WE ARE TO BE SERVANTS TOO

March 18, 2018 Mark 10:35-45

Dear Friends in Christ: When a person is elected to high office, he normally appoints those who helped him win to high offices in his government. This is what we see happening with two of Jesus’ disciples, James and John, requesting that Jesus appoint them to prominent positions when he comes to power. In the Gospel of Matthew, it is the mother Salome who comes to Jesus to ask this of Him.

Well, they have earned the positions. They have followed Him all over, walking the dusty roads, listening to His every word, riding in storm-tossed seas and feeling the hatred of the ruling authorities.

They and Peter were closest to Jesus the last three years. And besides, this is how things are done. Yes indeed----but Jesus is not your ordinary man on His way up in the system.

All of the disciples are looking for Jesus to restore Israel to its former glory as a country. Kick out the Romans and enjoy freedom.

Jesus doesn’t get angry because these men don’t yet understand. He uses the incident as a teaching tool by asking them: “Are you able to drink the cup which I Myself am drinking or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am being baptized?”

They of course say yes, not having any idea what Jesus is talking about. He is not talking about a physical cup but the cup of suffering which Jesus is going to go thru shortly. He has already spoken to them 3 times saying that He must go up to Jerusalem and where He will be turned over to the chief priests and scribes, be mistreated, killed but will rise on the third day.

Next, Jesus gives the disciples a glimpse of their future, saying: “The cup that I drink, you will drink and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized. But to sit on My right hand or My left is not mine to grant.”

They will indeed drink the cup of suffering for 11 of the 12 will die a martyr’s death.

Now comes the teaching point. “The rulers of the Gentiles exercise rule and authority over others. Not you! Whoever of you would be great must be your servant. Whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

It’s just natural for you and I & the disciples to aspire to high positions in our field of expertise that give us authority, respect, a bigger pay check and the possibility of advancement. But, as Jesus points out, that is in the secular kingdom.

In God’s Kingdom, it is not so and Jesus Himself is the best example. He is the Son of God, come down from His Father to earth to be our Suffering Savior; our servant. Not to be waited on and catered to like a high church official. Not to be carried around protected by guards and bullet proof glass.

He came to die for the sins of all. Our sins. The sins of the disciples, the Roman soldiers, the high priest, the scribes. Even as Jesus hung on the cross He prayed for all who had a hand in His suffering and death, when He said, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”

The Son of God does not come to condemn the world because the world already stands condemned. Judgment has already been made. Those who love the darkness are already damned, sentenced to hell, and await the final day when the Lord will say to them, depart, you evildoers, into the eternal fire.’

But, to true servants of God, humbly going about with love in their hearts for God and one another, not looking for glory; just showing a Christ-like spirit of love.

The Lord will greet them as they arrive, ‘well done, good and faithful servant.’ All who, in faith, humble themselves, will at the last be exalted to the highest heaven, to dwell in the presence of the Almighty for all of eternity.

The disciples finally understood the true meaning of servanthood after Pentecost. They went about witnessing to the love of God in the crucified but risen Savior, not counting the cost but with the command to teach all nations, guiding lost souls to heaven thru faith in Jesus Christ.

This is still the only mission of the church today. Part of our contributions each Sunday find their way to mission work at our Synod.

Halle Luedtke wants to serve the Lord doing mission work in North Dakota this summer and we can help her to do that.

On the third Sunday of April, Mission Sunday, our District President, Pastor Dwayne Lueck will be here to speak of missions. It is a true blessing to be a servant of the Almighty; to contribute to the great work of saving souls.

And let’s not kid ourselves. Being a humble servant of the true God, always ready to speak a kind word to a weak or lost soul, is the highest calling on the planet. What we do and say can have eternal consequences.

So, may the Good Lord bless us as we follow Him and always be on the lookout for opportunities He presents us to love and serve one another.

Amen