

Washington church of Christ

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washingtonnjchurchofchrist.com

Order of Services

Sunday December 28, 2014

Song Leader	David Osinski
Prayer	Bob Celentano
Preaching	Bob James
Lord's Supper	
Prayer for the Bread	Stan Thompson
Prayer for the Cup	Brian Jeffries
Prayer for the Collection	Derald Sanchez
Assisting at the Table	Matt Grimaldi
Morning Closing Prayer	Arnold Thompson
Evening Opening Prayer	Scott Thomas
Announcements	Bill Duryea

Schedule of Weekly Services

Sunday Morning Bible Classes	9:30 am
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 am
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Classes	7:30 pm
Thursday Morning Bible Study	11:00 am

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What Would You Ask?

In the books of Matthew and Mark we read of a request made to Jesus for the two positions of highest prominence in His "kingdom" according to Matthew's account, or His "glory" according to Mark's account. The main difference between the two accounts is that in Matthew the request is made by "the mother of the sons of Zebedee," and in Mark by "James and John, the sons of Zebedee." This difference is not a contradiction, for we read in Matthew's account that the mother came "with her sons," and that Jesus, in answering the request, spoke to more than one person. Clearly, the request of the mother was also that of the sons.

The object of this article is not Jesus' response to their request, but rather His question to them when they approached Him seeking to make their request.

Can you imagine being in the presence of Jesus, and being able to ask Him whatever we want!

What would we ask for?

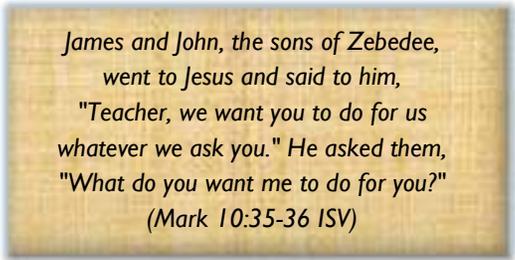
In Luke 12:1-12 Jesus had been emphasizing the folly of worry. He had been saying,

"Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? Yet not one of them is forgotten in God's sight ... Have no fear; you are of more value than any number of sparrows." (Luke 12:6, 7 NIV)

One would think that after listening to such words of encouragement the reaction of everyone would be, "How rich we are!" Upon one listener, however, the words of Jesus seem to have made no impression whatsoever, for when Jesus had finished His speaking Luke tells us that,

Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." (Luke 12:13 NIV)

The person who made this request could think of only one thing: the inheritance! He was convinced that he was being cheated. Jesus knew that the petitioner's fixation with everyday affairs had its root in greediness. Therefore he issues a warning, addressed not only to this man but to the entire multitude...



James and John, the sons of Zebedee, went to Jesus and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask you." He asked them, "What do you want me to do for you?"
(Mark 10:35-36 ISV)

Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." (Luke 12:15 NIV)

This is an earnest warning that all need take to heart, and from time to time ask ourselves, "Do I experience joy in giving, in helping along good causes? Or am I, perhaps, a selfish person? Do I have an inordinate yearning for material possessions? ... For honor, prestige, power, and position? Succinctly asked ... am I greedy?

Jesus tells these people—and is telling us today—not to become enslaved to this demon of greed, and he adds: *for a man's life* [the life that really matters] *does not consist in the abundance of his possessions, his earthly goods.*

Again looking at our question ... What would we ask of Jesus? In Luke 10:38 – 42 we read the occasion where Martha and her sister Mary were entertaining Jesus, and most probably some of His disciples. All is well in their home at Bethany. A moment ago Martha extended a hearty welcome to Jesus. And now Mary, her sister, is already seated at his feet, those very feet which at a later occasion she is going to anoint (John 12:3), eagerly listening to the words of life that are issuing from the Savior's heart and lips. However, her sister Martha, who has devoted her time to preparing the meal, seemingly explodes with anger. She is exasperated. She feels that she has good reason to be thoroughly annoyed for she is working and Mary is just sitting! In her outburst she asks of Jesus ...

"Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" (Luke 10:40 NIV)

Martha asked our Lord to "act on" someone else ... her sister Mary. Jesus responded in so many words as to say that the problem was not with Mary, but with Martha.

If given the opportunity to ask Jesus to address something that is a source of irritation, frustration, or even pain in our lives, would our *first* thought be to ask Jesus to act on someone else? Would we seek for Him to change our husband, or our wife, or our father, or our mother, or our brother or sister? Solomon poses the question...

Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin? (Proverbs 20:9 KJV)

There are certainly times when the faults and errors of those around us present a genuine concern and need to be addressed ... but Jesus warns us to keep our own lives in proper perspective...

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. (Luke 6:41-42 NIV)

Our initial question was, given the opportunity, "What *would* we ask of Jesus? In reality, we as God's children have the opportunity to ask of our Father whatever we want ... through prayer. This, to me, begs the question "What *are* we asking of God?"

In view of James' warning...

You ask for something but do not get it because you ask for it for the wrong reason—for your own pleasure. (James 4:3 ISV)

... we should consider the words of David ...

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you. (Psalms 51:10-13 NIV)

(This article is a reprint from the September 16, 2012 Bulletin)

Our Prayer List...

For Spiritual Responsiveness – Those studying with us in the Thursday morning Perkin's Study ... All of our wayward members

For Physical Healing – Ellen Jinks ... Lee Redd ... Bill Duryea's Parents ... Mary Jinks ... Kathy Syracuse (Fair Lawn)

For Wisdom and Good Judgment – The Leaders of our congregation ... the leaders of our nation

For God's Care and Good Providence – Our young people away at college ... Our young people here at Washington ... our members who are traveling ... the men and women in military service ... our congregation ... the Evangelist and Teachers We Help Support

EVENTS AND NOTES

- ✦ OUR NEXT PERKIN'S THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY WILL BE JANUARY 8TH AT 10AM. ALL ARE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE WHENEVER YOU CAN ... MORE IMPORTANTLY INVITE THOSE WHO MAYBE SEEKING JESUS!
- ✦ DON'T FORGET TO JOIN OUR "MEET-UP" SITE ON THE WEB ... [HTTP://WWW.MEETUP.COM/THURSDAY-MORNING-BIBLE-STUDY-AT-PERKINS-IN-PHILLIPSBURG-NJ](http://www.meetup.com/Thursday-Morning-Bible-Study-at-Perkins-in-Phillipsburg-NJ) ... CHECK IT OUT!