

What am I worth? (2)

How should we pursue true worth?



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We are considering True Worth, and for today we will continue our consideration of the subject, "What am I worth?" the second message.

In the first message we have seen that many of us can be very easily affected by the problem of self-esteem, very much affected by how other people view us, treat us, relate with us.

Today, let us go on to consider: How should we pursue true worth in our lives?

As we recognize that there are many difficulties and problems that we face in this world, it is good for us to seek to understand: Why is it that we face so many difficulties? Why is it that we do not find true meaning, fulfilment, peace and joy in our lives? What is it that we want in our lives? What are we pursuing? How can we find true meaning and satisfaction?

Example of James and John

Let us consider the example of two disciples of the Lord Jesus. These are men chosen by the Lord Jesus because of the potential in their lives, where there is a meaningful direction in their heart, with desires towards what is morally and spiritually good. And yet, as we look at their lives, we can see that there are difficulties, deficiencies that need to be resolved.

There are areas that they need to correct, and as we look at their lives, we can learn for ourselves how we too can learn and grow together. We will consider the issues arising from, as well as associated with, this example. We will consider issues that are relevant for all of us to ponder over, and also to apply in our own lives.

Let us turn to **Mark 10: 35-45**.

- 35 And James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, came up to Him, saying to Him, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask of You."
- 36 And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?"
- 37 And they said to Him, "Grant that we may sit in Your glory, one on Your right, and one on *Your* left."
- 38 But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking for. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?"
- 39 And they said to Him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized."
- 40 "But to sit on My right or on *My* left, this is not Mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."
- 41 And hearing this, the ten began to feel indignant with James and John.
- 42 And calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them.
- 43 "But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant;
- 44 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all.
- 45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

There are some helpful questions that we can ponder over as we read this passage, and they can help us to think over our lives, and consider the principles that are relevant to us.

Why such a request?

Why did these two disciples want to sit on the right and on the left of the Lord Jesus in His glory?

The passage tells us that James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, came to the Lord Jesus with a specific request, and they said, “Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask of You.” And when the Lord Jesus asked them, “What do you want Me to do for you?” they replied, “Grant that we may sit in Your glory, one on Your right, and one on *Your* left.”

It is helpful for us to think: What could have motivated them to make such a request? As we look at the context, in **Mark 10** as well as in the record of the Gospels in general, we can see that in their hearts there was a desire for greatness.

We have read how the disciples argued among themselves who was the greatest. Now, they ask to sit on the right and on the left of the Lord Jesus in His glory. Those would be, in their understanding, positions of greatness, very close to the Lord Jesus in His glory.

It may come through to us that this would be a very poor kind of motivation, very worldly in spirit, and not befitting of disciples of the Lord.

However, we should also recognize that in our hearts, very often there is a mixture in our desires and direction of life. It is quite likely that their motives were not entirely bad.

It is quite likely that they appreciated the Lord Jesus – they recognized Him to be holy, righteous and good. And so, they wanted to be close to Him; and the closest to Him would be on His right and on His left. That, we can say, is a meaningful desire – to be close to the Lord Jesus.

However, from the context, and the reply of the Lord Jesus in this passage, we can see that there were aspects that were not right in their desire, and in their attitude. They were seeking for positions of honour and glory. This is very likely to be related to their sense of worth and importance. It is likely to be related to their desiring to find meaning and fulfilment in life, to find true blessedness and meaningful happiness.

Is this not also true in our lives? We want to develop a true sense of worth and importance, that we are valuable. We want to find fulfilment; we want to be truly blessed.

So in their understanding, that would be the best thing that could fulfil their desire. And so we see that they were very specific and very definite in their request. They said to the Lord Jesus, “Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask of You.” “We want You...”: they knew what they wanted. They asked the Lord Jesus to do for them what they would request.

Praises and worth

What do we want? What do we seek for? What would we ask the Lord to give to us or to help us with? For many people, seeking for a position of honour, of praise and of glory, is a very common desire. We may not put it in this way, but it very often motivates the way we conduct ourselves, the things that we pursue.

