

CALVARY IN SIGHT

MATTHEW 20



A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

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The Fellowship of Ailbe

Calvary in Sight: Matthew 20
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Matthew 20: Introduction

Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem, and He has the cross and resurrection clearly in view. He is going to Jerusalem to finish the work of redemption He began three years before. On His way, He continues teaching about and demonstrating the reality of the Kingdom, so that we understand the meaning of His death and resurrection.

In the Kingdom we are called to work, as Jesus served those who came to Him throughout the course of His ministry. Kingdom greatness awaits those who humble themselves, as Jesus did, and give themselves in loving service to others.

A great reward awaits all those who are faithful in thus seeking the Kingdom and righteousness of God. And Jesus counsels us to keep focused on that reward.

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We hope you find this study of Ecclesiastes a challenging and stretching experience of journeying more deeply into the Word of God. Thank you for joining us.

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1 Time to Work

Pray Psalm 22.23.

You who fear the LORD, praise Him!
All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him,
And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!

Sing Psalm 22.23.

(Darwall: [*Rejoice, the Lord is King*](#))

All you who fear the Lord, now praise His holy Name!
You children of His glorious Word, declare His fame!
We stand in awe of our eternal God, and on His mercy call.

Read and meditate on Matthew 20.1-7.

Prepare.

1. To what did Jesus liken the Kingdom of heaven?
2. Who should expect to work in the Kingdom of heaven?

Meditate.

Matthew 20 continues the thrust of previous chapters in illustrating aspects of life in the Kingdom of God. Only here, Calvary and the cross are much more on Jesus' mind. Yet this does not prevent Him from continuing to teach His disciples how to think about the Kingdom, so that they will be ready for its coming.

The parable of the workers in the vineyard has two important lessons. The first, it seems to me, is that we should not think of the Kingdom of heaven as some kind of work-free paradise. The Kingdom is like a landowner who employs people to cultivate and harvest fruit. The aspect of work which Jesus includes in this parable is as important as the teaching about rewards, which we will see in the second part (vv. 8-16).

Seeking the Kingdom is thus a physical discipline. There are things to do. Paul considered the believers to whom he wrote to be co-laborers in the Kingdom. Work is the exertion of energy – physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual – toward certain specific outcomes. In the Kingdom of God, the outcomes we seek are righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, manifested in love for God and neighbors. Such outcomes don't just happen.

Jesus is not content for us to be idle while the desperate world becomes overgrown with weeds and tares. As in the parable of the sower (Matt. 13), here too, Jesus reinforces the idea that we must work out our salvation in fear and trembling, applying ourselves to the Lord's vineyard, with all our soul and strength, to bring forth fruit that expresses the pleasure of the Lord.

We don't ever want to hear Jesus asking, "Why have you been standing here idle all day?" We all have a mission field. We all have work to do, beginning with working to understand the Word of God, laboring in prayer for the day ahead, and giving ourselves soul and body to good works of love at every opportunity.

The Kingdom is like a great vineyard, that covers the earth. For it to bring forth the fruit our Lord

seeks, workers must go out into it daily, applying themselves diligently, continuously, conscientiously, and fruitfully to bringing forth the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. And that means you and me.

Reflect.

1. Why is work such an important part of life in the Kingdom?
2. Should we expect everyone in the Kingdom to have the same work? Or to be capable of doing the same amount of work? Explain.
3. How do you prepare for the workday you face as a Kingdom citizen each day?

*By the vineyard he means the commandments of God, and the time of working refers to the present life. The workers—those called to the task at different times: early, at the third hour, at the sixth, at the ninth, at the eleventh—are those who have come forward at different ages and lived justly. John Chrysostom (347-407), *The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 64.3**

Lord, today I go to work for Your Kingdom again. Help me to...

Pray Psalm 22.24-28.

What work will you do today to realize the vision Jesus lays out in these verses? Seek the Lord's Presence and strength for every opportunity of doing good works.

Sing Psalm 22.24-28.

Psalm 22.24-28 (Darwall: [Rejoice, the Lord is King](#))

For He has not despised the anguish of our King,
nor from Him hid His eyes, Who knew such suffering.
Let praise arise from all who love and serve the Ruler of the skies!

