

A group of people, possibly a church congregation or a study group, are gathered around a table in a dimly lit room. The text "Selfishness, Slaves & their Saviour." is overlaid in large, bold, yellow letters. The background is dark and out of focus, showing several people sitting at a table with bowls and other items on it.

Selfishness, Slaves & their Saviour.

The passage from Mark 10: 35 – 45 is very much in the same theme as the previous text in Chapter 10 from Mark.

It's about God's Kingdom and how it works – only now the discussion isn't going to be with Pharisees or rich young rulers...now it's going to get very close to home and personal...the pot is about to boil over...



Up steps James and John with the all time leading question; and a leading question is defined as...

‘...a question that suggests the particular answer or contains the information the asker is looking to have confirmed. Depending on the circumstances, leading questions can be objectionable or proper.

Leading questions may often be answerable with a yes or no...the propriety of leading questions generally depends on the relationship of the witness.’(Wikipedia)

That means James & John knew the answer that they wanted from Jesus...



These two were nicknamed by Jesus as the ‘Sons of Thunder’ back in Mark chapter 3 when Jesus called them to discipleship.

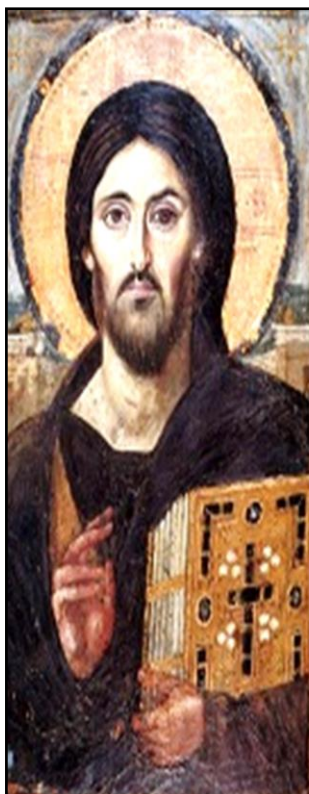
In their maturing and transition to being the disciples they would become, this was perhaps their sneaky phase.

What was this transformation? When John first met Jesus, John was one of the sons of thunder, yet after walking with Jesus for a lifetime, this “Son of Thunder” earned a new nickname: the “Apostle of Love.”

John (& James) were work in progress as we all are...



It has been suggested that these two brothers had, had their heads together (as we might say) before they approached Jesus...and from their thinking they had deduced that Jesus was going to be ruling somewhere as King hence 'in your glory' wasn't location specific...whether they had fully grasped at this point Jesus' Messiahship & Divinity is doubtful.



What do you
want me to do
for you?