When people praise us, we very easily become very happy. When people say negative things about us, we can easily become depressed. This applies in all areas of life – whether it be at the place of work, at home, in society, among friends, in a family – it very easily affects us. We often think that when people praise us, or when we are in a position of honour, it means that there is worth in our lives. Easily, we hold that view and concept, but in reality it is not true.

If we want to find true fulfilment and meaning in life, we need to correct ourselves in many of the wrong areas of understanding that we have accumulated over the years. Praise from others does not mean great worth in our lives. Even in situations where people may say very strongly positive things about us, it can mean nothing of value. In fact, it can at times be very negative in nature.

Let us look at a passage that helps us appreciate this principle:

Acts 12: 20-23

- 20 Now he was very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon; and with one accord they came to him, and having won over Blastus the king's chamberlain, they were asking for peace, because their country was fed by the king's country.
- 21 And on an appointed day Herod, having put on his royal apparel, took his seat on the rostrum and *began* delivering an address to them.
- 22 And the people kept crying out, "The voice of a god and not of a man!"
- 23 And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died.

Here is a description of a man in a position of power and honour in this world: Herod, a king. He was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon. They came to him with one accord; they were asking for peace. The reason given here is that their country was fed by the king's country. They were concerned as to what would happen to them if Herod were angry with them, so they wanted to make peace with him.

So we are told that Herod took his seat on the rostrum, dressed in his royal apparel, and he delivered an address to them.

In all likelihood, he would have sought to speak impressively, authoritatively and to assert his position or power. The people were very happy to respond by praising him, in very, very strong terms: “The voice of a god and not of a man!” He was very highly praised, but what was the meaning in this situation?

We are told: ...immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory... Herod was not struck dead because the people praised him. He was struck dead because of a wrong attitude in his heart; “...he did not give God the glory...” is a description of his pursuit of power and glory for himself, displaying himself with arrogance, and enjoying the adulation of the people.

He liked it when they made such a remark: “The voice of a god and not of a man!” He did not humble himself before God. He was prepared to be exalted to be like God, and God showed His displeasure through the angel who struck him.

God wants us to know that ultimately the praises of men do not determine our worth, and the attitude of our heart is of primary importance in terms of what God values.

So if we are seeking for praise from men, beware! We can, as a result, nurture a heart that God will be very displeased with. If we like the praises of men, we can easily pursue things that people may praise us for, but God may be angry with us.

At the same time, it is also important for us to recognize that praise from other people is not always bad. At times, praise from others can be meaningful. The important thing is to recognize why the praise comes about: What motivates the people who praise us, and what is our attitude when we are praised?

Romans 13: 3-4 tells us of a kind of praise that can be meaningful:

- 3 For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same;
- 4 for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil.

So the apostle Paul tells us if we do what is good, we will have praise from the authorities, the rulers, who are carrying out the process of justice. Where God has ordained authority to maintain law and order, to encourage what is good and to punish that which is evil, if we practise what is good, we will have praise from these authorities.

This kind of praise is meaningful if we are doing what is right because we love what is good. If our attitude is correct, and we do what is good, and we are praised for it, it can be a meaningful thing and can form part of our testimony of our walk with God and the quality of our lives.

But we need to be careful as to the motivation in that context. If we are looking forward to praise from men, or we become proud as a result of the praises that come to us, it will also lead to damage in our lives, and will not promote true worth in us.

Our longings

So in the midst of these kinds of situations, as we ponder about life, we may wonder, "What should I pursue in life?"

There are many things in this world that can trouble us, and deep in our hearts many of us would have various longings to be someone who will find peace, joy, freedom, meaning in our lives.

We long to be what we should be: what is meaningful for us.

And especially when we have come to appreciate God who is good, we want to be the kind of person that God desires us to be. And yet, we may find that it is very difficult and we fail.

What are the aspects that we may long for in our lives?

Many of us would have gone through many situations of life when we find the weight and the weariness of this life very difficult to bear. We want to be free from the anxieties, the fears and the burdens of this life. We find it difficult to cope with the pressures and temptations that come to us. We are very much affected by what others think of us, what they expect of us, what they demand from us.

