

## Sunday 22 March 2020 - Thoughts and A Prayer

Mark 10:35-45 - The Request of James and John

<sup>35</sup> Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. 'Teacher,' they said, 'we want you to do for us whatever we ask.'

<sup>36</sup> 'What do you want me to do for you?' he asked.

<sup>37</sup> They replied, 'Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.'

<sup>38</sup> 'You don't know what you are asking,' Jesus said. 'Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptised with the baptism I am baptised with?'

<sup>39</sup> 'We can,' they answered.

Jesus said to them, 'You will drink the cup I drink and be baptised with the baptism I am baptised with, <sup>40</sup> but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.'

<sup>41</sup> When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. <sup>42</sup> Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup> Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup> and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. <sup>45</sup> For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'

On Mothers' Day we give thanks for Mothers and for those who have been like a Mother to us. It feels strange this year not to go and see my own Mum because of the coronavirus outbreak. People in her over 70 age bracket have been urged to self-isolate, and she asked me not to go because of the risk of passing the infection on to her and others in the retirement complex where she lives.

But it has led me to reflect on the way in which she served me when I was a youngster, in all the meals she provided, all the clothes she washed and the love she gave. Like most youngsters I took it for granted and it's only with the passing years that I've grown to appreciate just how much she did for me and still does.

I am aware that not everyone's experience is the same, as our experiences do vary, but a good mother who loves her child or children gives us an example of what it means to become a servant as Jesus taught his disciples and demonstrated in his own life.

In the reading from Mark, James and John had requested positions of power next to Jesus, and when the rest of the disciples heard about this, they were indignant, probably because they thought James and John had beaten them to it. But Jesus indicated to them that what leads to greatness is not to lord it over others but to serve instead, and that he himself had not come to be served but to serve.

So how are we to serve others in these troubled times? We don't know of course how long it will take for the pandemic to pass, but it will be important for each of us to look out for each other and our neighbours, to keep each other in our prayers and to stay in touch with each other, and to think about and pray about who we might be able to help. If someone particular comes into our mind when praying then it may well be a prompt from God to contact them, and if it is, then it is important to act.

Nigel

If you have a copy of Singing the Faith why not read or sing the words of 'The Servant King' (Number 272) which so beautifully depict what it means to be a servant.

## Prayer

We thank you for those who have been a mother or like a mother to us,  
For those who have shown us your love and your care through their words and actions,  
For those who have served us.

We are sorry for how easy it is to take love for granted,  
Failing to express our thanks for the care we receive, and  
Slow to demonstrate our appreciation.

We are sorry too for how we have taken your love for granted  
And pray that you will guide us how to show your love to others at this time.  
We pray in particular for all affected by the coronavirus,  
for those who have been bereaved by it and for a swift recovery for those who are ill.

Amen.