The suffering King shall eat and praise with us the Lord.
Forever we His praise repeat and trust His Word.
Praise God above, all you who keep His vows and who His mercies love!

All nations shall repent and hasten to the Lord;
All those to whom His truth is sent shall praise His Word.
The Lord is King! His sovereign rule on high now we His people sing!

2 One Reward for All

Pray Psalm 23.6.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD
Forever.

Sing Psalm 23.6.

(The Gift of Love: [*Though I May Speak with Bravest Fire*](#))

Goodness and mercy, full and free, shall ever after follow me,
and in the house of God, my Lord, shall I abide forevermore!

Read Matthew 20.1-16; meditate on verses 8-16.

Prepare.

1. How did the owner of the vineyard describe his action?
2. Why were some of the workers upset?

Meditate.

A comment from C. S. Lewis can perhaps help us to put this strange parable into its proper perspective. In his essay, “The Weight of Glory,” Lewis wrote, “The promises of Scripture may very roughly be reduced to five heads. It is promised (1) that we shall be with Christ; (2) that we shall be like Him; (3) with an enormous wealth of imagery, that we shall have “glory”; (4) that we shall, in some sense, be fed or feasted or entertained; and (5) that we shall have some sort of official position in the universe—ruling cities, judging angels, being pillars of God’s temple. ” There’s nothing new here for believers. These are things we look forward to with hope and joy.

But it’s what Lewis wrote next that helps us understand the owner’s action in paying his laborers: “The first question I ask about these promises is ‘Why any one of them except the first?’” When we realize the first and greatest promise of our salvation – to be with Christ without obstruction or interruption, in perfect peace and joy forever, why would we even care about the others?

There are good reasons, of course, and Lewis sketches them out. But his follow-up comment here is the point of Jesus’ parable. It doesn’t matter whether we come to faith in Jesus early or late. Or if our life in Jesus has been easy or hard, long or brief, fraught with trials or paved with ease. The reward for all who believe in Jesus, and who are faithful in the works He appoints to them, is the same: Jesus! What more could we ask than that? And who of us will begrudge anyone that same privilege and eternal joy? Only the most selfish of heart would wish to have others stand in line behind them when Jesus is handing out the reward of Himself.

We are called to be faithful and to focus on the promises of Jesus as the hope of our calling, that one day – and that right soon – He will bring us to Himself, give us Himself, and be with us Himself for all eternity; and we will rejoice and be glad in our good Master and Lord, without jealousy, without comparing ourselves with one another, and without wanting anything more than Him. The first will be last and the last will be first, which simply means that all will be one together in Christ. All who are chosen and called will respond to the assignment to work; and all those will share equally in the one great reward of Jesus.

What a day that will be!

Reflect.

1. Jesus promises that we will dwell with Him in His house forever. What makes that such a great promise?
2. But that promise is made to those who have heard His call to labor in His vineyard. Does that mean that salvation is gained by works?
3. The Owner of the vineyard has called each one of us to labor. What work does He have for you to do today?

What then can we say? In the kingdom of heaven there is no one who justifies himself or blames others in this way; perish the thought! That place is pure and free from envy and jealousy. For if the saints when they are here give their lives for sinners, how much more do they rejoice when they see them there enjoying rewards and consider their blessings to be their own. John Chrysostom (344-407), The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 64.3

Thank You, Lord, for saving me and sending me into Your vineyard. Help me today as I...

Pray Psalm 23.1-5.

Seek the Lord's Presence for your journey today, and thank Him for the eternal Presence that awaits in glory.

Sing Psalm 23.1-5.

Psalm 23.1-5 (The Gift of Love: [*Though I May Speak with Bravest Fire*](#))

Because the Lord my Shepherd is I shall not want, for I am His!
He makes me lie in pastures full; I rest in Him by waters still.

My soul He quickens and will bless; He leads in paths of righteousness.
Though I may walk through death's dark vale, I shall not fear – He will not fail!

