

29 OTB.18; Isa 53:10-11; Heb 4:14-16; Mark 10:35-45; 10/21/18

Hear a voice from the distant past

“The Son of Man did not come to be served; he came to serve.” Mark 10:45

Now, hear another voice responding in our own time

A few years ago, *Dr. Lloyd Judd* practiced medicine in rural Oklahoma. Many of his patients were poor and had no transportation. So he often had to drive to their homes to treat them. One day Dr. Judd became sick. He checked into a hospital and discovered that he had terminal cancer. His thoughts turned to his young children. He had much to tell them, but they were too little to understand.

So he recorded a set of tapes for them. One dealt with practicing medicine.

He said to his children:

“Are you willing to get out of a warm bed on a cold night and drive 20 miles to see a sick person, knowing that they can’t pay you and that they could wait until morning to be treated?”

If you can say yes to that question, you are ready to study medicine.”

(Link, *Mission 2000*, p.364)

Could we say ‘yes’ to Dr. Judd’s question? Do we fear sacrifice & service?

The world can sometimes sound like this *Hey, what’s in it for me?*”

After all, it’s even in the Scriptures

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” He replied, “What do you wish me to do for you?” They answered him, “Grant that in your

... glory we may sit one at your right and the other at your left.”

James and John came to Jesus with a very selfish request. They asked that one might be allowed to sit at his right hand & the other at his left hand in his kingdom. *They, obviously missed the point*, that Jesus wanted to build a kingdom focused on mercy and love, not power and domination.

They missed the point, that Jesus had not come to be served like royalty, but to serve his people.

They had missed the point, that everyone who serves Jesus will be given a seat of honor in heaven.

Jesus answered by asking them a question:

‘Can you drink the cup that I am to drink?’

They immediately said **“we can”** because they thought it would be a very sweet cup. But what Jesus was *really asking* the two disciples was this,

‘Are you willing to go through the suffering that I am going to go through?’

This is no easy thing - to drink a cup of sacrifice and suffering. After all when the time came for Jesus himself to drink it, he feared it. Three times he would ask the Father to remove it from him: *'Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me.'* **2** (Mt 26:39). But, then Jesus courageously added,

'Yet not my will, but yours be done.' **And he did drink it.**

We don't know in advance what the *cup of life* holds for us. We find out as we go along. *Jesus, the Innocent One, chose to drink a very bitter cup*. As we have seen, he didn't find it easy. Yet, he drank it to the dregs.

And he did so out of love for us. Love can make a bitter cup drinkable.

(So can we – just think of a bitter medicine that must be drunk.)

Listening to the Scriptures can be a very risky activity!

Here we are, sitting in church, just trying to slow down a little bit and collect some good thoughts to help us through the week. Then we hear something like:

... *"whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant."* Matt 20:26

Then we start to think that there ... really is another way to live.

We imagine a world where we act on our belief that each one of us is reassured and treasured by God. Before we know it, we feel uncomfortable about our search

to make it to the top, to be the most important, to be the most well-liked. We even ache about the troubles we have in our own lives. Church has become disturbing. Our ears and our hearts have been opened to hear the challenges.

We struggle to respond. We are not alone. It has happened before....

Albert Schweitzer once said: *"I don't know what your destiny will be,*

but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are

... those who have sought and found a way to serve."

Do you believe that? Well, then, to drink the *cup of life*, especially a cup made difficult by a bittersweet life of sacrifice and service for others, **is** what it means to follow Jesus. But those who share *the bitterness* of **his** Cross

... will also share *the sweetness* of **his** Resurrection.

At this Liturgy of God's Service, the *Letter to the Hebrews* tells us that Jesus sits on a *throne of Grace*, not a chair of condemnation. He does not give out harsh punishments nor make impossible demands. *Sympathizing with our weaknesses, tested like us though, never sinning*, Jesus continually offers us love and mercy. He will never abandon us! He wants us to follow this way of love. Jesus redefines greatness and challenges us to see the world

... and ourselves in a radically different way.

Do you hear a *Voice* asking you....

Will you take the cup?

Will you walk to Jerusalem?

Will you help build the Kingdom?

And now for Parish Stewardship!....