

New Kingdom St. James, Apostle Monday, July 25, 2016 8:15 AM 2 Cor 4:7-15;
Mt 20:20-28 (Perhaps James and John and Peter, through humiliation, were also the first of the apostles to be transformed, to be transfigured in their internal understanding of what the kingdom is all about.)

“Jesus said in reply, ‘You do not know what you are asking.’”

Indeed he could have said **you do not know what my kingdom is all about**, because she said, “one at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom,” as if his kingdom was like earthly kingdoms with palaces and thrones and everyone kowtowing to the one on the throne and those at his right and left. But that is not the kingdom Jesus was talking about.

Indeed the chalice that Jesus is talking about is quite different from the chalices used in palaces. The chalices used in palaces for banquets were beautiful, gold, engraved, bejeweled. Jesus’ chalice was really a chalice of suffering, a chalice of powerlessness. And he said to these two men, “Are you really ready to drink the chalice that I’m going to drink?” And they said, “Yes, we are,” not knowing what that meant. And he said, well actually “You will,” and they did. They learned. In fact, this very moment is **the beginning of their learning experience because following this interview the other ten become indignant with them, and they suffer this indignation, this humiliation.** It’s humiliating to be the target of others’ scorn, and that’s what happened. Of course it was their own fault. They invited it, but it was in God’s own providential way **the beginning of a transformation for them.**

Perhaps **James and John and Peter**, who were the three on the mountain of transformation, the Mount of Transfiguration, those three maybe were also the first of the apostles to be transformed, to be transfigured in their internal understanding of what the kingdom is all about, what God is all about, what power really is and what it really isn’t, what perdures

and what doesn't. **All three suffered humiliation: James and John with the other ten, Peter with the other ten as well, minus Judas, for his betrayal of Jesus.**

In a way sometimes humiliation is the only way we come to humility. It's unfortunate. **Humility should be something very natural, that we simply are who we are and we let God be God and we follow whatever God wants us to do.** That should be so simple, so natural. But **something has altered our constitution.** Something has made us think that it would be better if we could lord it over others, control others, or at least control our own lives; but that isn't what God offers us. He doesn't offer us control; **he offers us love.** And he says that if we really receive his love, **we will be willing and capable of enduring anything and everything, if we receive his love.** If we receive his love, we are willing to serve and able to serve, and be grateful for the opportunity—and be grateful and be joyful. That's what the love of God does for us. But very often our constitution has been altered, so that doesn't seem agreeable, desirable. **It seems rather it would be better if we could control everything, get everyone to do what we wanted,** surround ourselves with people who please us and do our own will. That seems like a desirable goal and strategy in life.

Jesus' whole life is a contradiction of that. He is trying to tell James and John **it's about time you let go of this value system you have inherited from the world,** which is a model of the rulers of the gentiles. This is not good enough for you. **God has made you for something much better.** But this new kingdom that Jesus is talking about **really requires a lot of trust.** "So it shall not be so among you," as it is with everyone else. "I have come to make all things new," and I'm starting with you.