Many of these areas have a significant relationship with this area of true worth: What we think other people expect of us affects us in terms of our perception of what we are worth. But in general, there are many aspects of life that can bring fear, anxiety and burden, as well as significant distractions from the path that we are longing to walk.

Choked by the world

Luke 8: 14: In this verse, the Lord Jesus, in telling the parable of the sower, describes a situation where the ground leads to the seed growing up among thorns, and not bringing forth fruit. He says:

“And the *seed* which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to maturity...”

“Choked with worries and riches and pleasures of *this* life”: worries are a very common experience, and worries can easily choke us – we have no more energy, no more drive to concentrate on the things of eternity when we are filled with worries of this life.

We are worried as to whether we will get promoted. We are worried as to whether we will be able to accomplish the tasks that are assigned to us. We are worried whether we can fulfil our responsibilities in home, in society, and in many other areas of life.

Worries are an area that is easier for us to understand how they can trouble us... but how about riches and pleasures? How do riches and pleasures choke us?

Riches and pleasures can very easily draw us away from the pursuit of true worth. We think that these are valuable... we think that these are meaningful... but as we can read very easily from the book of **Ecclesiastes**, all this will lead us to vanity... emptiness... a striving after wind. It will choke our spiritual life, and we will not bring forth fruit to maturity.

It is helpful for us to note the word "life" in this verse. The Lord Jesus said: "...they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of *this* life..." "*This* life" that He is referring to is not spiritual life; "*this* life" that He is referring to, the word "life", is translated from the Greek word "*bios*", which basically means our physical, natural, temporal life in this world: our earthly existence.

It is good for us to pay attention to this aspect because this is a very major cause of our wrong pursuit in life and it very readily draws us away from the path of true worth. We can be very preoccupied with the things of this life, the things of this world. It is the same term that is found in **1 John 2: 16**, which we will look at, at a later context, but it basically refers to "the boastful pride of life", "boastful pride" in the context of our earthly existence, our natural abilities, what we have, what we can do...

Deep in our hearts, we know that all this cannot bring true meaning to our lives. It may give us a false sense of worth, but at the end of it, we find that all these things are worthless. **Ecclesiastes** tells us clearly they are worthless... they are emptiness... they are striving after wind!

Whatever we can attain in this world, from this world, this “life”, will amount to nothing. Where there is no spiritual life, there will be no worth in our lives.

Spiritual life or earthly life

So then in our hearts we may long to find life, to find meaning, direction and purpose. The Lord Jesus tells us how we can find that life.

Matthew 7: 13-14: the Lord Jesus says,

- 13 “Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it.
- 14 “For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it...”

The word “life” is also found in these two verses, but it is not the same word as in **Luke 8: 14**. In this context, the Lord Jesus is not referring to our natural, physical, temporal life. He is referring to spiritual life: “...the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life...”

He is speaking to people who already have physical life, but who do not have spiritual life, or who have found some degree of spiritual life... helping them to understand how to find true spiritual life in abundance: “...the gate is small... the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it...”

This is different from the path of the world. The path of the world is broad, the gate is wide, and it leads to destruction.

So if we want to find life, we need to take care not to walk in the broad way that leads to destruction: the path that is popular, the path that is pleasurable, the path that is easy, in terms of what this world can offer to us, a path that can seem very attractive, but it leads to death.

This word “life” is translated from the same word that is used in **John 3: 16**, where it refers to “eternal life”:

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life...”

The world or your soul

God wants us to have eternal life. It is in the context of eternal life that we will find meaning, that we will develop true worth. If we are seeking for it in this world, we will not find life; instead, we will find death: spiritual death.

The Lord Jesus explains in **Matthew 16: 24-26** how we can find that life:

- 24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.
- 25 “For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it.
- 26 “For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”

Again we see the Lord Jesus telling us... the path of the world as contrasted with the path of spiritual life. He says: “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me...” This is not the path of the world. The path of the world is: “Gratify yourself! Enjoy yourself in what the world can give you. Seek for what you like. Attain power, authority, achievements that you can reach in this world.” But the Lord Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me...” It is a difficult path, but it is the only way by which we can develop true worth.

