We know that it's not much. And I pray for those who are struggling now, who feel like, who just feel so discouraged by what they can offer so little.

Help them to know that you are pleased with how much they can serve, about what they can offer. Empower us to serve, not by our own strength, not by looking within ourselves, but to see just how far Jesus condescended to serve people like us, so that we can then go wash the feet of others, forgive others, encourage others, be rejoicing when other people get past us and get promoted above us, that we would love in that way, we would rejoice in that way, that you would help us to stop the endless cycle of competition and envy, stop that in our own church, and we would serve, serve like you, Lord.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen.