

A Mother's Request

Matthew 20:20-28

I hesitated to use Mrs. Zebedee (aka Salomé) for my Mother's Day sermon. Many are critical of her request for her two sons. At first, it sounds like she is being brash, doesn't it?

However, upon further consideration, I've come to appreciate her boldness. As I read this text I see "mother" written all over it.

Here is a mother who comes to Jesus with a bold request (vs. 20-21). She asks nothing for herself. She only wants something for her two sons. This was just a mom being a mom!

- Mark 1:19-20 tells us James and John were partners with their father Zebedee in the fishing business. Jesus called them as they were mending their nets. They left their nets and father to follow Jesus. The request of Mrs. Zebedee shows she was supportive of her sons choice to leave the family fishing business to follow Jesus.

➡ **Let's take a closer look at six things about this "mother's request."**

I. It was made to the right Person.

- A. She came with the right approach—She came worshipping. She knew Jesus was God.
 - The word "worship" literally means to kiss or lick the hand (like a dog). Her request was bold, but her attitude was humble.
- B. Mrs. Zebedee recognized Jesus was going to be King and establish His kingdom. He would be the One in charge and that is who she came to with her request.

II. It was a NATURAL request.

- A. It is natural for a godly mother to want her children to be part of God's kingdom.
 - What good is it if our children have successful careers, make money... drive fancy cars... and live in high-class neighborhoods, if they miss the kingdom of God?

- B. It is natural for a mother to love her children and to want what is best for them. There isn't a mother here that doesn't want the best for their children.
1. Just be sure you want **God's best** for your children, and not what you think is best, or what the world thinks is best (money, popularity, elevated position, good profession, etc.).
 2. Maybe God wants your child to be a preacher or missionary. Look at your children from God's point of view. Too often mothers only see their children from their own point of view.
- ➡ Jesus asked, "***What wilt thou?***" Hey Mom, if Jesus asked you "What do you want?" what would you say? Mrs. Zebedee wasn't bashful about her request! She asked for a good thing!

III. It was a **PERSONAL** request.

- A. She didn't ask for someone else's children. She probably saw the other disciples there. She knew they were good men too. But she asked Jesus "*grant that these **MY** two sons*" sit at your right and left.
- B. Let's be honest. Most moms are somewhat bias and a bit prejudice when it comes to their own children.
1. It's natural to put your children before another parent's children.
 2. One reason why mothers take such a personal interest in their children's success is they are part of them. A successful child is like "a rose in her bouquet."
 3. Ezekiel 16:44—*As is the mother, so is her daughter*. The success, or failure, of a child is often a reflection of them. When a son excels in life parents take a measure of pride in his success—"I'm so proud of you." (see Prov. 23:24-25).

IV. It was an **AMBITIOUS** request.

- ➡ She was ambitious for her children, but her ambition was noble. Her ambition sought to honor God through her two sons.

- A. She not only wanted her sons to be in the kingdom, but have a significant role in the Christ's kingdom.
1. The person sitting on the right of the king is second in command; the person sitting on the king's left is third in command. There wasn't a higher position or a higher request.
 - That sounds like a mother's request. Mom's always want the best for their children.
 - Too often we settle for lesser goals in life. Don't be afraid to ask big things for your children if they're worthy and honorable things.
 - Similar to Elisha's request of Elijah (2 Kings 2:9).
 2. The mother of Sisera was ambitious (Judges 5). Sisera went out to battle, but was killed. Meanwhile, Sisera's mother anxiously waits for him to return with great spoils of victory. She looks out the window and wonders, *"Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots? ... Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey; to every man a damsel or two; to Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needlework, of divers colours of needlework on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil?"* She was looking for her son to return victorious with the precious needlework he captured. She wanted her son to be successful in battle.
 - Many mothers are like Sisera's mother. They are awaiting their sons to return triumphant and victorious. No mother wants their child to fail.
- B. The most ambitious thing you could want for your children is to see them saved and serving God for the rest of their lives!

V. It was asked in FAITH.

- A. Just before she made her request, Jesus foretold His death (vs. 18-19). Yet, she still believed He would set up His kingdom and she wanted her boys to be a part of it! That's faith.

- She had the same kind of faith the dying thief had when he said, “*Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom*” (Luke 23:42). Even though Jesus was dying on a cross, he believed Jesus would still come into His kingdom!

B. Hebrews 11:6

VI. It was a **UNCALCULATED request** (v. 22).

- A. She asked for something when she didn’t realize the cost involved.
- I’m glad for Romans 8:26. We don’t know all the facts. We don’t know what our request might mean for our future or the future of someone else.
- B. At least she asked. The worse that could happen would be for God to say, “no.” While Jesus did not immediately grant her request, He didn’t deny it either. He just reminded her the decision was God the Father’s, and there is a cost involved.
- They paid the cost! James was the first Apostle to be martyred (Acts 12). John was exiled on the Isle of Patmos. *Fox’s Book of Martyrs* says he was later thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil.
 - Are you willing to pay the cost for God to answer your prayer?

SUMMATION: Mrs. Zebedee didn’t argue with the Lord Jesus about her request. She simply accepted His answer. How do I know that?

Bible doesn’t give all the details Mrs. Zebedee life, but later you find her at the foot of the cross when Jesus was crucified (Mt. 27:56) and then at the empty tomb on resurrection morning (Mk. 16:1). His answer to her request did not deter her from following Him. This leads me to believe she must have ac.2 (h) 1 (a) 0.4 (e) -00.1 (a) -0.4 (e) -0.4 () -0.4 (Je) -0.4 (m)