

## Wednesday 3 March 2021

Today is Wednesday the 3 March in the second week of Lent.

One Hope project sings, 'Good work in me'. As I listen, I become aware of the ways God is doing a good work in my life at the moment, and give thanks.

Today's reading is from the Gospel of Matthew.

Matt 20:17-28

While Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside by themselves, and said to them on the way, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified; and on the third day he will be raised."

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favour of him. And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" They said to him, "We are able." He said to them, "You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father."

When the ten heard it, they were angry with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

The story of the sons of Zebedee isn't just about a mother ambitious for her children, but a misunderstanding of what following Jesus is all about. She thinks it's a ticket to power and glory for her sons, but Jesus speaks of the cup that he has to drink, the suffering and self-sacrifice that is at the core of his mission. What about your own experience of following Jesus? Has it been sweetness and light? Glory and triumph? Suffering and sacrifice?

Perhaps a mixture of some of those?

And what is your experience of the kind of Christian leadership Jesus describes here – “the one who wishes to be great must be your servant”, “I came not to be served but to serve”? Have you experienced leadership like that? Have you ever exercised leadership like that?

As you hear the gospel passage again, notice the contrast between these two visions of the mission of Jesus, of the meaning of Christianity and Christian leadership.

In the last minutes of this prayer time, speak to Jesus. If he asks you that question, “Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?” – how do you want to respond?

You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace, that is enough for me.