**Will you go by ……**

**“The Way of the Cross” Part 3**

“Believe in the Mission”

March 21, 2021 –

Matthew 20

* This week, for the **third** time, Jesus **prepares his disciples** for the shocking events of the days to come.
* The Messiah will **die**.
* **Why will Jesus be taken by evil men, while evil Rome** still rules, and the leaders of Israel are **corrupt**?
* **The answer is that Jesus** did **not** come to **save Israel** from Roman rule, nor did he come to save Israel from their corrupt leaders.
* **Jesus came to fulfill God’s great Rescue plan/His Redemption plan; as the perfect sacrifice, the Passover Lamb, who would meet all the requirements of God’s righteous law and defeat our true enemy - who** **is** **Satan**.

So join me in ….

**Matthew 20:17-19**

**17** Now Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. On the way, he took the Twelve aside and said to them, **18** “We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death **19** and will hand him over to the Gentiles to be **mocked** and **flogged** and **crucified**. On the third day he will be **raised to life**!”

* Here in **Matthew chapter 20**, Matthew lays out the account for us with **three important truths. The first truth Jesus** **gives is** ….

1. **A Call to Join the Work: (Verses 1-16)**

* **This call or invitation** began in the previous chapter, in **verse 30** that says; **“But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.”**

In **verse 27**, **Peter** **had revealed a** **misguided** **motive** **for service** in the kingdom. After Jesus told the young rich ruler …

**21** … “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

**Peter, heard that response and knowing that the 12 had left everything….. Peter then** lays claim to God’s kingdom with these words;

**“We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?”**

So Jesus responds to **Peters question** with **the parable of the vineyard**.  **The Parable states …**

**1** “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for **his vineyard**. **2** He agreed to pay them a **denarius** for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

* **God is the landowner** and He alone settles the accounts of His servants.
* **While we know we can’t “work” our way into heaven, notice the workers here (are already believers), and God continually calls his servants to work in HIS HARVEST FIELD. (Repeat)**
* Whatever pay God chooses to give us is “**GRACE”** and **MORE** than we deserve.
* We should **not** serve with **rewards as our motive**, and we should **not** insist on **knowing what we will get in advance**.
* **But what we do know is; “God is infinitely generous and** will always give us better than we deserve.
* Although **the workers all worked different hours**, … **notice** …
* The landowner **paid the first workers exactly what he promised** **in** **verse 2**;

“**He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.”**

* As God (the landowner) continued to go recruit other workers… he promised to**, “pay them whatever is right.”**
* **In Verse 6** the landowner goes out again with only one hour left to work; and said; “**Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?’**

This shows us that God; **does not call anyone** **to**; **“stand around all day long doing nothing.”**

* + **So we must ask ourselves;** 
    - Why am I here? .. **for just me**, **or to serve?”**
    - **Is this where I just attend**, **or**
    - **Am I actually a worker in God’s vineyard?”**

After we answer that question; the next question is….

**A. What is the work of the vineyard?**

* Our work is to **carry on the ministry Jesus** did on this earth;
  + both “**in” the body of Christ,** but especially ….
  + **To those “outside” in the vineyard**.
* **Jesus took the message of the gospel** to those who would listen.
* And while preaching the **kingdom of God**; **he ministered to the needs of those who were hurting and broken.**
* **“We are to do the same.”**
* **Have we ever been like Peter and asked**, “**What then will there be for us?” (I deserve better, I deserve more; making ministry about “ME” instead of about others)**
* **Do we ever** **complain**; like the workers in **verse 11-12; where..** **“they began to grumble against the landowner** (**God**). They said;

**“These men who were hired last worked only one hour; and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.”**

**What were they really saying?**

* God, you didn’t treat me **fairly**.
* I’ve worked **harder,** so I deserve **MORE**!

**Listen, -- Our attitude about service; Speaks volumes about how “genuine” our LOVE FOR GOD and our neighbor truly is.**

Here, Jesus stressed to his disciples the **need to work in the vineyard**; “**not”** **for what** **reward** **you will** **receive, but because LOVE your Lord!**

* Too many ask; “**What’s in it for me**?”
* Too many “**compare” their “REWARDS,”** **instead of** **serving for the sake of LOVE! – and ….**
* **Those who “compare” will never be satisfied!**

Next, Jesus will ***set the example for us*** as He makes the ……

1. **A Cry to Complete the Work: (Verses 17-19)**

**18** … the Son of Man will be **delivered** over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will **condemn** him to death **19** and will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and **crucified**. On the third day he will be **raised to life**!”

