

## Mark 10:41-52

### “The unasked question”

- I. **Introduction**
- II. **Vs. 41-45 Worldly ambition verses godly ambition**
- III. **Vs. 46-52 That I might receive my sight**

#### I. **Introduction**

This morning we come to the conclusion of chapter 10 and two stories that again seem to be disconnected.

- The first story in verses 41-45 is the aftermath of the request made by the brothers Zebedee (James and John). Their twofold request with its three implications became known by their fellow 10 disciples and it “*greatly displeased*” them. So much so that Jesus has to step up and speak on the differences between *worldly ambition* and *godly ambition*.
- The second story that Mark addresses is in verses 46-52 and the healing of “*Blind Bartimaeus*”. We will need to be good biblical detectives this morning to see the connection between these two seemingly unconnected stories but in doing so we will be greatly rewarded for our effort with another life transforming application point.

#### II. **Vs. 41-45 Worldly ambition verses godly ambition**

Vs. 41 I’m a bit curious as to how the other ten learned of James and John’s request. My theory is that they overheard it because they were in close proximity. *That would make the real reason that they were upset, is these two opportunists beat them to the request.*

The word Mark uses for “*greatly displeased*” in the English translation sounds very respectful, but the Greek word means “*indignant*”. Webster’s dictionary defines it as “*feeling or showing anger because of something that is unfair or wrong which leads to a person becoming very angry.*” The scene according to Matthew started out with Peter’s comments about having left everything to follow Jesus. This was followed by Jesus’ words about the 12 thrones that they would one day occupy. Which led to the amazed

observation of the disciples about the fixed determination upon Jesus as He was out in front going to Jerusalem to face the cross. The contrast between their view and Jesus words were obvious: ***The 12 heard about the thrones and two of them beat the others to the request to being closest to Jesus on the thrones. But Jesus knew that before the thrones there awaited a cup and baptism known as the cross that He must go through.*** This is the complete context to what transpires.

The envy and jealousy of the 10 towards the two brothers must have reached a level to where Jesus saw the need to instruct them all “AGAIN” on the differences of worldly ambition verse godly ambition. The ten (*no doubt led by Peter*) viewed the request as a coup that was out maneuvering them for a special position. They clearly saw politics and were upset that these two who were already apart of the inner group were seeking to move up which would have meant that Peter was the odd man out. To correct this Jesus:

- First, in verse 42, acknowledged the methodology of worldly ambition as it relates to the kingdoms of the world which was very much how his disciples were viewing the kingdom of God.
- Then Jesus, in verses 43-44, restated the methodology of godly ambition as it relates to the kingdom of God. The point Jesus wanted to get across was not only the difference between them by why He encouraged godly ambition as a means of changing the world.
- Finally, in verse 45, Jesus uses His own example of godly ambition that they saw put into practice each and every moment of the last 18 months that they had been with Him.

Vs. 42 This phrase “*You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them. And their great one’s exercise authority over them*” would have been completely understood by the “rank and file” of Mark Roman readers. The competition and jealousy that we notice in these disciples is unfortunately all too familiar in the body of Christ but it exists do to the failure of the church to practice godly ambition not

because they do. God's view of the church is **not an organization but a living organism**; one in which each person has a part that is equally important and necessary for the vitality of the whole. The apostle Paul was attempting to get this point across to a competitive Corinthian Church in his 1<sup>st</sup> letter to them when he wrote in chapter 12 verse 12 *"For as the body is one and has many members, but all members of that one body..."* Then in verse 18 Paul wrote, *"But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased."* The eye cannot say to the hand, *"I have no need of you..."*. I'm afraid that at times the church has mimicked the world's organization structure at the cost of God's organism structure. The outcome of that is we see a corporate hierarchy where those in leadership roles arrogantly wield authority, bossing others around and measure their own power and success by how many people are subject to their orders. This type of leadership looks just like the world where jealousy's and rivalries are prevalent and backstabbing, kissing up and other forms of manipulation is common place. I believe that there are two reasons why the world's organization structure is all too common in the church today:

1. **Ignorance**: That was the case here with the disciples, they didn't yet know of another form of ambition and that is what Jesus was teaching them about godly ambition.
2. **Sin**: There are those who know that the world's organization structure is not Jesus's method but choose to ignore it so they can maintain power and lord over people.

