

*35 James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." 36 And he said to them, "What is it you want me to do for you?" 37 And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." 38 But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" 39 They replied, "We are able." Then Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; 40 but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."*

*41 When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. 42 So Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. 43 But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. 45 For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."*

Mother' lap.

When we brought Beth home from the hospital suddenly for Matt that became the most precious place on all the earth.

When Katie arrived on the scene, both Matt and Beth wanted to be as close to Mom as they could be.

It happens in most every family. Sibling rivalry is that name they give it. Only one mom, only one lap - who will be closest?

A lifetime passes. Mom has grown old. Being near Mom can now be a burden. Daily care is needed, decisions about health care to be made. Maybe it is time for Mom to go to assisted living, time for a nursing home, time for hospice. Who will be closest now? Who will stay away? A mother and children and love.

*"Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you."* James and John were making a request of Jesus. *"Grant us to sit one at your right hand and one at your left in your glory."*

A little later when the other ten disciples heard about this request they were very angry. Sibling Rivalry. The twelve were like Jesus' children, each wanting to be closer to him than the others.

How is a mother to know what the battle over her lap is about? How is a mother to know whether her children's hearts are fixed on winning over one another or fixed instead on love for her? Do James and John ask for the special places because they always want to be closest to Jesus? Or do they ask so that they can be one up on their brothers?

*Jesus asked them, "Are you able to drink the cup that I drink and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They replied, "We are able."*

The cup and the baptism are the suffering and death Jesus has just told the disciples about. *"The son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles; they will mock him, and spit upon him and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise again."*

*"The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized you will be baptized but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."*

Love is not just about sitting on mom's lap and being in mom's will. Love is not even about the words, "I love you." Love is being with mom through all that comes.

A night came when James and John drank Jesus' cup, the one Jesus did not drink. He gave the cup to all the twelve to drink on that night when they were so close to him. But on the next evening they were far away when his lifeless body was taken down from the cross.

Could a mother love her children still even if they failed her? Some mothers do. For their love is not simply a reaction, a reflection but a gift.

Could Jesus love disciples who ran away – who promised to drink the cup – but who pushed it away when the suffering was near?

When Jesus was raised from the dead he came to be close to them. He breathed his own spirit into them. He promised to be with them always, to the close of the age. For his love was not some reflection of their love, nor a response to their love, but a gift.

Jesus loves you. He knows you really well, better than a mother knows her daughter. He offers you his baptism, - never sending you under those waters alone but clinging to you through every death that drowns you and lifting you to life once more. He offers you his cup, all his suffering and dying given for you to drink in the wine of his blood.

Jesus wants you to be with him every bit as much as he is with you. He hopes for you that the threat of suffering will not make you run away.

Two children are loved by a mother. One is selfish, taking, taking, taking - the other gives back the care that has been received. And still two children are loved by a mother.

Jesus wants you to be close to him. He hopes you will be just like him. He came not to serve but to give his life as a ransom for you. Jesus hopes you will give your life away in love also.