

Twenty-Ninth Sunday Ordinary Time - B -2021
Isa 53.10-11///Hebrews 4.14-16///Mark 10.35-45

→a child sits on the lap of Santa at the mall and whispers a carefully rehearsed list of Christmas dreams...

→a man bends on one knee, opening a ring box and asking the woman he loves if she will marry him,

→an online shopper fills out yet another order form after surveying hundreds of items for sale on the website inventory...

→a beggar holds a cardboard sign at the freeway intersection asking for enough money to buy a meal and night's shelter

→[and] an employee sits across the desk from their supervisor discussing why they deserve an increase in pay or benefits....

→all those scenarios have one thing in common....every one of them wants something.....

→our wishes...our desires reveal a lot about us

→when we make our wants known, we are not just placing an order for something outside of us...we are also exposing something deep down from within us

→our hopes and dreams....our longings and ambitions....our secret fantasies and our public demands....---all reveal a window to our soul... our voice arising from the deep recesses of our being

→and today...the same thing happens in our Gospel reading....two disciples---James and John approach Jesus with their wants...their desires...and in doing so...provide a window into their souls for us to see.

PAUSE

→today's reading proves...that the disciples were no different than you and me

---because much like us...they wanted something from Jesus....a special favor

→and as we hear...granting a place of honor at right/left was not something J. could do for them

rather J. responds with a healthy challenge to become true servants of the gospel

→and this same challenge....is often given to you and me as well

→to become servants....ministers... disciples to one another

...i.o.w. to live out our baptismal call

PAUSE

→all of us (because of our baptism) have been called to serve....and it is in serving others that we accomplish God's will here on earth

---and so this service, our call to serve, to minister to one another...is one that is serious and needs to be part of our everyday lives

→and yet as we all know....it is also not an easy task to accomplish.....

→serving God...being a true disciple....can be downright cumbersome at times because it demands self-sacrifice and putting the needs and desires of others first

---it means not always getting our way all the time

---it....means sometimes working very hard and seldom [if ever] getting acknowledged or thanked.....

----it often means doing the unpopular, but right thing

----it means dealing with conflicts, and not always being right

---AND IT means the giving of the two most valuable commodities we have....our time and our self.

→and our model for this type of service [as we know all too well] is Christ himself

→Christ is someone who understood the pain and difficulty of service yet continued throughout his life to be the ultimate servant

→he knew rejection....his own townspeople rejected him yet he continued his mission.....and he is urging you and me to do the same even though we are sometimes ignored, or taken advantage of....hurt or frustrated

→Jesus knew betrayal....in same way we know the pain of being used by someone, or using someone

→he knew unfaithfulness....his best friend denied him 3 times...just as we too, at times, have also been unfaithful towards others...

→Jesus knew the pain of being misunderstood...

→he knew the pain of gossip and slander

→he knew about being poor, hungry, and tired....

→and he knew about the pain of failure...in many of the same ways that we often do as well

→AND YET....he continued to **say yes**...to carry on not expecting anything in return

→and in today's gospel he urges James and John////the other disciples////and you and me to do the same

→[you know] often the focus of this gospel passage is about James and John's question to Jesus about **sitting** at the right and the left

...but a closer look...reveals to us that it's really not about **sitting** at all ----rather it's about **standing**

→James and John are concerned with where they will **sit** at the end of all time...and Jesus responds by trying to explain to them that it's not where they sit that counts

---but how, and for what, and with whom... they **stand**.

→Jesus suffered and died because he always stood by those who were poor and outcast

→Jesus stood for the values of the kingdom of God...

→and.....Jesus stood for what was right and just, fair and righteous

→think for a moment of the many places in which all of us will **stand** in this coming week....

---in the check-out line or in front of others, over a hot stove or maybe by conducting a meeting, contemplating the stars at night or at your front door responding to an unexpected knock

----**how will we stand in this coming week and beyond?**

---as Jesus did...a servant to all, expectant and open, ready, and willing

.....or will we be like James and John...concerned about and wanting something better...than what we already have.