



Are You Able...?

“Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” (Matthew 20:22).

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“And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, 18 Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, 19 And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again. 20 Then came to him the mother of Zebedees children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. 21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. 22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. 23 And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. 24 And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. 25 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. 26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; 27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: 28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:17-28).

It is one thing to desire something, and entirely another to be ready for it, and that constitute one of the salient points in this teaching:

- 1) “To be forewarned is to be forearmed”. A good teacher prepares his students for the future. On their way to Jerusalem Jesus gave the 12 disciples a ‘sneak’ preview on impending events, so it would not take them by surprise, and they would be able to prepare for appropriate handling of the situation.
- 2) As Jesus took the 12 disciples to disclose the impending events, it is not clear from the text whether the mother of the 2 sons of Zebe-

“And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the son of man...” (Matthew 20:27,28).

dee's had the opportunity of eavesdropping on the discussion, as it would have been very insensitive for her to make her request in spite of it. To give the benefit of doubt, let's assume that she did not hear. All the same, it is probably worth noting that **some people are often too self-centred to show concern for what others are going through. They are only interested in their problems, plans and ego-centric world.**

- 3) She had asked for what she did not understand nor what her sons were ready for. Human beings are often like that. They want to be or own what their level of commitment and responsibility has not prepared them for, and at a cost that they are not willing to face?
- 4) Their positive response to Christ's question - “Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able”, further illustrate the point that sometimes, people's claims are way ahead of their commitment and capability. This is because, shortly after this, the events at Gethsemane (Matthew 26:56 & Mark 14:50) where “... they all forsook him and fled” proves that they were not able to drink the cup that Jesus was referring to.
- 5) The level of indignation manifested by the remaining 10 disciples led Jesus to make a profound teaching on humility, which He had already demonstrated with His life... “the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28).

The challenge for us from this is that our confession should match our commitment.