**10/21/18 Sermon**

**Gospel Reading Mark 10:35-45**

The police officer was parked where he could easily watch traffic.

Suddenly a car went past, easily 20 miles above the speed limit.

With lights and siren, he pulled the driver over.

As he approached the car, the driver rolled down his window.

The police officer said: May I see your driver’s license?

The driver answered: I don’t have one. It was suspended when I got my

5th DUI.

Driver: It’s not my car. I stole it.

Officer: The car is stolen?

Driver: That’s right. But come to think of it, I might have seen the

registration in the glove compartment when I was putting my

gun in there.

Officer: There’s a gun in the glove compartment?

Driver: Yes, sir. That’s where I put it after I shot and killed the woman

who owns this car and stuffed her in the trunk.

Officer: There’s a BODY in the TRUNK?

Driver: Yes, sir.

Hearing this, the officer immediately called his Chief.

Within minutes the Chief arrived with half a dozen officers.

After speaking to the first police officer, the others positioned themselves behind their cars, with weapons drawn and ready.

The Police Chief approached the driver prepared to handle the tense situation.

The Chief asked: Sir, may I see your license please?

Driver: Sure. Here it is.

Chief: Who’s car is this?

Driver: It’s mine, Officer, Here’s the registration.

Chief: Could you slowly open your glove compartment so I can see if

there is a gun in it?

Driver: Yes, sir. But there’s no gun.

(Sure enough, there was nothing in the glove box.)

Chief: Would you mind opening your trunk?

I was told you said there’s a body in it.

Driver: No problem.

(The trunk was opened. But it was empty – No body.)

Chief: I don’t understand it. The officer who stopped you said you told

him you didn’t have a license, you stole the car, had a gun in the

glove compartment, and there was a dead body in the trunk.

Driver: Really? I’ll bet he told you I was speeding, too.

The Police Chief looked at the driver.

He looked at the officers armed and ready.

He looked at the first police officer who appeared confused,

bewildered, angry, perplexed, and frustrated.

The Police Chief said to the driver: If I were you, I would get out of

here as fast as you can without

speeding, before one of them

shoots you.

Driver: Yes, sir. Thank you Sir.

And he quickly drove down the road and around a curve out of sight.

One of the officers was heard saying:

If I had a story like that when I was just starting to drive, I

might have been able to save myself from a few speeding tickets.

How hard we humans work to get what we want, in spite of the difficulties it might give others. We want what we want, right now. And we don’t always care who gets hurt. The driver of the car simply wanted to avoid a speeding ticket. He didn’t care about the extra work he caused for all those police officers. He wanted to be in charge. He wanted things to go his way. In his mind, he was number one, and the others didn’t matter.

What would you do if you were in charge of the world?

It’s fun trying to imagine it, but most of us know that there is only one Person in charge, and that’s God. But sometimes we forget.

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, forgot.

They asked for a blank check response from Jesus, as if they knew this request was a little shady. They did get one thing right --- Jesus will sit in glory. But everything else they got wrong.

They were completely in line with the world, jockeying for position, and places of honor, and prestige. They were looking out for number one. They wanted the best, felt they deserved the best, and would do whatever it took to get the best, even trying to out maneuver God, at the expense of their fellow disciples.

When the other ten heard about the request of James and John, they began to be angry with them. The other disciples were upset, probably not because these two were being selfish, but more likely because they had beaten the others to the punch. James and John did what the rest probably wanted to do. They got there first.

A father of four boys came home to find them all engaged in something of a free-for-all. He heard yelling and angry shouts. They were pushing and shoving and hitting each other. Dad immediately quieted all four boys. He sat them down at a distance from each other. He turned to the oldest and asked, “Jason, who started this?” “Well, it all started when Harold hit me back,” exclaimed Jason.

Of course Jason blamed Harold. If he had not hit Jason back, there would have been no problem. In Jason’s mind, his actions were justified. If Harold had not struck back everything would have been OK.

But to Jesus it was not OK. He tried over and over to teach his disciples, and to teach us, that we are to love and help and serve one another. He came, not to be served, but to serve others, even to the point of giving his life as a ransom for all of us. It isn’t about reaching for the place of honor, but to help each other.

When we celebrate the Passover and the last supper with his disciples, He got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, wrapped a towel around his waist, poured water into a basin, and washed his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

It was the lowliest job in the land and Jesus took it upon Himself to do.

“I have set you an example: you should do, as I have done for you.”

True Humility comes from having a proper perspective of who we are. Jesus had no misconceptions about who He was. He was not concerned about how others might perceive Him. He was God in the flesh and had full control of everything, and yet He humbled Himself to serve others – to serve us. And he calls us as his followers to humble service as well.

During the American Revolution, a man dressed in civilian clothes, rode past a group of soldiers repairing a defensive barrier. Their leader was shouting instructions, but making no attempt to help them. Asked why by the rider, he retorted with great dignity, “Sir, I am a corporal!” The stranger apologized, dismounted, and proceeded to help the exhausted soldiers.

When the job was done, he turned to the corporal and said: “Mr. Corporal, next time you have a job like this, and not enough men to do it, go to your Commander-in-Chief, and I will come and help you again.”

The man was George Washington. George Washington, the Commander-in-Chief, was willing to get off his horse and help the exhausted soldiers complete their difficult task. Rank was not important. Honor was not important. Getting the job done was important.

James and John saw God’s Kingdom through the eyes of human beings, and they saw power, honor, majesty, glory, and wealth.

Jesus sees the kingdom of God with different eyes. He sees sacrifices, giving, commitment, and servanthood.

Whom do you wish to follow?

James and John?

Or Jesus?

AMEN