

The First Will Be Last and Will Serve All

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight oh God, our strength and our redeemer.

Amen

Sometimes we just do not get it, just as the disciples did not get it.

The disciples are confused, about the cryptic message their teacher has given them.

"The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again."

Jesus being the great teacher knows they just did not understand the concepts of

- Who is the son of man,
- Who would betray him,
- How can he rise again after he was killed?

In an effort to help the disciple understand what he is teaching them, they slips away from the crowds where he could privately, without distraction help them understand the very important message he is trying to teach.

None asked what this prophecy meant because they were afraid it might disappoint their beloved teacher.

When reading the Gospel; I imagined walking down a path in Galilee. Jesus is ahead of us the disciples and I are walking behind him. I hear them whispering and arguing among themselves about who is the best disciple, who is the greatest, which one is the "teacher's pet". They hear but do not comprehend.

Not only did they misunderstand the prophecy of our lord's death and resurrection, they misunderstood what it meant to be a follower of Jesus. They think that as Jesus's disciples; the chosen twelve. It is an opportunity for privilege, power, and position. *Are we that different from the disciples?*

I imagine the disciples were like precocious children bickering. Jesus likes me better, no he likes me better.

Jesus knowing what was in their hearts stops and sits under a large shade tree and said,

"Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all."

The disciples do not get this concept either, how could I be first if I am last?

God the son is trying to explain this to them as simple and easily as possible.

Jesus tugs on his beard and then gives them a simpler concept.

Ah ha; Jesus thinks; visual aids; visual aid will help them to understand.

So, he call one of the children who was kicking a ball around over.

Children at this time in history were considered worthless, disposable, a slight burden, because they were not helpful in any way to the family, they could not work, they were insignificant.

"Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."

Still blank looks on their faces, Jesus must be getting tired of trying to make them understand.

Christ tells the apostles that if they want to be the best person they could be; they would have to put the needs and desires of others before their own.

In addition, the only way to know God the Father is by knowing God the son. The only way to know God the Son is by knowing the children, and the people in need.

Luckily for us this message about to be first you must be last. Is not about moving to the back of the line, it is not that you put yourself last, it is about putting others before you, just as Jesus would have done.

We all know how to do it,

- When someone comes over to your house for dinner, you feed them first.
- Mothers and fathers gladly sacrifice many things to provide for her children.
- Soldiers and police put their lives on the line every day to protect us all.

It is a simple doctrine that we love our neighbor as you would love yourself. We are all called to be servants to those in need by our baptismal covenant.

God the son gave up all his divine privileges and became a servant. He put the needs of the world before his own; he suffered on the cross so we would be saved.

The lesson is the same for us today. There are hundreds of our brothers and sisters without food, shelter, without the basic essentials to survive. The gospel tells us that when we put our needs and desires before the less fortunate we are distancing ourselves from God. We need to get involved, we need to feed the hungry, house the homeless, and befriend the lonely. These tasks bring us closer to God.

There are so many ways to be a servant at Holy Comforter. The pastoral and outreach work touches so many. CARITAS is an example of putting others before yourself. OK I will admit that this is a shameless plug for CARITS however.

This December we will be hosting about 30 guest. In that busy time just before Christmas, when you are running around to find the biggest turkey, and the perfect tree, or that special gift. Join us in taking care of the less fortunate in our community. There are many ways to put our guest's needs and concerns before ours. There are so many way to be involved for the young and old alike.

Greatness is measured by what you do for others.

In Summary

All of the witty sermons, all the beautiful stained glass, all of the vestments, wonderful music or a five-dollar collar is not what God is looking for. God wants us to serve the abandoned and the people in need just as he would have.

He said that the most important thing was to think of others first and ourselves last. If we want to be great in God's sight, we should seek to be a servant rather than seeking to be served.

Dear Jesus, help us to remember that to be the greatest, we must be willing to be the least.
Amen.