

## Reflection for Wednesday, March 24

### Shivon Miller

In a youth ministry training right after the beginning of the Pandemic, Catherine Anderson, Youth Ministry Coordinator for the NE MN Synod, introduced us to the “Story Brand” Model of leadership. In this model, you imagine each of the youth as the “hero” of their own story. You as the adult leader are their guide. The guide longs for the “hero” to be successful and to avoid failure and so is always asking the question “what would be helpful?” In our discussion we began to realize that what would be helpful to the “hero’s” success, was not necessarily always what the hero wanted. For example, many teens want unlimited screen time but as adult leader guides we may recognize this may not be helpful for their success and well-being. This is not an issue specific to teens. Often what we need – what would be helpful for our success and well-being – is not what we want.

In tonight’s scripture reading James and John say to Jesus “we WANT you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” Jesus asks “What is it you WANT me to do for you?” They answer that they WANT to sit one at his right hand and one at his left hand in his glory. Jesus replies “You do not know what you are asking.” They go on to argue, “But this is what we WANT...” Jesus states, “are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with...?”

What they WANT is to drink the cup that Jesus will drink –

On the Thursday of Holy Week we will hear Jesus pray in the Garden of Gethsemane

“My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.”

It will be difficult for Jesus to drink from this cup – they do not know what they ask for...

And Jesus prays “yet not what I want but what you want Lord.”

James and John WANT to sit at his right and left hand in his glory...

In the gospels, Jesus hour of glory is tied to the crucifixion. As he hangs from the cross, two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Jesus says to James and John “to sit at my right hand or at my left hand is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it is prepared.” They do not know what they ask for...

Let us learn to pray as Jesus “yet not what I want but what you want Lord.”

While the disciples jostle for position – while they want to be identified as the favored ones, Jesus reminds them what they NEED. “whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many.”

We may not WANT to serve, but Jesus suggests it is what we need.

I think this past year has been practice in reflecting on the difference between what we WANT and what we NEED. Distinguishing between want and need can be a struggle for many of us who live with privilege.

A few years ago, I heard a woman speak on parenting. She suggested that we challenge everyone in our family to “flag” the use of the word “need.” For example when someone in the house says “I need to go to the mall and get a new dress.” - actively ask “Do you need to or want to?” To be a need, your life must actually depend on it. “I need to stop at Starbucks and get a cup of coffee.” True...it can feel like a need, you may even feel like “life” is dependent on that dose of caffeine. But she would say we “flag” it and relabel it a “want” as we won’t actually shrivel up and die without it. It is amazing how this simple practice can shift your thinking. We think we “need” a lot. But oh how many things we want...wants that are not needs...

The guide asks “what would be helpful?” for the “hero”. What they need may not be what they want.

Jesus prays and invites us to pray - “yet not what I want but what you want Lord” or in the words of the Lord’s Prayer “your will be done”.

This is powerful prayer. In this prayer we admit we don’t even know what we need. We don’t understand what we ask for.

It is so easy to read tonight’s scripture reading and judge James and John – How arrogant! How self-centered! How tunnel visioned! How greedy! How clueless!

How human! How me!....

Oh Lord I confess I come to you saying “I want you to do for me what I ask of you.” I WANT so many things my way. I WANT so many things that are not what I need. I NEED you. We NEED you.

Help us to pray:

“not what I want but what you want Lord” - for this is where our true help comes from.

Amen.