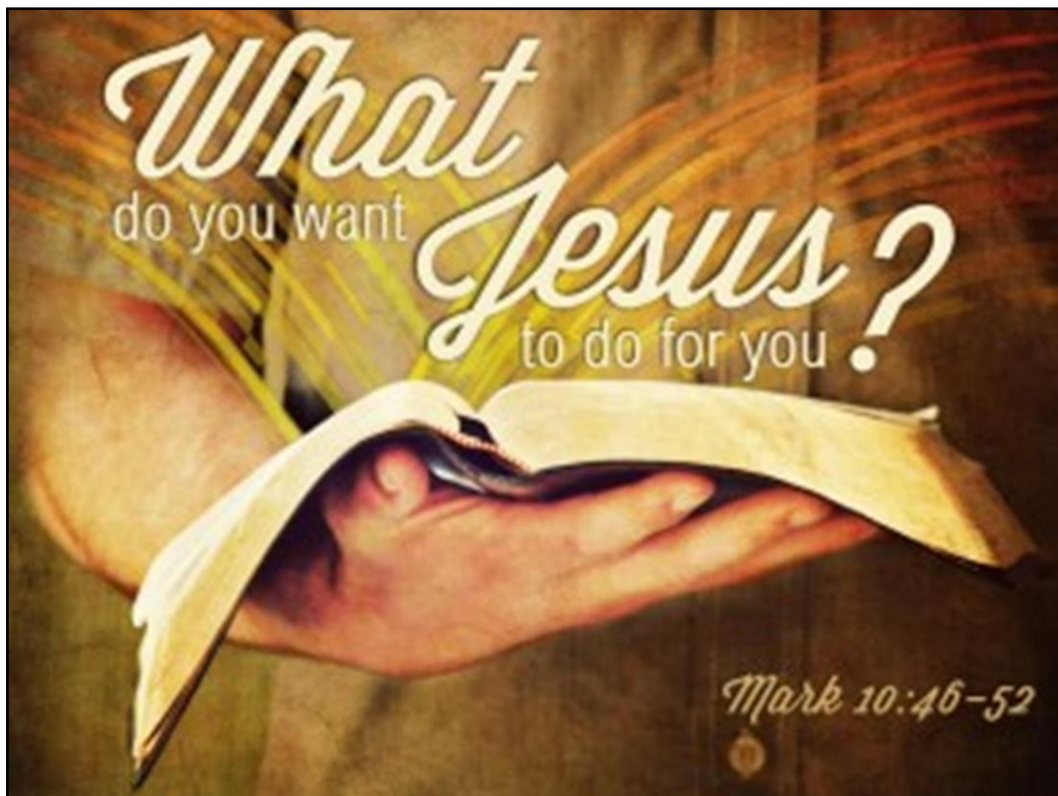
Mark 10:36

Now Jesus, in His Divinity, didn't say 'Aha, I know what you two are up to and that you're creeping around me to get a favour'.

Instead, Jesus asked them this question '**What do you want me to do for you?**'

This could also have been Jesus offering them an opportunity to think again before they spoke....if it was, it was lost on them.

They **BOTH** asked the question...and the only variable they were giving Jesus was which one would sit at which side of him. They must have thought they had nailed the request down... no wiggle room here.



Before we move on in the passage...and perhaps our/your minds are perhaps picturing these two likely lads feeling pleased with themselves as they wait for Jesus' to answer (and they thought the answer would give them what they wanted)

Pause and think...if you were face to face with Jesus – **what *would* YOU ask him to do for you?**



This may seem like the same question...yet I think it turns the first question around.

It can be read as any of us asking the question to Jesus 'What do you want **me** to do for **you**, Jesus?'

More than that, it ought to read the other way round, of me, of you asking what we can do for Him...so often we only think of what Jesus can do for us...of Jesus meeting and fulfilling our agenda rather than us seeking to meet his agenda...



If you are a fan of Comic Book characters you know that this is the Incredible Hulk.

The phrase he uses is 'you wouldn't like me if I got angry'.

We might the other disciples were maybe mildly annoyed (in a very restrained 'British' kind of a way) – the reality is that they were to coin a phrase 'spitting mad'...they were heading into serious 'red mist' territory...whichever phrase you choose, they were getting very angry at James and John..



James and John had asked to be at Jesus' right and left hand when He came into His Kingdom.

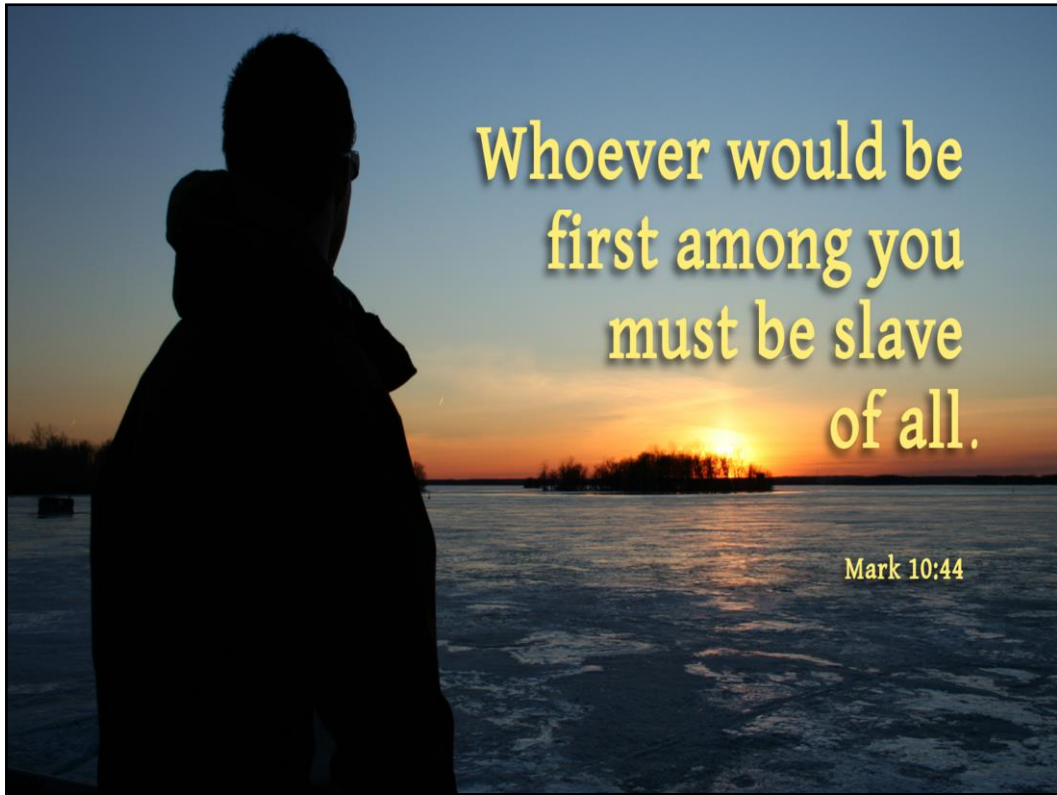
Arguably Jesus' Kingdom on Earth reached its apex at the Cross – when the relationship between the fallen world and the Creator was re-made with the opportunity for all of mankind to have Eternity with God.

