

## Impartiality of God and Servanthood; Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

### Matthew 20

Group <sup>1</sup>	C	V	Description
Laborers in the Vineyard	20	1-7	Landowner and Laborers
		8-16	The Last shall be first, and the first last
17-19		Jesus foretells death and resurrection	
Preferment Asked		20-23	Mother of the Sons of Zebedee asks for special positions
		24-28	Servanthood advanced
Sight for the Blind		29-34	Jesus heals two blind men

### Reflections

This chapter has four sections of which three have the same topic of conversation—placing yourself before others. In the parable of the laborers, those that were first hired were given less wages than they expected when they saw what the people hired for one hour were paid. Jesus then uses this parable to share about His upcoming death and resurrection, an example of self-denial and doing God’s will.

This is something that probably didn’t register with the disciples right away but did after the event took place, just like in following.

**Mark 9:32 NASB** But they did not understand *this* statement, and they were afraid to ask Him.

**Luke 2:50 NASB** But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them.

**Luke 9:45 NASB** But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement.

**Luke 18:34 NASB** But the disciples understood none of these things, and *the meaning of* this statement was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said.

**Luke 24:44-45 NASB** Now He said to them, “**These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.**” **45** Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,

**John 10:6 NASB** This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them.

**John 12:16 NASB** These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him.

<sup>1</sup> (NASB) “Group” column from the headings in the NASB text.

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**John 20:9 NASB** For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

Next, the mother of James and John ask Jesus for positions of superiority with Him in heaven, the opposite of what Jesus was willing to do. In Mark's recording of this event it was James and John themselves who did the asking. I'll leave the apparent contradiction to the experts and address the request. They were seeking positions of superiority over all the other people who will come to faith in Jesus. Jesus responds by telling them they didn't really know what they were asking and that with the request comes great suffering. We know from history, James was the first apostle to be martyred (Acts 12:1-2) in 44 AD and John was the last apostle to die, after John had been boiled in oil but survived and then died around 90 AD.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, the last section might seem unrelated but upon further consideration it isn't. Two blind men ask Jesus to have mercy on them. Jesus asks what they would like Him to do for them and they ask to receive their sight. Jesus, moved with compassion, touched their eyes and they were immediately healed. Here Jesus was acting with the authority given to Him by the Father to do good for others.

Consider the two different requests that were made of Jesus. One seeking a position of superiority and the other a need to be met, restoration of sight to the blind. It is interesting that Jesus does fulfill each request. In the case of James and John, they did suffer much the same way as Jesus did. In the case of the blind men, they received their sight.

Both of these requests resulted in people having greater insight into life. James and John learned about what their future would be like, which they probably didn't fully understand until after Jesus' death and resurrection happened and they drank from the same cup of suffering as Christ did. The two blind men, received their sight back from a merciful God which then enabled them to see the world as they hadn't been able to.

My conclusion is this. We don't always, in fact probably rarely, see things from the same viewpoint as our Heavenly Father. There are things that we don't and won't fully understand until some future event happens or until we are united with Christ in heaven. In the meantime, ask for wisdom to discern the right thing to do to fulfill God's will in this life.

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### ***There and Then: Here and Now***

Answer the questions below as you reflect on your own life and this part of our study<sup>3</sup>: *my LOG vs others SPECK*. Here are some possible responses I've identified from the text that might apply to anyone.

S - Are there *sins* for me to avoid or confess?

•

P - Are there *promises* from God for me to claim?

•

E - Are there *examples* for me to follow or avoid?

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C - Are there *commands* for me to obey?

•

K - How has this passage increased my *knowledge* about God / Jesus / Holy Spirit?

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<sup>2</sup> (Fuxe)

<sup>3</sup> *Navigator Bible Study Handbook* (The Navigators), with additions & Matthew 7:1-5.

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*Key Words:* New Testament, Gospels, Matthew, Parables, Impartiality, Servanthood, Miracles

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