

On The Road To Greatness.

Mark 10:35-40

Sunday morning, June 1, 2008.

I. Changing times.

- A. Change did loom large over the world of that time. Within weeks the death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus would usher in major changes in the world of that day.
 - 1. The old administration of the covenant would pass away.
 - 2. The final sacrifice would be brought.
 - 3. The veil would be rent.
 - 4. The Holy Spirit would come to stay, and in much greater fullness.
 - 5. Judgment would loom large over unbelieving Israel.
 - 6. The gospel of grace would be opened up to the gentiles.
- B. A sense of that impending change was with the disciples.
 - 1. Because the Holy Spirit prepares the Church for an hour, and an hour for the Church. The Holy Spirit does the same for individual believers in their service of the Kingdom of God.
 - 2. Notwithstanding everything the Lord had said about His impending suffering, the disciples thought that the Kingdom of God would immediately appear. Luke 19:11.
- C. They were men in a fog, but also men of faith.
 - 1. In a fog in that they were not able to understand the how and what of the impending change they sensed was coming. "They understood none of these things..." Luke 18:34. "They were amazed ... they were afraid." Mark 10:32
 - 2. They were men of faith in that they stuck with the Lord and believed that somehow, and despite everything He had said, He would bring to fruition the anticipated Kingdom of God. Luke 19:11
- D. Out of this faith, which lacked development, their question arises.
 - 1. They pose their question indirectly and cautiously.
They get their mother, Salome (who may have been the Lord's mother's sister) to ask the question for them. Matt. 20:20,21.
Even then the question is posed like asking for a blanc check.
 - 2. Sensing the impending change they want to secure their share of future glory and beat the other disciples in asking the highest positions for themselves.
 - 3. In light of the Lord's question, "Can you drink the cup that I drink..." how must they have felt when two thieves were crucified to the left and to the right hand of the Lord?

II. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink...?

- A. The Lord counters their question with a question of His own.
Since they have applied for the position He is checking on their qualifications.
- B. In putting the question thus the Lord also establishes an absolute link between present day suffering and future glory. "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him." 2 Tim. 2:12.
- C. Given the preface to the question "you know not what you ask," this question is to

be understood as a rhetorical question; a question in which the answer is implied. Of course they could never go through what their Lord was about to go through!

1. The sufferings of the Son of God were absolutely unique. He alone in His human nature, sustained by His divine nature, was able to endure the wrath of God for sin, and thus make atonement for our sins.
2. The cup, of which we partake in communion, is to us a cup of blessing. To Him it was a cup of sorrow and suffering to the utmost. The cup in Scripture speaks to us of having our fill of either blessings or sufferings. Psalm 16:5; 75:8. "Father let this cup pass from Me..." Mt. 26:39.
3. Similarly our baptism speaks to us of our ingrafting into Christ and becoming a partaker of all the blessings He has purchased for us. Conversely His baptism speaks of his ingrafting into our sinful fallen race and becoming the partaker of the fullness of the curse due to our sin.

III. You will indeed drink of the cup that I drink...

- A. James and John, in the fog of their ignorance, had just affirmed that they were able to drink the Lord's cup and partake of His baptism.
- B. The Lord affirms that there is a way in which they will partake of his suffering and death. In fact there are two ways of participation.
 1. In the great work of sanctification the Holy Spirit unites our sinful flesh to the cross of Christ. What we are by nature must be mortified; what we shall be by grace must be quickened and raised with Christ. Our sinful flesh labors under the covenant of works, partakes of the curse thereof, and dies with Christ on his cross. Our sinful flesh can never be saved; we must take it to the cross for execution. Here we take our pride and our independence and all our worldly desires for vainglory. Gal. 2:20 and 6:14.
 2. Union with Christ in voluntarily undergoing, or taking to ourselves hardships and difficulties and suffering and setbacks to the end that others together with us may come in the possession of gospel blessing, or so that we may pass along to future generations a church that has been purified and reformed according to the word of God. These are the labor pains of the Church. Galatians 4:19. This is death working in us so that life may be worked in others. 2 Cor. 4:12. This is filling up in our bodies what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ for the sake of His body. Col 1:24.

IV. And what about my reward and future glory?

- A. Right about this time acc. to Matt. 20:1-16 to Lord told the parable of the laborers in the vineyard.
- B. He has promised that no man serves Him for nothing, and that He is liberal with His reward. Matt. 19:27-30.
- C. Is that not enough, and is it not the better part of wisdom not to think about that too much further, but rather to entrust it to the Lord?