The Lord is ever by my side; His rod and staff with me abide.
A table rich for me He spreads; with oil my Lord anoints my head.

3 The Goal in Sight

Pray Psalm 34.1-3.

I will bless the LORD at all times;
His praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth.
My soul shall make its boast in the LORD;
The humble shall hear *of it* and be glad.
Oh, magnify the LORD with me,
And let us exalt His name together.

Sing Psalm 34.1-3.

(Alleluia [Lowe]: [*Mighty God, While Angels Bless You*](#))

I will bless the Lord at all times; I shall praise Him evermore!
My soul makes its boast in Jesus – Him we gladly all adore!

Refrain v. 3

Magnify the Name of Jesus!
Let us lift His Name in praise!

Read Matthew 20.1-19; meditate on verses 17-19.

Prepare.

1. What did Jesus confide in the disciples?
2. Did He tell this to all the people who were following Him?

Meditate.

Matthew tells us that Jesus “took His twelve disciples aside on the road” to tell them about what was going to happen in Jerusalem. We might wonder: Why didn’t He just tell everyone? Why was it so important that the disciples alone should hear these sobering words?

Jesus wanted them to keep focused on the business at hand, which was His work of redemption. The crowds were fickle. They loved the miracles, the free meals, the healings, and His casting out demons. They would celebrate with rejoicing His entrance into Jerusalem in just a short while. But they would turn on Jesus and cry for His death when they had to make a choice between Him and religious leaders. Had Jesus disclosed these next steps to the crowds, there’s no telling how they might have responded. But His disciples needed to know. They needed to keep focused on the real reasons for Jesus’ coming – His great work of redemption on the cross. And they needed to prepare themselves for the fact that while this would be a beautiful work of Jesus, accomplishing it would not be pretty.

Jesus shows us how to live the life of faith in these times. Keep the end in sight. Jesus knew He would rise again, and He understood all that implied. The joy of that, set down before Him, enabled Him to bear all the rest (Heb. 12.1-3). We need to keep the end in sight as well: a joyous day of resurrection is coming, followed by eternal life with Jesus in the new heavens and new earth. With such an eternal prospect before us, what could cause us to dismay or lose hope?

At the same time, be realistic about the journey. Jesus knew that some hard times were just ahead – shame, suffering, betrayal, crucifixion, and the grave. But in the light of the resurrection, He could endure the cross, despising the shame, and go with joy to fulfill His purpose. Jesus did not promise

us an easy road as His disciples. He said we would be hated. We can expect persecution. Spiritual forces of wickedness will try to distract, defeat, and destroy us. But if we keep focused on the long-term promise and hope, we can bear up and endure no matter what this world throws at us.

The disciples, of course, would falter. But when Jesus rose again, His victory would refocus them on their proper goal, and they would never lose sight of it. We must not lose sight of it either, but persevere through whatever comes our way to be with Jesus in glory.

Reflect.

1. What is your practice for keeping focused on the resurrection to come?
2. How can maintaining such a focus empower us to persevere in Jesus through hard times?
3. Jesus encouraged His disciples with this word. How can we encourage one another to keep focused on the coming resurrection and glory?

Therefore, though a great crowd of the faithful followed him on the road, he took only the twelve disciples apart in private and to them alone announced the mystery of his death, because the more precious treasure is always stored in the better vases. There were many men with him, but they were weak on account of the smallness of their faith.

Anonymous, Incomplete Work on Matthew, Homily 35

Thank You, Lord, for the promise of resurrection. Keep me focused on it today as I...

Pray Psalm 34.8-20.

Praise God for Jesus' sacrifice, and for His mighty resurrection and Kingdom.

Sing Psalm 34.8-20.

Psalm 34.8-20 (Alleluia [Lowe]: [*Mighty God, While Angels Bless You*](#))

Taste and see how good is Jesus; blessed are all who in Him hide.

None shall lack for any blessing who in Christ will e'er confide.

Refrain

Magnify the Name of Jesus!

Let us lift His Name in praise!

Though the beasts succumb to hunger, all who seek Him all things have.

Listen, children, I will teach you how to fear Him who can save.

