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REV. DEACON FRANCIS BERGHUIS

TOUGH LOVE- SELF/WILL-CHRISIT FILLED

Let us pray

In the Silence, Name Me

Holy one, untamed by the names I give you, in the silence name me, that I may know who I am, hear the truth you have put into me, trust the love you have for me, which you call me to live out with my sisters and brothers in my human family.

Guerrillas of Grace- Ted Loder

The Gospel lesson for this morning comes from the Gospel of Mark.

Now most, if not all of you are aware that the Gospel of Mark is considered the first Gospel written. Its author unknown, but considered a person filled with faith for what was then called 'The Way'. The gospel was said to have been written around 30 years after the resurrection. So, the author still had the chance to get eye-witness accounts of (at least) the last period of Jesus' life. It is also certain that the author was a Jew and had great knowledge and faith in the 'oral traditions' of the time. Jesus' use of parables, poetry, epigrams made it particularly easy to remember teachings more accurately. Mark was one of three synoptic gospels, the other two 'synoptic gospel, Matthew, and Luke show to contain 90% and 50% from the Mark gospel accordingly. Synoptic simply means that all three may contain the same stories. The Gospel of John is not a synoptic gospel as he presents a different side of Jesus. If this is accurate then why have a total of four gospels, if they are pretty much saying the same thing. The truth lies in the fact that each author of their respective gospel was writing for a select audience at a period time in history

For the author of the Gospel of Mark his (and it most uncertainly was a man) was written for the church of Rome, during Nero's reign, and for its Gentile population.

The lesson this morning has Jesus setting out on a journey, which was very typical of Jesus, as this was his method of teaching to the public and his disciples. This journey was the last journey that Jesus would be taking as he was heading towards Jerusalem for the last time.

Another point that needs to be mentioned, is that his teaching (in this lesson) was not about him but centered around his talking about the 'Kingdom of God' and how one goes about entering.

The man in the lesson runs right up to Jesus, kneels and begins his plie. I am guessing that his approach of coming right up to Jesus, was because of his belief that he was entitled due to his wealth and status within the community.

Wanting to impress Jesus (and his followers) with his status and most undeniably higher education he calls Jesus 'good' thinking this will get him at least a pat on the back and goes on to ask about getting eternal life! Jesus right away sets him straight by telling him no one is good except God, not even him! Jesus goes on to ask if he knows the ten commandments and the man is heard to say that he has kept them all his life!

Now the following sentence is the one I chose while contemplating over what I would say in my sermon.

"Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said," Mark 10-21

I find this partial sentence, beautiful, poetic, and sincere.

Jesus begins to explain to the man, why he fails at his request, while he was looking at him and loved him! I find this amazing. Even though this man interrupts him, stops him in his tracks, but still Jesus shows love/compassion. For Jesus was doing what is called 'a double eye'. This is when someone is looking at another person, sees him or her for what they present, but also can see what they can become if they lead their life in a truthful way.

The man standing there, is shocked, as he is told by Jesus, yes, he has done all the ten commandments since he was born. But Jesus tells him that he lacks one thing that must be done to have eternal life. And for him, that one thing is to go sell all his possessions and give the money to the poor! The man was despondent and left grieving, for he loved his wealth far too much to give it away, even for eternal life!

I ask you. What would you do in his position! Wasn't he a good Christian? All our lives we have pretty much been told how and what it means to be Christian. And it pretty much sounded like how this man presented himself to Jesus.

Have we been caught in a Ponzi scheme from heaven! I wasn't sure so I to my old Webster dictionary out and looked up the word 'Christian'. And here's what one definition said;

"a decent, civilized or presentable person"

Now I don't know about any of you, but when I read that, my hand went up and Glory to God! I am going home!

Hold on a minute. According to Jesus there was more. Jack

But Jesus said now wait, sounds to me, that you are a little full of yourself by thinking you can get by so easily. And that my friends is the whole jest behind Jesus' one more thing. Thinking that by doing the basics, we are home free. But, what have we forgotten? What must be done for Jesus to say;

'Welcome home good and faithful servant'

Oh! there it is right in front of us, I just said it-----Good and faithful SERVANT!

For the man in the lesson, Jesus wants him to give his wealth to the poor. By this way of looking many think that not to be rich gives you a better chance. But, giving up his wealth was the only way for this man to go from self-willed (filled with ego) to Christ filled (becoming a servant to his fellow human-beings.)

Each one of us has our own 'one more'. If you don't know what it is, present, yourself to God and God will show you. God showed me mine, and each day I work at prayerfully to keep Christ-filled!

This 'one more thing' can be wealth, or drugs, alcohol, pornography. The stock market Like Bob Dylan said

You got to serve somebody, whether it be your pusher, your banker or the Lord you've got to service somebody.

To take that one thing in your life turn it around you can become Christ filled.

We as a church are going through a great opportunity to begin to share our gifts, to discover what each of our gifts are. Is it outreach, Christian formation, stewardship, parish life. Choses are there for the chance to be a servant of the Lord\ Christianity is a religion founded on community. We are one of those proud communities that call each other friend, brother and sister. Between now and when it all begins, prayerfully take time to I listen with the ear of your heart about what you might do for the good of the community and the diocese.

What's it going to be? Self-willed or Christ filled

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

AMEN