We have to reject that which is negative in order to seek for and nurture that which is positive. He says, "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it..." If we want to save our life in this world – we want to nurture it, nurse it, develop it, pursue the things of this world – we shall lose our life. We will not have spiritual life. Our life will become empty and negative. There will be no meaning and worth in our lives. We will lose our life.

But, "...whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it..." If we are prepared to give up our life in this world, the things of this world, the pursuit of the world, for the Lord's sake, then we shall find our life, we shall develop quality in our being: there can come about true worth in our lives.

The Lord then asked the question: "For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul?"

The contrast: the world or your soul; you gain the world, you lose your soul; you give up the world, you find your soul. "What will a man give in exchange for his soul?" When we pursue the things of this world, we are actually exchanging our soul for it.

The evil one offers us this world in exchange for our soul. If we want true meaning in life, then we need to understand the place of the world in terms of its hindrance to our pursuing true meaning in life.

Many of us, having gone through strife... difficulties... will also often have longed for peace in our hearts. We want to have a steady, consistent, serene kind of peace in our heart that is not troubled by the past, the present or the future.

How can we develop that kind of peace in our being?

We long for peace, but we find turmoil... distress... anxiety... fear... worries. Well, the Lord Jesus tells us we can have peace:

John 14: 27

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful..."

The Lord Jesus tells us we can have peace and He says, "My peace I give to you..." And specifically He says, "...not as the world gives..." This peace is different from that of the world.

The world can never give us true peace. The world can give us "peaceful" experiences that seem very meaningful, but they lead to turmoil and meaninglessness.

The Lord Jesus says, "My peace I give to you..." and we know the peace in the Lord Jesus arises from deep quality in His being: clear, meaningful direction and purpose in life... deep oneness with God.

We want to pursue peace... we need to recognize how we need to give up the world, and to come to the Lord to find our peace in Him.

True blessedness

We all long to be truly blessed: to be deeply and meaningfully happy. How can we be truly blessed? How can we be meaningfully happy? The Lord Jesus again tells us, in **Matthew 5: 8**,

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God..."

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." We often think of blessedness in terms of a position of honour, in terms of things that we can get. There are many things in this world that many people want to be "blessed" with.

But the Lord Jesus tells us that true and deep and ultimate blessedness is in the heart: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

It is when you are “pure in heart” that you will truly “see God”: know Him, relate with Him deeply, with rich meaning and quality in fellowship with Him. If we want true blessedness, we need to concentrate on what is in our heart rather than what is in the world.

So then, we may wonder: “What must I do?” “How can I be free?” “How can I be pure in heart?” We have longings... seeking the Lord to help us to find true meaning in life. What must we do? What should we seek for? What should we concentrate upon?

We will go on to the next question that we can ask as we look at **Mark 10: 35-45**.

Why did the Lord Jesus say: “You do not know what you are asking for”? When James and John asked the Lord Jesus to grant that they may sit, one on the right and one on the left of the Lord Jesus in His glory, the Lord Jesus told them, “You do not know what you are asking for.” Why did He say that?

In the context, we see that one reason is related to the next sentence, “Are you able to drink the cup that I drink...?” This issue we will consider in the following question, but there could very likely be other aspects that were problematic in the request that they made.

Tainted concept of true worth

The Lord Jesus said, “You do not know what you are asking for.” How could it be? Were they not very clear that they wanted this, they wanted this position? It is very likely that the Lord Jesus was helping them to understand that they had the wrong concept of true worth and glory.

They were pursuing true worth and glory. They wanted to be in a position of glory, and they asked to be given to sit on His right and on His left.

In all likelihood, the Lord Jesus wants to help all of us to understand what is the meaning of true glory. It is very easy for us to have the wrong idea what it is.

The disciples told the Lord Jesus, “Grant that we may sit...” Earthly kings have such power. The king can decide who to sit on his right and on his left as he wishes. So, could not the Lord Jesus grant them their request: sit on His right, on His left?

