

October 18, 2009 Isaiah 53:4-12; Psalm 91:9-16; Hebrews 5:1-10; Mark 10:35-45

Notes

- The brothers request/ambition is not just to be at the throne, but to be at the very center of things (thought – Mark Hinkle Shore, Luther Seminary)
- Jesus says, “You do not know what you ask. . . it’s for those for whom it’s been prepared.”
- Only other reference at right and left is in the passion narrative where one thief is crucified at his right and at his left.
- I’m thinking that is NOT what the disciples are thinking they want to be at the center of, but that’s exactly what Jesus is referring to!
- Jesus’ ambition is much different for himself and his disciples – “the son of man came to serve, not to be served.”
- As readers of this gospel story, we can see the disciples getting it wrong – we know that Jesus aimed to give his life away in order to reconcile the world to himself. He came to serve and for his followers to serve, not to be a worldly king!
- Story – Muhammad Ali, the (greatest) boxer was traveling on a plane. It was about to take off and the flight attendant asked him to fasten his seat belt. Ali replied, “Superman doesn’t need a seatbelt.” The flight attendant looked at him and said, “Superman doesn’t need an airplane. Please fasten your seat belt.” (Lindy Black, Sermon Nuggets)
- We get caught up in who we think we are – the power that comes with our identities – and sometimes lose sight of our true identities.
- Last week we heard about money. This week we hear about power. Not long ago, the disciples were arguing about who was the greatest and they didn’t want to tell Jesus what they were arguing about. Money, Possessions, Power – it seems that we still get caught up in the same temptations as that of the disciples!
- Humility is different – uses power to empower others
- One of my favorite books is actually a children’s book called The Giving Tree. In it, a little boy loves the tree and the tree does whatever it can to please the boy and gives him whatever he can – shade to sit under, branches to climb and play in – the tree even lets the boy carve into the trunk. As the boy gets older, he forgets about the tree and pursues other things – things that he sees as more important than the tree. It isn’t until he is an old man that he remembers the tree again. By this time, the tree has been cut down and is now only a stump. All that the boy, who is now an old man, needs is a place to rest, so the tree, that is now just a stump, offers its whole self for the “boy” to rest upon the stump.

- Jesus says, “I have come to serve, not to be served.”
- Sometimes, in the pursuit of power, we forget our true identities.
- “When we know who we are, we are not so intent on having power over others as having power with others.” (Myron C. Madden, Blessing: Giving the Gift of Power)
- Martin Luther King, Jr. said “Everyone can be great because everyone can serve.”
- Jesus came as a ransom for many. Because Jesus came to serve and not to be served – b/c of how he served and what he did for us, we are freed to do the same and to serve others in the name of Christ’s love and forgiveness!