Refrain

Who loves life? Who longs for goodness? Keep your tongue from evil ways.

Turn to good, from wicked wand'ring; peace pursue through all your days.

Refrain

For the eyes of Jesus ever look to meet His people's need.

Though He stands against the wicked, He will hear us when we plead.

Refrain

When for help we cry to Jesus, He will save, for He is near.

He delivers us from trouble, for He holds us ever dear.

Refrain

See the Righteous as He suffers: God will save Him from His pains.
All His bones He keeps through suffering, every one, intact remains.

Refrain

4 Are You Able?

Pray Psalm 63.1, 2

O God, You are my God;
Early will I seek You;
My soul thirsts for You;
My flesh longs for You
In a dry and thirsty land
Where there is no water.
So I have looked for You in the sanctuary,
To see Your power and Your glory.

Sing Psalm 63.1, 2.

(Nun Danken: [*Now Thank We All Our God*](#))

O God, You are my God, and earnestly I seek You!
My soul thirsts and my flesh in weariness now greets You!
Thus I would see Your face, with glory and pow'r arrayed,
In this Your holy place – Your beauty here displayed.

Read Matthew 20.1-23; meditate on verses 20-23.

Prepare.

1. What was James' and John's mother seeking?
2. How did Jesus respond?

Meditate.

Jesus had previously promised His disciples that, in the time of regeneration, they would be rulers and judges over the people of God (Matt. 19.28). That promise struck a receptive chord in the souls of James and John, the sons of Zebedee. Mark has James and John approaching Jesus by themselves (Mk. 10.35). But in our text, it looks as if the two brothers put their mother up to asking the question that burned in their souls, whether they might be the right- and left-hand men of Jesus in the Kingdom (vv. 20, 21). They are present, we know, because Jesus addressed His remarks to them, and they replied (v. 22).

Jesus explained that they didn't know what they were asking (v. 22). They had latched on to the promise Jesus made, but had somehow skipped over the means to that end. There was a cup to be drunk, and it was bitter – a cup of suffering. Were James and John ready for that?

They answered without hesitation, “We are able.” But were they? Like everyone else, they would abandon Jesus in the garden less than a week following this incident (though John hung around the cross, as he himself reports, Jn. 19.25-27). They thought they were ready to rule, because they didn't understand that ruling with Christ entails suffering with Him (Phil. 1.29).

We should commend James and John for wanting to be great in the Kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5.17-19). We all should embrace similar aspirations. But obedience and suffering – self-denial and cross-bearing – are the way to greatness. God has prepared a place for each one of us in His eternal Kingdom (v. 23); our duty is to seek and fulfill that calling by making sure we're ready to live for Jesus, and to die for Him, if necessary.

Are you able?

Reflect.

1. Why is it right to seek greatness in the Kingdom of God?
2. How would you explain to a new believer how to find the “place” God has prepared for him in His Kingdom?
3. What does it mean to follow Jesus in seeking the Kingdom of God?

*They say, “We are able.” They say this not so much by the boldness of their own hearts as by the ignorance of the trial. For to the unknowing, war is a desirable thing, just as to the inexperienced, the trial of suffering and death seems to be a light thing. For if the Lord, when he had entered into the trial of his suffering, was saying, “Father, if it can be done, let this cup pass from me,” by how much more would the disciples not have said “we are able” if they had known what the trial of death was like? Anonymous, *Incomplete Work on Matthew, Homily 35**

Enable me to follow You today, Lord, and to realize more of Your Kingdom as I...

Pray Psalm 63.3-11.

Thank the Lord for His constant Presence and steadfast love. Seek these for you Kingdom-seeking work today.

Sing Psalm 63.3-11.

Psalm 63.3-11 (Nun Danken: [*Now Thank We All Our God*](#))

Your steadfast love, O Lord, than life is better to me.
So I will praise Your Name, and bless You, Lord, most truly.
My soul is richly blest; to You my hands I raise,
and open now my mouth to offer joyful praise.

By night, Lord, fill my mind with pleasant meditation;
for You have been my help as ‘neath Your wings I station.
My soul clings, Lord, to You; I rest in Your Right Hand;
may all who seek my life in Your displeasure stand.