The Lord Jesus told them, “You do not know what you are asking for”: “You do not really understand the nature of the issues involved”. They thought that sitting on His right, on the left would mean that they were important, that there will be true worth in their being, but they had the wrong concept of true worth and glory.

In the world, when we sit in a position of honour, we are people who are valued by the world: we are recognized as people of worth, of standing, of status. We are very preoccupied with appearance, positions and power. But in the spiritual realm, there are higher issues involved. In all likelihood, the two disciples were very deeply influenced by the ways of the world and its values.

So too it can be for us. Our concept of true worth, of true value, is very often deeply affected by the values and the ways of the world. How does the world affect our sense of worth? In our own experience we can see that our values can very readily and very seriously be distorted by the influence of the world.

Our concept of what is of true value can easily affect us in terms of our pursuits in life, how we spend our time and energy, what we seek for.

In some ways, we may have made some progress, and we seek for more spiritual things, but even in spiritual things, we may still pursue according to the spirit of the world and its values.

These two disciples were not just asking for physical things... physical power. They knew that the Lord Jesus was morally and spiritually good. They wanted to sit near to Him. That would have a spiritual positiveness in it. But, associated with this was their understanding of what true greatness is.

As we go on, we will see how the Lord Jesus helped them to understand what is true greatness. It is not through seeking for such a position.

The world system

The apostle John warns us of the influence of the world. In **1 John 2: 15-17**, the apostle John says:

- 15 Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.
- 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.
- 17 And the world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.

The “world” that the apostle John is speaking of here refers to the world system that is under the rulership of the evil one. It refers to the values, the attitudes, the direction, the focus and concentration of people in this world who are not submitted to God and His ways, who desire their own ways, who pursue after the things of this world: they live contrary to God’s will and character.

The apostle John tells us: If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. All these things of the world, he says, they do not come from the Father, they are not consistent with Him, but they are from the world.

(This aspect of the world... is important for us to differentiate from the world in terms of the world of people.)

In **John 12: 31**, the Lord Jesus tells us about this world in terms of the world system. He says:

“Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out...”

The “ruler of this world” and the judgment “upon this world” refer to people going their own way, people seeking their own desires, and when they do that, they are in reality following the rulership of the evil one. The evil one seeks to draw us in this direction.

And when the Lord Jesus says, “...now the ruler of this world shall be cast out”, He was referring to the event of the cross, where He would deal a crushing blow on the evil one, so that we through the Lord Jesus may find victory and freedom.

The Lord Jesus is able to help us because He Himself overcame the world. He was not tainted by the world.

And so, in **John 14: 30**, He tells us:

“I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me...”

“The ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me”: The evil one could not find any fault in the Lord Jesus in terms of His having participated in the spirit of the world. The Lord Jesus completely rejected the world in terms of the world system under the rulership of the evil one.

The evil one tempted Him, and said, “All these things of the world, the kingdoms of the world and its glory I will give to You, if You will fall down and worship me.”

The Lord Jesus said, “Begone, Satan!” He rejected the offer of the evil one and all that is in the world that the evil one could bring to Him. And the Lord Jesus, in calling for true disciples, helps us to understand the importance of our being separate from the world.

John 15: 19, He says:

“If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you...”

The Lord Jesus told His disciples, “I have taken you out of the world”. Spiritually, when we repent, we come to the Lord Jesus, we are saying that we will not follow the world. He is now our new Master. The Lord Jesus is our Lord, our Saviour: we will follow Him. We are taken out of the world. He has made us His disciples, children of God, born of the Spirit.

But the problem is: although we are born of the Spirit, although in status we are children of God, we may still long for the things of this world. We may still “love the world”, and this will bring about a conflict in our hearts.

God will be displeased with us, and He cannot effectively work in our lives to bring about true worth in our being if we continue to pursue the ways of the world. We must now live according to God’s calling, that we are now not of the world. We can no longer live by the ways of the world: the spirit, direction and attitude and values of the world that is not submitted to God.

