

# Sinning Saints

Mt.20:20-28

# “Attitude is everything”

“Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference”

“The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitudes”

“Your attitude, not your aptitude, will determine your altitude”

NKJV does not use *attitude*.

*Mind* – Ph.2:3, 5 ... 3:15, 16, 19

## Mt.20:20, feminine

21: mother wants 'best' for sons

22: Jesus answers sons:

1) "Cup" . . . suffering; 26:39

2) "We are able" . . . 26:56

23: His kingdom meant humility, sacrifice, rejection, not honor or privilege

24: indignant disciples; directed at James and John

- 18:1-5

# I. The Sins of Saints

- Flattery, 20. Why kneel at this time?
- Competition, selfishness, 21. Strike first.
- Carnality, 21. Want power to rule.
- Pride, 21. Position, power, pomp. Ro.12:3
- Ignorance, 22. “You” (pl.) do not know . . .
- Self-confidence, 22. “We are able”  
(26:33-35). 20:24.
- Anger, 24. ‘Much + grieve’: indignant  
against, angry.
- Envy, 25-27. NOT in My kingdom.

I. The Sins of Saints

## II. The Source of Sins

# 1. Carnal desires

- Jesus warns disciples: avoid self-seeking
  - Mt.16:21-23, Jesus would suffer, die
  - Mt.17:12, again [18:1, who is greatest...?]
  - 20:17-19, again...
    - 20:1-16: Jews argue over rights / slights; Jesus submits to murder and sacrifice
    - 20:20-28: worse: disciples argue like unbelievers
      - 17, “Jerusalem” . . . 20, “then”

## 2. Unholy competition

- World sees humility as a handicap
- Pride and selfishness result in fussing, fighting, and fractures
- A 'cup' is costly



### 3. Power hungry

“In Greek eyes, serving is not very dignified” – TDNT

- GREAT → be a servant, 27
  - From ‘dust’? ...or ‘hasten after, pursue’?
  - True fulfillment comes in lowly service.
  - Be great in self-sacrifice.
- FIRST → be a slave, 28
  - “Nothing is higher than lowliness of mind, and nothing lower than boastfulness”

I. The Sins of Saints

II. The Source of Sins

III. The Savior of Sins

# Jesus and sin

1. Familiar error (25): rulers, pride
2. Forceful explanation (26-27): not you
3. Flawless example (28) – deity, yet . . .
  - a. Son of Man did not come to be served.
  - b. He came to . . .
    - 1) serve
    - 2) give life a ransom for many

# Jesus, the ransom (1)

- Ransom: terrible word in modern vocabulary
  - NT: slaves / POW's hoped for ransom
  - OT: Jews ransomed firstborn males
  - Disciples: selective hearing (19:28)
  - Jesus: mind occupied with humiliation and death

# Jesus, the ransom (2)

28: **came** (not *born*, except 18:37)

- To minister (not to *receive* service...)
- To give His life (not *taken*, but *given*)
- Ransom: He died, made all people savable
- Mt.26-27 . . .
  - Jesus had all power
  - Gave life in humble service / sacrifice
- Jesus points to <sup>1</sup>service (20:26-28), <sup>2</sup>death on cross...

# Conclusion

1. Wrong attitudes are sinful.
  - a. Mt.15, out of the heart . . .
  - b. Motives matter

# Conclusion

- 2. Wrong attitudes lead to wrong actions
  - a. Prov.4:23 – first thought, then action.
  - b. Competition generates many sins.  
Mt.16:25.
  - c. Earthly rulers depend on force, pomp, and authority.

Why do we think we  
should be 'number one'?

# Conclusion

3. They use mother to ask Jesus an irreverent request.
  - Jesus holds them accountable for thoughts, ambitions, sins.
  - 24, the selfish ten are as guilty as the self-centered two



# Conclusion

4. Jesus changed the character of these men.
  - a. Acts reveals humble disciples who exalt Christ, not themselves
  - b. Lord's correction was intended to change their character and to save their souls
  - c. Correction is good and salvific. 2 Tim.3:16  
(**'to'** + **'up'** / **'again'** + **'make straight'**)

# Conclusion

5. One who focuses on Christ cannot remain proud.
  - People swell up to impress others...

# Conclusion

6. Though they competed with one another, not one thought of competing with Jesus.

# Conclusion

7. They (we) do not have to be a slave to sin.
  - We can repent, change course . . .  
become different, just as these men did

# Conclusion

8. Some have to learn the hard way.

Mother of Zebedee's sons (Mt.20:20)

- a. Mt.27:56, Mary Mag., Mary mother of James and Joses, mother of sons of Zebedee
- b. Mk.15:40, Mary Mag., Mary mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome
- c. Jn.19:25, Jesus mother, His mother's sister, Mary wife of Clopas, Mary Mag.

# Conclusion

8. Some have to learn the hard way.

Mother of Zebedee's sons (Mt.20:20)

- a. If true: James and John are first cousins of Jesus.
- b. **Salome**: stands near cross: what does she see?
- c. **John**: among first to suffer, Ac.4:1-3.
- d. **James**: first to die, Ac.12:1-2.