

Sunday 20th October 2024

The Twenty First Sunday after Trinity

Gospel Reading

Mark 10.35-45

The Request of James and John

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.'

Other Readings: Job 38.1-7[34-41]

Psalms 104.1-10, 26, 35c

Hebrews 5.1-10

Homily

How often have you been a part of a group where one or two wish to be more favoured than the rest, and what has been the outcome of this situation? Here we find Jesus in a situation where James and John wish to be favoured and are asking Jesus for special consideration.

Firstly, let us consider why they are asking for this privilege, is it that they feel superior to the others, or do they feel the need for reassurance, do they need to know that they can always be close to Jesus? When we encounter similar scenarios, do we like the rest of the Disciples feel angry, or do we try to understand what is behind the request? It is so easy to let our Human nature get the better of us when we maybe feel sidelined. Should we maybe before we react think about the other side of the situation?

Jesus then asks James and John if they think they are able to drink the cup that he has been destined to drink, and they very quickly reply that they are ready for the task, but do they fully understand what this entails, are they ready to be the humblest of servants, to lay down their lives for others. This leads me to ponder on our lives; requests come at us from all directions. We have all heard it “I don’t like to ask but could you” or “I know that you are very busy but”. We all like to say yes but how often do we take on yet another task and then find we are overstretched? Jesus seems to be reminding us all in this passage to be sure we are in a position to carry the task through. Are we in the right physical or mental state to do whatever is asked to the best of our ability? Jesus is then speaking to all his Disciples about motives why is it that you ask this of me, and why are the rest of you angry? We hear him say that to follow him we must be ready to be a servant to all, and to put aside our human need for acceptance, authority, or personal gain. He says that the Son of Man came not to be served but to be a servant.

Life today is fast and furious; we are all bombarded with so much information and guidance, that to keep our focus on the way of Christ can become very difficult, so how do we keep our path straight and true. We all know that we are never going to get it right all the time, we all sin all the time, but Christ died for us that with true repentance we can be forgiven. I wonder if in this crazy life we lead if we should make more time just to be, to have a space in our day when we take time to allow ourselves to hear what God through Jesus is saying, to allow him to replenish our souls, and for us to listen. Our God is a loving and listening God, he will guide us to make wise decisions if we allow him, and I believe there is nothing he wants more than for us just to make time for him.

Amen

Conversation Questions

1. Is there anything you can do in your life to make more time for God?
2. Are you ready to be a servant?
3. Is there anything else from the passage not already discussed that speaks to you?
What is it?
4. What will you do this week in your Monday-to-Saturday ministry in response to what you have heard today? #everydayfaith

Prayer

Spend some time in prayer, responding to what you have heard today and listening to what God might be saying to you.

Collect of the day

*Grant, we beseech you, merciful Lord,
to your faithful people pardon and peace,*

*that they may be cleansed from all their sins
and serve you with a quiet mind;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*

(or)

*Almighty God,
in whose service lies perfect freedom:
teach us to obey you
with loving hearts and steadfast wills;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

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