But God wants us to know that He loves the world in terms of the people who are in the world. Although He is angry with them for their wrong direction, He loves them in the sense that He wants to help them. And so, **John 3: 16** tells us:

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life...”

God loves the world in the sense He cares for the world. He wants the people to repent, to believe in the Lord Jesus so that they will not perish, but that they will have eternal life.

But it is not that God loves the world in the sense that He appreciates the people in terms of their direction and their values. God hates the world in terms of its spiritual direction and there will be wrath and judgment on the people of the world if they do not repent.

God has brought light into the world to help us to recognize His love for us, to help us change and to become good: to find life. But if we do not repent, then God will have no alternative but to judge us according to His holiness and justice. There will be condemnation; there will be destruction of our being and of our lives.

So let us be careful: As we seek for true meaning and worth in our lives, beware of the world and its system, its values and direction. Although we may have good directions and attitudes within our hearts to some degree, this can be very easily diluted by, and hindered by, our wrong understanding, wrong values and inclinations through the influence of the world.

What we are asking for

So, as we consider these two disciples... the Lord Jesus said, "You do not know what you are asking for..."

They did not understand, for example, that to sit on His right and on His left requires a very high degree of moral and spiritual excellence. It is not just anyone who can be assigned to sit on the right and on the left of the Lord Jesus. They did not understand the nature of that context, what would have been required.

Unless there was such a meaningful and high quality in their being, it would not be meaningful and appropriate for them to sit in such a context.

Further to that, even if their lives were of a very high quality, it would also not necessarily mean that they would sit at such a place. There are other principles involved, but they did not understand this. The Lord Jesus had to teach them. He said, "You do not know what you are asking for."

Many a time, we also do not know what we are asking for. We tell the Lord, "Lord, I want to be Your disciple", "Lord, I want to be holy", "Lord, make me holy, make me Your disciple", but when the Lord starts doing that, we rebel, we reject, we are upset. "This is not what I want! This is not the path that I am seeking for. I want to be a good disciple of the Lord Jesus, I want to be effective as a Christian, I want to be holy, but not this way! Why must I go through so much pain, suffering, difficulties, persecution, misunderstanding...? Why must life be so difficult? I just want to be a good disciple, I want to be holy."

Do we understand what we are asking for? When we tell the Lord, when we sing the hymn, "Teach me Thy way", do we really want His ways? Do we understand His ways? Do we know what we are asking for? The problem with most Christians is that we ask God for something we think is valuable, but according to our ways: "It must be this in this form".

But God tells us: "My ways are higher than your ways, My thoughts than your thoughts". Very often, we think that we know better than God. Instead of submitting to Him, we demand that God does it our way. We do not like it: the way that He is working in our lives.

Listening to Him

So, it is important for us if we want to pursue true worth, we learn to submit to God's ways. We learn to listen to Him. What has He to say to us? Are we following the world, or are we following God? If we want to develop true worth, do we understand that true worth requires development of a very high degree of moral and spiritual excellence?

They were not aware of what such a position means in the moral and spiritual realm. They were not aware of their own inadequacy, which brings us to the next question:

Why did the Lord Jesus ask them whether they were able to drink the cup that He drank and be baptized with the baptism with which He was baptized? Why did the Lord Jesus ask such a question? The Lord Jesus said: "Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?"

The Lord willing, we will consider this question in the next message and ponder over other issues that arise from this passage that can help us reflect on our own lives.

What are we asking the Lord for? What are we pursuing? Do we understand what it means and do we really want it? Or we have our own ideas of what true worth is, influenced by the ways of the world, and we are asking the Lord to give to us in the way that we find most acceptable?

God has His ways to teach us, to help us, if we truly want to follow Him. We have to settle our hearts that we want to follow Him, we will submit to Him, we will listen to Him. If we do not settle this, we cannot develop that kind of quality. God cannot effectively teach us. We will be grumbling, complaining, running away, rebelling.

So let us ask Him to help us to ponder over our lives, to evaluate what we have been pursuing. Let us ask Him to help us to appreciate and to understand more deeply the meaning of true worth in our lives and how to pursue it.