Unto the sword’s strong pow’r let our foes be delivered!
Pursue them to devour their mortal lives forever!
In God will we rejoice and glory in His grace;
but all who live by lies shall perish from His face.

5 Desire Greatness

Pray Psalm 27.4-6.

One *thing* I have desired of the LORD,
That will I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD
All the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of the LORD,
And to inquire in His temple.
For in the time of trouble
He shall hide me in His pavilion;
In the secret place of His tabernacle
He shall hide me;
He shall set me high upon a rock.
And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me;
Therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle;
I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.

Sing Psalm 27.4-6.

(Joanna: *Immortal, Invisible God Only Wise*)
One thing we request but to dwell with You, Lord,
Your beauty to test and to think on Your Word.
In trouble You hide us secure in Your grace;
no foe may o'erride us: We sing of Your praise!

Read Matthew 20.1-28; Meditate on verses 24-28.

Prepare.

1. Why were the ten disciples displeased?
2. What did Jesus teach them about greatness in the Kingdom?

Meditate.

The disciples were displeased with James and John. Why? Because they felt left out? Bypassed? Slighted? Or could it be that they thought such aspirations were unbecoming the followers of Christ? We don't know, exactly, and Jesus didn't rebuke them. He simply clarified a point He had been making since chapter 5.

It's a good thing to want to be great in the Kingdom of God. We should all aspire to being effective rulers, with a large domain over which to exercise sound judgment in the Name of the Lord (Matt. 19.28-30). In Personal Mission Field terms, we should always seek and be ready to expand the reach of our ministry, as the Lord leads and gives opportunity.

But not to lord it over others; rather, to serve them. Greatness in the Kingdom is measured by service. Service is simply love in action, bringing the blessings of righteousness, peace, and joy to others at the point of their need. But how does one learn what service requires? Or develop a disposition of soul which inclines to service? Put another way, how does one come to be great in the Kingdom?

By learning, obeying, and teaching the Law of God (Matt. 5.17-19). When we master the Law of God – or we should say, when the Law of God masters us – our natural inclination will be to serve others. The Law equips us to love others, and that means doing for them what we would like someone to do for us (Matt. 7.12). The Law of God prepares us for this. It helps us to recognize unjust situations, opportunities for showing compassion, and specific ways to build others up in love.

James and John were right to want to be great in the Kingdom – seated at Jesus' left and right hands! But they and the rest of the disciples and all of us need to understand that greatness is measured in terms of service, which issues from a heart and mind devoted to love, as taught and empowered by the Holy Spirit, Who teaches us God's Law (Ezek. 36.26, 27).

Reflect.

1. Would you say that you aspire to greatness in the Kingdom of God? Why or why not?
2. What opportunities for serving others are you likely to have in the days to come? Are you ready to serve them?
3. How would you counsel a new believer to seek greatness in the Kingdom of God?

Do you see how everywhere Jesus encourages them by turning things upside down? He gives them what they desire but in ways they did not expect. John Chrysostom (344-407), The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 65.4

Lord, I want to be great in Your Kingdom! Help me today as I...

Pray Psalm 27.1-3, 7-14.

How will the Lord use you today to bring His goodness to light in your world? Pray specifically about opportunities to serve others that you expect to have today.

Sing Psalm 27.1-3, 7-14.

Psalm 27.1-3, 7-14 (Joanna: *Immortal, Invisible God Only Wise*)

Lord, You are our Light and our Savior most dear!
You guard us with might; therefore, whom shall we fear?
Though evil surround us, our enemies fall;
no harm shall confound us when on You we call.

Hear, Lord, when we cry and be gracious, we pray!
Lord, do not deny us Your favor this day!
Our help, our salvation, though others may fall,
preserve our good station when on You we call.

Lord, teach us; Lord, lead us because of our foes!
Hear, Lord, when we plead for release from their woes.
Had we not believed all Your goodness to see,
our heart sorely grieved and in turmoil would be.

