



17<sup>th</sup> October 2021 | 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday in

*Lives that enthrone our Servant King*

Greetings my brothers and sisters in Christ, what a joy for us all that here, on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> October, that we can come together to worship and give thanks for the freedoms we are now experiencing, as we continue our journey through this covid pandemic.

I know many of you will be watching via live stream, are unable to be here today, and we pray that as the restrictions are progressively lifted, we will be restored to normal daily lives, that we will be able to once again come together each Sunday for worship and fellowship.

I pray, that today's message, will lift all our spirits, and encourage us, as we live out our lives as Christians, committed to lives of service, in God's Kingdom!

*Let us pray.*

*Heavenly Father, as we gather together as living stones, part of your Church, we ask the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts, kindling in them the fire of your love.*

*Almighty God, speak to us through your Holy Spirit, and as we walk in the light of your Spirit may we grow in wisdom, always rejoicing in the comfort He brings, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Once again, I take great comfort & confidence from today's reading's that once again challenges our attitudes and causes us to think deeply on the passages of today's readings from Holy Scripture.

So on today's message!

To begin with, the story of Job! I don't know about you, but my attitude to this book, over the years, has changed from one of, I suppose of being "**forced to read it**" to the now of total joy of "**understanding of the message**" of this wonderful story about a righteous man, Job & his understanding of God.

For instance, we gather the truth from today's reading, that:-

Firstly, that there is an unbridgeable gap between divine and human knowledge, and whilst we may dislike our inability to penetrate the mysteries of God, at some point we are better off if we accept the reality of our human limitations. **Amen to that!**

And secondly, that our relationship of trust with God is more important than answers to our question of "Why?" Even if Job knew the answers to his questions, he would not be satisfied with an intellectual solution.

***Isn't that true of us?***

Job's deeper need was to know that God had not abandoned him, that God still cared for him. ***What a message of assurance for us!*** How true is it that, for those of us who suffer, is the need, for "***is a visit from God.***"

Such a visitation is, of course, exactly what we have in Christ Jesus and his cross.

More than that, the cross of Christ is a divine participation in every aspect of our humanity, and that includes our suffering. As the writer of Hebrews 2:9 says. *"We may not see answers for suffering, "but we do see Jesus ... now crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone".*

We see Jesus and, seeing him, it is enough! And this leads us to our Gospel reading from St Mark. As the true meaning of discipleship unfolds to the disciples, Mark shows how it is possible for profound misunderstanding to remain with this request to Jesus, **"Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory"**.

. James and John don't yet understand the service that will be demanded of the Christian disciple. Their request is marked by self-seeking, and their focus is the future, when all the **"hard stuff"** will be over, and they will be on **"the winning side"**.

Their concept of **"the winning side"** has not been influenced at all by the conversation they have just had, (Mark 10:32-35), in which Jesus tries to tell them what must happen to him.

The other disciples are indignant with James and John, so that Jesus has to sit them all down and tell them, in very simple language, what the values of a Christian disciple are to be.

Jesus' first reply is that it is not up to him, to assign this priority to the disciples. The only priority Jesus can offer is the suffering and death of the follower who gives themselves as a martyr.

The "cup" is the destiny of a person's life while the "baptism" is their misfortune and suffering. Both describe the renunciation demanded of the Christian disciple.

Then Jesus points out that there is a new norm of priority in the Christian Community. It is a unique group, with no parallel in any other human society, and its priority values are unique.

To use the title of great book on discipleship, that I have read, by Don Kraybill, It's an "Upside-Down Kingdom". Kingdom values are the opposite of worldly values

Whereas in other groups, such as a civil state, the great people lord it over their inferiors! I remember well, during my early days in the heavy steel industry, the wrong perception, of how those above us were referred to as "our superiors"! This sought of implied a class type control over the workforce, and caused much antagonism!

This however must never be the case amongst Christians! Priority is given to the one who serves most, who emulates their Master whom they follow. For Jesus, who is the leader of all Christians, gave himself in service even to death.

Let me finish today's message with the words from TIS 256 The Servant King: from the first verse,

*From Heaven you came helpless babe, entered a world your glory veiled,  
not to be served but to serve!"*

And then to the last verse & Chorus, which to me summarises our three readings for today.

*So let us learn how to serve, and in our lives enthrone him, each  
other's needs to prefer, for it is Christ we're serving. This is our God,  
the Servant King. He calls us now to follow him, to bring our lives as a  
daily offering, of worship to the Servant King. Amen*

### Discussion and reflection

#### A Month of Daily Devotions on the book of Job

For those who would like further reflection on the story of Job, a month-long devotional has been developed. This devotional journeys with Job through his long and arduous time of testing.