James and John did have their own Calvary places in a different form – James executed and John exiled. As Jesus predicted 'the cup I drink you will drink, and with the baptism I am baptised, you will be baptised.'



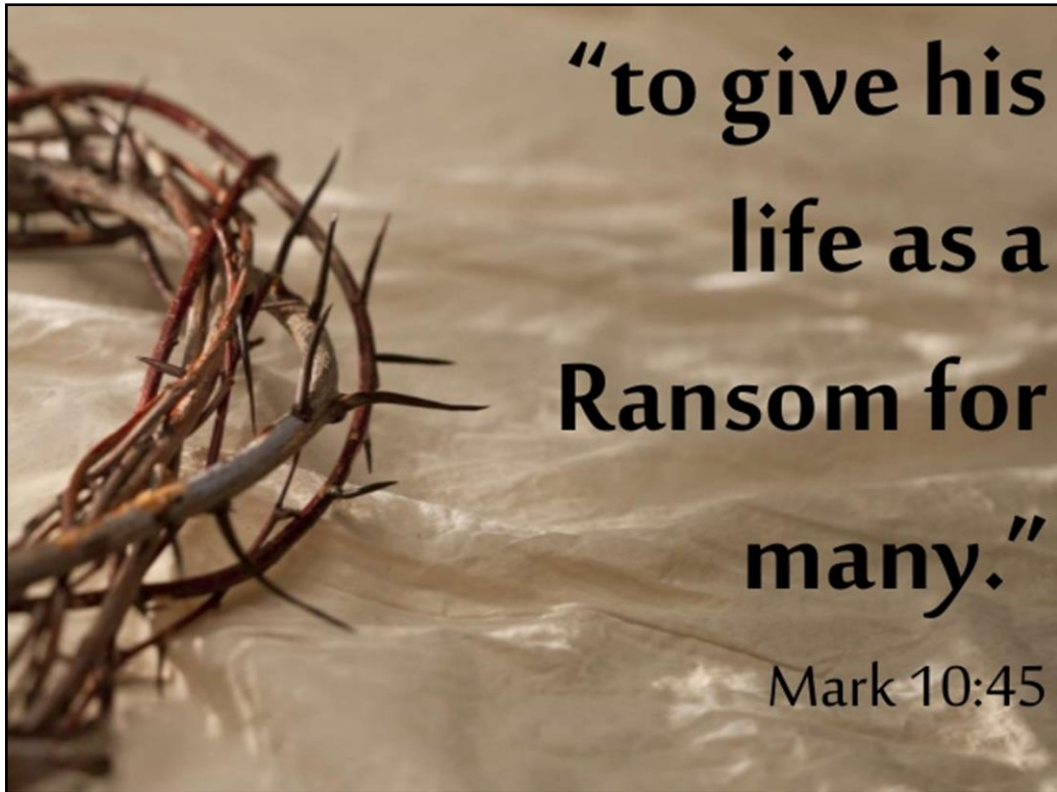
Jesus no doubt was more than aware of the growing firestorm between his disciples. He had not very long since told them not put stumbling blocks in the way of anyone who was for Him (Mark 9: 42) – now his own disciples are ready to cause one another to stumble and fall...

Jesus stepping in to talk with them all but not in the manner they were speaking of each other is a model example of reconciliation in practice.



Jesus didn't point the finger at any one of his disciples, rather he gave them (or rather reminded them) of how His Kingdom operates. Greatest lies not in the position that any of them would elevate themselves to; but rather how willingly they are to be the lowest of the lowest slave...would they do for someone else those things that only a Gentile slave would do?