Wait, wait on the Lord; persevere in His grace.
Hold fast to His Word; seek His radiant face.
Be strong, set your heart to abide in His Word;
His grace He imparts; therefore, wait on the Lord.

6 Portent of Light

Pray Psalm 142.5, 6.

I cried out to You, O LORD:

I said, “You *are* my refuge,

My portion in the land of the living.

Attend to my cry,

For I am brought very low;

Deliver me from my persecutors,

For they are stronger than I.

Sing Psalm 142.5, 6.

(Dix: [*For the Beauty of the Earth*](#))

Hear my cry, Lord, I am low! They are strong who seek my soul.

Jesus frees from every foe; He will keep and make me whole!

Refrain

Lord, You are my Refuge strong!

O receive my plaintive song.

Read Matthew 20.1-34; meditate on verses 29-34.

Prepare.

1. Where was Jesus at this time?

2. What did the two men want Him to do for them?

Meditate.

Only Matthew mentions that two blind men appealed to Jesus as He was leaving Jericho (cf. Mk. 10.46-52; Lk. 18.35-43). Mark tells us that one of them was the son of Timaeus; we don't know anything about the other, except that he was there with Bartimaeus and was healed as well. This is not a contradiction, just a difference of perspective in reporting. Peter, who seems to have been the primary source of Mark's gospel – which Luke relied on – may have remembered only the blind man with a name. Matthew, on the other hand, includes them both.

The mention of Jericho strikes me as significant. The last-mentioned place in Matthew's account is “the region of Judea beyond the Jordan” (Matt. 19.1), that is, on the east side of the Jordan. Jericho was on the west side of the Jordan, a city that had been rebuilt at the cost of the builder's firstborn son (1 Kgs. 16.34; cf. Josh. 6.26). It was thus a symbol of conquest, death, and rebirth. Jesus, like Israel before Him, would have crossed the Jordan to pass through Jericho. As He left that city, He gave sight to two blind men who besought Him earnestly for mercy (vv. 30, 31).

With His focus squarely on Jerusalem, Calvary, and His rising from the dead, we might have thought Jesus was too otherwise occupied to be bothered with two blind men. A “great multitude followed Him” out of Jericho; doubtless, many of them were crying for something from Him. But, filled with compassion for two men who acknowledged Him as “Lord” and “Son of David”, Jesus opened their eyes, just as He would open the tomb and give Light to the world in just a few days. He had conquered the devil (Matt. 4.1-11). God the Father, Who had led Him to go through Jericho, would now offer His firstborn Son for the salvation of the world. And as Jesus gave sight to blind eyes, so He would give life to all who call upon Him as Lord and King, and earnestly beseech Him for mercy.

And we note that, when the mercy they sought was received, “they followed Him.” As should we all.

Reflect.

1. What is mercy? Why do we need mercy *and* grace to help in our times of need (Heb. 4.12)?
2. What is the significance of calling on Jesus as “Lord” and “Son of David”?
3. How does Jesus give Light to the world? What is our role in this?

In touching their eyes, the Lord Jesus also touched the eyes of the mind of the nations. He was giving to them the grace of the Holy Spirit. For Christ's touch gives the grace of the Holy Spirit. Those nations, when they were enlightened, followed him with good works, never abandoning him afterward. Anonymous, Incomplete Work on Matthew, Homily 36

Let Your Light shine through me today, Lord Jesus, as I...

Pray Psalm 142.1-4, 7.

Pray that God will guard you against all temptation, and free you from everything that keeps you from seeing and serving Him.

Sing Psalm 142.1-4, 7.

Psalm 142.1-4, 7 (Dix: [*For the Beauty of the Earth*](#))

With my voice, O Lord, I cry – hear my plea for mercy, Lord!
My complaint mounts up on high, bringing You my troubled word:

Refrain *vs. 5, 6*

Lord, You are my Refuge strong!
O receive my plaintive song!

When my spirit faints away, You my falt'ring pathway know.

Where I take my journey they traps have hidden to my woe.

Refrain

Lord, look to my right and see: None takes notice of my plight.

Is there refuge left for me? Is my soul out of Your sight?

Refrain

Out of prison lead me, Lord; thanks and praise to You shall be.