* Jesus **laid aside** his glory, to **complete** the **mission of the cross**, and purchase our redemption**.**
* One could **never say** Jesus did **not** **prepare His disciples** for His death.
* **Three times** (here in Matthew) He announced that He was going to Jerusalem to die.
* Here for the first time Jesus spoke of those who would **mock**, **flog**, and then **crucify him**. **But also, that he would rise again on the third day.**
* Jesus purpose for coming, was the **redemption** and **salvation** of **all** who will **believe** **in Him**.
* **The** **suffering of the cross** will bring about the **glory of the resurrection.**

**In humility, Jesus gave His life - with the motive of “LOVE for you!” The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross spells – Jesus Loves You!**

But, not everyone is listening to Jesus parable on ***motives*** and that is proven by the ..

1. **A Request to Command the Work: (Verses 20-28)**

* Zebedee’s wife and sons is about to learn what the cross is all about.

1. **The request (20–21):**

**20** Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, **asked a favor** of him. **21** “What is it you want?” he asked. She said, “Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.”

* **Mom** nor **the sons** even know what they are asking!
* At least James and John did believe in **prayer**, and they believed the promise Jesus had given about **sitting on thrones** in (Matt. 19:28).
* But, their request was in **ignorance**. So, Jesus responds by saying..

**Verse 22:** “**You don’t know what you are asking**,” …. “**Can you drink the cup I am going to drink**?” “**We can**,” they answered.

* **Salome** didn’t realize that the “**cup**” Jesus spoke of would be a **difficult** one to drink.
  + **James** was the first of the disciples to be **martyred**, and
  + **John** endured **suffering** & **persecution** thru life and even on the Isle of Patmos.
  + **These three believers wanted** “’**their will**,’ **not** **God’s will, ….. they just wanted things their way.”**
* They were **thinking like the world**:
* James and John wanted to “**lord it over**” the other disciples.
* Their request was **worldly**, because they were **selfishly** asking for **glory for themselves**, “**not for the Lord**.”
* The request was **not** only of the **world** and of the **flesh**, but it was from the **devil, …** because it was motivated by **pride**.

**Note this truth;**

Many use the name of Christ; **for the glory of themselves** and “**Not for the glory of the Lord**.”

1. **The requirement (20:23)**

**23** Jesus said to them, **“You will indeed drink from my cup, 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 by my Father.**

* **Jesus warned Salome** and **her sons** that the **special thrones** were available to those who were “**worthy of them**.”
* The **result** of their request was “**indignation**” on the part of the **other disciples**—probably, because they had not thought of it first!
* The **wisdom from above** always leads to **peace**; but the **wisdom of this world** leads to **war** (James 3:13–4:3).
* **Selfishness** **will only result in** **dissension and division**.

1. **The resentment (20:24)**

**24** When the ten heard about this, they were **indignant** with the two brothers.

* The move by James and John **didn’t promote** **unity** among the group.
* **How can they ever work together** **in the future**?
* **Oh, but they will**.
* The **cross** will set an example for **them and us** on how to **work** **with**; and **view** **others**; **through the eyes of Jesus**.

**Verse 25-28: - Gives us Life Lessons from Jesus:**

Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles **lord it over them**, and their high officials **exercise authority over them. 26** **Not so with you**. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your **servant**, **27** and whoever wants to be first must be your **slave**— **28** just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

* **Do you see many acting like servants and slaves?**
* **Jesus emphasized service and suffering**, and set that example for us when He went “**the way of the cross.”**
* To improve our **praying,** we must improve our **serving**.
* If we are **serving Jesus and others**, then we will **not** **be praying selfishly.**
* If we honestly can say, “**Speak, Lord**, for your **servant** is listening, then **He will say to us**, “**Speak, servant**, **for your Lord is listening.”**
* **If our prayers do not make us better servants, then there is something wrong with our prayers.**

**Our prayers should bring us near the cross.**

* It did for **Salome**. When Jesus was crucified, **Salome** **was standing near the cross** (John 19:25, “his mother’s sister”) **and** **sharing in Jesus sorrow and pain.**

Salome didn’t see **two thrones** on either side of Jesus—**she saw two thieves on two crosses.** And she heard Jesus give **her son, John**, to His mother Mary.

**The Cross spells the Words; God loves You**.

And Gods plan is to bring selfish, rebellious humans, home.

That plan is the main plot that runs through the whole Bible.

Really, the whole Bible is the **story of God’s love for us.**

* No matter who you are.
* No matter what you’ve done.

**God loves you** and Jesus died so you can know His love and forgiveness.

**If you will go .. the way of the cross, will you join me in this Prayer?**

May I never boast except in the **cross** **of our Lord Jesus Christ**, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. (Galatians 6:14)