When they each got their thinking about themselves right, then they would start to have the mind of Christ and begin to understand how Jesus embraces and outworks greatness.



**“to give his
life as a
Ransom for
many.”**

Mark 10:45

Just to make sure that these 12 disciples really grasped what He had been saying, Jesus then made it personal of Himself.

These words of vs 45 resound back to Isaiah 52:3 (NLT) ‘**..Now I can redeem you without having to pay for you.**’

Tributes had been paid for the nation throughout its history; now Jesus is aligning this final payment of a ransom upon himself...yet not in the manner of an earthly king or despot but in voluntarily giving his life and being executed as a slave and through suffering a slave’s death would serve,(be the slave) all of humankind.

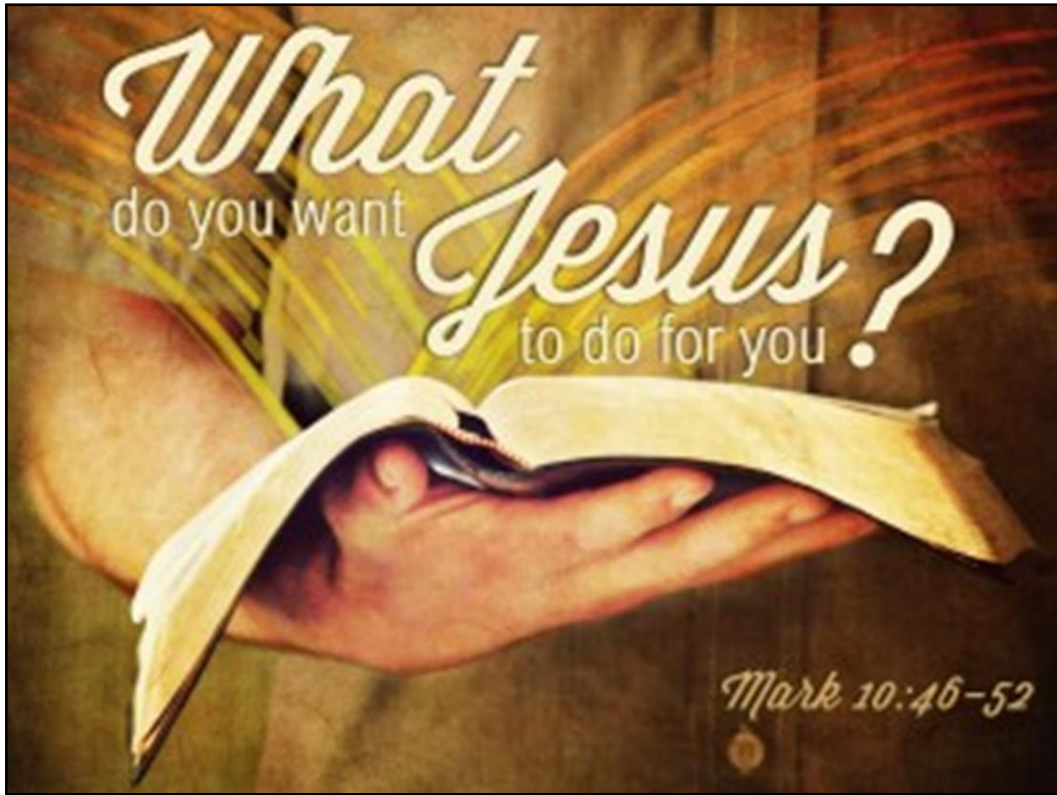


It doesn't get much more counter cultural than that.

After Jesus finished speaking with those words, nothing else is recorded.

It wouldn't need to be – they were in verse 32 'going up to Jerusalem' – the walls outside Jerusalem if not the roads leading there were never free of executed (crucified) criminals. Romans used Crucifixion as a very public deterrent.

Thus as they walked – the immediate landscape would have made it clear what Jesus meant by 'a ransom for many' (vs 45.)



As we conclude, reflecting back on my earlier question...if you were face to face with Jesus – **what *would* YOU ask him to do for you?**



Similarly with this earlier slide when gave it the emphasis, 'What do you want **me** to do for **you**, Jesus?'

Are you bold enough to ask what you can do for Him...and trusting Jesus to equip you and guide you to accept and fulfil the answer which He gives you, the revelation of Jesus' agenda for your life.

In asking the question, I and you, are accepting Jesus' words for ourselves in that 'the first will be last and the last first' – now that is counter cultural; and it is the Way of Jesus' Kingdom.