Vs. 43-44 Having identified the problem (worldly ambition) Jesus offers the new methodology of godly ambition. The words, *"Yet it shall not be so among you..."* ought to hang over every church board meeting to remind us that we aren't lords, we are servants entrusted with God's resources and sheep. In Matthew chapter 23 verse 8 Jesus said, *"But you, do not be called Rabbi; for One is your teacher, the Christ, and you are*

*all brethren.*” The church is not to operate as a hierarchy of power, as Paul said in 2 Corinthians 1:24, “*Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are **FELLOW WORKERS** for your joy; for by faith you stand.*” No one; not the pastor, the board, the deacons or denomination is ever to be the boss or bully pushing around their fellow brothers and sisters. ***Jesus is the Head of His church and will always be!*** We can look out over the differing forms of church government and see that no matter what form practiced we can see the same failure which is because of worldly ambition instead of godly ambition. There has never been a form of church government that has been immune to it because the problem is not the structure but the heart behind it (*worldly ambition instead of godly ambition*). The church has simply failed (Catholic and Protestant, Baptist and Pentecostal) to live out these simple God given instructions of our Lord. A pastor or other leadership in a church are simply people who have been given the responsibility to exercise the proven calling and gifts in away that glorifies Jesus, furthers His kingdom and causes God’s people to grown in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Then Jesus repeats chapter 9 verse 35 and the great little visible example of how you can determine if you are functioning as a leader with godly ambition, “*Whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all.*” ***Godly ambition is SERVANT LEADERSHIP;*** and when exercised in the power of the Holy Spirit something amazing happens. ***Authority is established not by constraint but by willing submission as you have demonstrated that you value the people above your position and self!*** Those in authority in God’s church are those who have time and again demonstrated that they are servants of all and because of this have gained respect and honor from their fellow

brothers and sisters that have been constantly served by them and have no problem submitting to their leadership.

Vs. 45 Of course the greatest example of this is none other than Jesus Himself who, “*did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*” Here is Jesus, the One who spoke everything into existence, the only One who has every right to be served by that which He created and He choose instead to relinquish His rights in order to meet our needs and demonstrate what true godly ambition is.

### III. Vs. 46-52 That I might receive my sight

Vs. 46 First let’s address the threefold connection between these two stories:

1. When you look at the other gospel accounts you realize that Mark leaves out many other events that happened at this time. For instance, Luke tells us of Jesus coming to Zacchaeus’ house which happened at this same time. Matthew speaks of two blind men and never reveals the name of either. This revelation suggests to us that the Holy Spirit through Mark hand picked this story in connection with what had just transpired.
2. Then there is a repeated phrase that connects these two sections. In verse 36 Jesus asked at the request of the two brothers James and John, “*What do you want Me to do for you?*” Then down in verse 51 at Bartimaeus’ continual cries Jesus asks him the same exact question, “*What do you want Me to do for you.*”
3. Finally, there is the odd double repeat of Bartimaeus’ name which certainty would draw the reader’s attention to this story. You see Bar-Timaeus means “Son of Timaeus”, so why does Mark say it twice in verse 46? It is not normal for the Greek or Hebrew and is quite redundant as they mean the same thing.

These three things cause me to believe that these stories are very much connected and that is further enhanced by what Timaeus means. This blind man’s name means “*Son of Honor*”! What are the odds that right after there was a through discussion on the request of having the place of “HONOR” next to Jesus that you were totally “BLIND” about the cost of; that you would run into a “BLIND MAN NAME HONOR” which Matthew doesn’t even record his name as one of the two blind men? The healing of Bartimaeus is

the perfect illustration that would heal these disciples so that they could enjoy their places of HONOR in godly ambition at Jesus' side.

Vs. 47-52 The trouble with these disciples is that they were as spiritual blind as **Bartimaeus** was physically blind. The difference was that **Bartimaeus** unlike the disciples was very aware of this fact and wasn't willing to shut up about it even when he was warned to be quiet. **Bartimaeus** was far more concerned with his blindness than he was of anything else, as threw aside his garment to come to Jesus.

Don't you find it a bit interesting that as **Blind Bartimaeus** comes before Jesus that Jesus asks, to my way of thinking an obvious answer, when addressing a blind, "What do you want Me to do for you?" I mean what else would **Bartimaeus** want but to receive his sight? And sure enough that is exactly what he asks for and receives for the first time in his life. **So are you ready to put this all together for our application?** Remember James and John's request as they desired three things: **Preeminence**, **Proximity** and **Power** from the Lord, but were blind as to the cost? Here then is **the antidote to that which hinders us from godly ambition and enjoying an ever increasing amount of these three things in this life.** We need to be asking the Lord to continue to **"Cure our blindness about ourselves!"** That is what keeps us from:

- From enjoying heaven now
- From a growing closeness to Jesus
- From a greater power from Him to do what He has called us to do

Oh that each and everyday we would be like **Bartimaeus** and ask Jesus to grant us that we may receive our sight about our self's! David said it so well in Psalm 139:23-24

*"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me. And lead me in the way everlasting."*

