

King, Yet Servant Of All

Texts: Job 38:1-7 (34-41)

Hebrews 5:1-10 (Series B, 19th Sunday after Pentecost) Ps. 104:1-9, 24, 35

Mark 10:35-45

Prayer:

The year was 1871, H. M. Stanley went to Africa to find the missionary David Livingstone. He spent several months with Livingstone's, carefully observing him. Livingstone didn't speak to Stanley directly about spiritual matters. And Stanley was amazed by Livingstone's patient compassion for the Africans.

He could not understand how Livingstone could have such love for these pagans. Livingstone spent himself in the untiring service of those he loved for Christ's sake. Stanley wrote in his journal,

When I saw that unwearied patience, that unflagging zeal, and those enlightened sons of Africa, I became a Christian at his side, though he never spoke to me one word. A steady devotion to untiring service is not a prospect that naturally appeals to most of us in these days.

We want to be served. If we do something for others, we do not like it if someone else gets the credit. But those of us who call ourselves Christians should not be in any doubt about the nature of the man we claim to follow. We follow a man more powerful than all the politicians and potentates the world rolled into one.

For by him [that is, Christ] all things were created: things in heaven and on earth visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Jesus is a man with inconceivable power and glory, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. And yet this is the King who rode into Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday on the back of a donkey. This is the King who says of himself, at the end of this passage in Mark 10:45: *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

Let us take a look at Mark 10: 35-37

Then came two brothers to Jesus. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask." "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked. They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory."

What is going on in this passage? James and John wanted to be at the top of the pile. For all their fine words, they were reluctant to serve. They are not alone in that. We have the same tendency in us. What is it that gets in the way of our wanting to serve wholeheartedly? The context of this incident can help us to identify some of the weaknesses that Satan can exploit.

The ministry of Mother Theresa illustrates my point of the kind of person that God wants us to be: servants of God and others. Just as Jesus was a servant of God and others. Mother Theresa of Calcutta I went down to India as a young nun to work among the poorest of the poor on our planet.

She literally scooped up the poor, the rejected, the sick, the dying, and discarded human beings, off the streets of Calcutta and fed them, clothed them and cared for their well being. Mother Theresa of Calcutta in the eyes of many who worked with her in Calcutta, say she was an inspiration, a source of encouragement, a mountain of motivation that energized and touched all who saw her in action. Mother Theresa of Calcutta had the heart and hands of a servant.

A servant always has loving heart and working hands. Both the heart and the hands. Not just the heart of a servant who sees the needs of others. Not just a heart who feels the pain of those who lost their homes to a disaster. Not just a heart who empathizes with those who have lost their jobs, income and insurance.

Servants always have good, loving and generous hearts, but they also have hands to do the dirty work. Hands that make all the meals. Hands that clean up the tables. Hands that do the dishes. Hands that actually help people in their needs.

Heart and hands. In the gospel text for today, Jesus said that whoever is great among you, **must** be a servant. You cannot be a disciple of Jesus without being a servant, without having the heart and hands of a servant. Being a servant is a **must**, a demand, like **water** being **wet** and **fire** being **hot** and **ice** being **cold**.

So, a follower of Christ **must** be a servant.

If fire is not hot, it is not fire.

If ice is not cold, it is not ice.

If a follower of Christ is not a servant, he or she is not a disciple.

Jesus said, "Whoever follows me, **must** be your servant." Being a servant has to do with **attitude** and **actions**, the heart and the hands, the mind and the motions. Mother Theresa of Calcutta was the most humble of people, not showing off her life of love, not making any big deal of it, not drawing attention to her or her involvement with the poorest of the poor.

In the gospel text for today, Jesus invites us to be servants **of all**, and we focus on the two words, **of all**. Christianity is all about relationship with God through Christ Jesus. And in this relationship it is so important to have heart of a servant.

If it is **water**, it is **wet**. If it is **fire**, it is **hot**. If it is **ice**, it is **cold**. If you are a disciple of Christ, you are a servant within your God's family. What does that mean for us? Practically. Actually. In real life.

What does that mean for us? Jesus invites us to be servants **of all**. Not only servants within our relationships and within our families. But also at work. In real life? To be the heart and hands of a servant whose primary concern is **not** to serve one's own self but others around him or her.

There are things in life which are more important than others and Jesus' invitation for us to have the heart and hands of a servant is central to being a disciple of Jesus. But for me, living a life of a servant, is also the essence of what it means to be a human being, to speak for those couldn't otherwise speak for themselves, whether one is a follower of Christ or not.

God always out-gives us. He has already given us everything in Christ. The more we give, the more we will discover his generosity. When we give our lives to Jesus for him to use as he wants, we need not fear losing out. So there is a simple challenge to us all: Will we answer the call to serve the King, yet a servant?

We are called to give ourselves in uncompromising service of the King, yet a servant. Do that, and we will be able to look forward to the day when Christ says to us: *Well done, good and faithful servant. Lord, teach us to be generous with our lives; teach us to serve you as you deserve; to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest to labour and not to seek reward, save that of knowing that we do our will.*

All great human beings throughout the history of the planet are those people who have served the needs of others, that they discovered the gem for living that it is in giving that we receive, that it is in dying to self that we find ourselves.

I love my Lord, Jesus Christ. He was profound in the way he lived and died. He was profound in all that he taught us about God, his heavenly Father and our heavenly Father. The words that Jesus gives to us today are the best advice that anyone could ever give:

Whoever would be great **Must** be a servant of all.

Amen.

October 17, 2021

Let us pray: God of Glory and Majesty, re-fresh our hearts, our ears, and our minds, to receive, listen, and know again, the splendor of Your word and Your works. Kindle the desire within us to offer ourselves in reverent submission, serving all Creation in Your name. We ask through Jesus, our Great High Priest; and the Holy Spirit, our Comforter and Advocate; who together with You are One God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Prayer concerns: *Matilda Molyneaux-Piper, Wess Bourgaize, Shirley Walker, Hanne Bourgeoise, Ellen Eriksen, Peter Bateman, the dire situation in Afghanistan, Middle East & Covid -19 patients, essential and Frontline workers.*

Make melodies in your heart with these hymns:

- **Lord, You Give the Great Commission # 579**
- **We All Are One in Mission # 576**
- **Will You Let Me Be Your Servant # 659**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Othniel Marshall, Michael Cleaver, Krista Brecht, Kris Sorby, & Dean Cleaver.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Glenn and Karen Barrett