Righteous men armed with Your Word Will Your grace bestow on me.

Refrain

7 Kingdom Work

Pray Psalm 146.1, 2.

Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD, O my soul!

While I live I will praise the LORD;

I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

Sing Psalm 146.1, 2, 10.

(Hallelujah! What a Savior: [Man of Sorrows](#))

Praise the Lord, my soul, give praise! While I live, His Name I'll raise!

And exalt Him all my days – God forever reigns in Zion!

Read and meditate on Matthew 20.1-34.

Prepare.

1. What can we learn from this chapter about seeking the Kingdom of God?
2. What two cities are mentioned in this chapter? What is their significance?

Meditate.

Joshua crossed the Jordan, conquered Jericho, then went on to subdue all the land of Canaan. Jesus crossed the Jordan, passed through Jericho – symbolizing His death as the firstborn of God – than continued His approach to Jerusalem. There, on the cross and out of the empty tomb, He would conquer sin and death, and establish His Kingdom on earth for the salvation of the world.

As He journeyed, Jesus reminded His followers that the Kingdom of God involves work, in particular, that of serving others according to their needs. The heavenly Kingdom is not like earthly kingdoms, where men jockey for power and prestige. It is a realm of humility and service, in which all citizens share alike in the reward of knowing Jesus. Jesus taught these lessons in a parable and by direct instruction, and He demonstrated them by healing the two blind men, who immediately followed Him.

All the while, Calvary was in Jesus' focus, and beyond Calvary, the resurrection and all that would follow.

Jesus teaches us here, as He has done consistently throughout Matthew's Gospel, how to have a Kingdom mindset: Look to Jesus, prepare to serve, expect hardship, but keep your eye on the reward that is to come – eternal fellowship in glory with our crucified, resurrected, exalted, and reigning King.

Reflect.

1. Would you say that you live each day according to a Kingdom mindset? Explain.
2. Why is it important to keep our eyes on Jesus as we seek His Kingdom and righteousness?
3. To whom is God sending you today, that you might serve them in the Name of our King?

In effect he is saying, "When you, the ten, are insulted, do not be moved with such indignation. For James and John

*harm and disgrace themselves most by seeking the first place. That puts them among the last. For eminence within this community is not like status in the world. For the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over others, but here the very last is counted first. And if you want proof that I speak truly, look at what I am doing. Look at what I do and suffer. Let the proof of my teaching be my life. For I have done what I commend.” For being King of the powers above, he was willing to become man and submitted himself to be despised and despitefully treated. And not even with this loneliness was he satisfied, but he even came to die. John Chrysostom (344-407), *The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 65.4**

Lord, I am Your servant, to bring the righteousness, peace, and joy of Your Kingdom to...

Pray Psalm 146.3-10.

Pray that God will open your mind and keep you alert to every opportunity for serving Him in His Kingdom today.

Sing Psalm 146.3-10.

Psalm 146.3-10 (Hallelujah! What a Savior! [*Man of Sorrows*](#))

Trust we not in prince or man – no salvation’s in their hand;
Death shall take them, breath and plans – God forever reigns in Zion!

Blessed are they whose hope resides in the Lord, Christ at His side.
By Him heav’n and earth abide – God forever reigns in Zion!

He is faithful evermore; He gives justice to the poor,
feeds the hungry from His store – God forever reigns in Zion!

Jesus sets the pris’ner free, heals blind eyes that they may see,
lifts those burdened painfully – God forever reigns in Zion!

He the righteous loves the best; wand’ers in His grace are blessed;
needy ones in Him find rest – God forever reigns in Zion!

But the wicked who defame His eternal blessèd Name,
Them He brings to ruin and shame – God forever reigns in Zion!

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. What kind of work is involved in seeking the Kingdom of God?
2. How is the Kingdom of God different from earthly kingdoms?
3. What reward awaits all who seek the Kingdom? When may we expect to know that reward?
4. Why must we keep our eye on Jesus as we seek the Kingdom?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from Matthew 20.1-34? How are you putting that lesson to work in your Personal Mission Field?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.