

Untitled (42)

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Date: 18 October 2015

[0:00] Fire. Let us pray. Lord God, we thank you that you would call us to this church, that you would strengthen us for your service.

We ask that you open the word to us, that we can acquire you as our Savior and Lord Jesus in a deeper way.

So we give you this sermon time in Jesus' name. Amen. Okay, so making the rounds is a story that got lost in the news.

George F.W. Bush had his 90th birthday last year. Do you remember that? And what did he do to celebrate his 90th birthday? Jump out of an airplane.

Okay, now here's the rest of the story. The landing was in the churchyard of their family church in Kennebunkport, St. Anne's.

[1:00] And Barbara, as only Barbara could quip, said, Well, if the landing doesn't go well, we won't have to travel far for the funeral. I might say the same thing regarding this sermon, but we'll just see where that goes.

So, we all know about Abraham Lincoln. He stood for unifying the country. He was killed.

We know about Mahatma Gandhi. He stood for bringing peace. He was killed. We know about Martin Luther King.

He stood for racial equality. He was killed. We know about Jesus. He stood for reunification in God.

He was killed. Which of those are unique? Which of those four is the unique personality?

No-brainer. The answer is Jesus.

[2:01] Okay. It's like the little kid in Sunday school class when the teacher said, All right, I'm painting a picture. It's got a long, bushy tail.

It's gray. It climbs in trees. What would it be? And the little kid said, Well, it sounds an awful lot like a squirrel, but in Sunday school class, it must be Jesus.

The answer is always Jesus. But the interesting thing about the uniqueness of Jesus, He was killed for His faith, but then He defeated death for Himself and for us.

God in the flesh. Now, His disciples didn't have this quite locked into their brains.

And so today's lesson, the gospel lesson, is about two of His apostles who didn't quite have it figured out.

[3:10] James and John and the great faux pas. So, what's going on in this lesson? Jesus is on His way for His final trip to Jerusalem in the flesh.

Right? He knew what was going to happen. He knew the religious leaders were going to do Him in. Because He didn't, quote in their minds, do it right.

He was explaining to His apostles and there were disciples along with them that the apostles were the twelve leaders. The disciples were all those who were students of Jesus.

As they're heading to Jerusalem, on numerous occasions, He said, I'm going to die. I'm going to be punished, persecuted, and killed.

But on the third day, I'm going to arise. They heard it. Over and over again. And they didn't get it.

Because they didn't think He was talking about, I think this is my opinion now.

[4:17] It's not what it says in the Scripture. I don't think they thought He was talking literally. I think they thought He was saying, it's going to be tough, but in the end we'll prevail.

And He used death-life language. That's what they thought. And so, come James and John. Brothers.

What was their nickname? What nickname did Jesus give them? Sons of Thunder. They meant business. They wanted to do in those who didn't follow Jesus.

And here we catch the little weak side of them. They think, ah, we're going up to Jerusalem. It's going to be tough. Jesus is going to win. He's going to be a great military leader.

And we get the chance to run the place. So they walk up to Jesus. You know, on another occasion, their mother walks up to Jesus.

[5:18] And they say, listen, would you, would you do something for us? And Jesus, being kind of a guarded person, said, what would that be? We want to be on your right hand, your left hand.

That means we want to be your ultimate military commander and your ultimate secretary of state when you come into your kingdom. Jesus, I'm sure, in his heart, said, this is the funniest thing I've ever heard.

He said, okay, well, all right, tell me, can you drink the cup that I will drink and be baptized with the baptism I will be baptized with?

Well, they had no clue what that meant. And so they said, sure. And Jesus said, oh, yes, that's true. You will. But you know, he said, to sit on my right and my left, that's really not my call.

And then, then we drift into another story. Do you know who got to be on Jesus' right and on his left when he came into his glory?

[6:29] Two thieves. Who said that? Two thieves. They got to be on his right and his left when he came into his glory, when he died for the sins of humankind.

James and John had no clue. Well, so, there are ten others, aren't they?

they hear what James and John attempted to do. And they said, that's wonderful.

We'd love you to be the two top leaders. No. No. You know, Mark is really kind the way he deals with it. He said, they were indignant.

That meant they were mad as blazes that James and John were trying to jump in and take the leadership. Once again, Jesus works.

[7:25] He says, okay, let's sit down on our way to Jerusalem. Let's go over this again. If you want to be a leader, you've got to be a servant.

Okay. He tried to show to evidence in his life what's called servant leadership. leadership. That means if you're a leader, you want to take care of your people.

You want to care for them. Have you ever felt anybody trying to upstage you? Has that ever happened to you? I'll tell you a really quick story.

When I was a young Air Force chaplain, there was another guy who wasn't, well, there were five chaplains on this base, and there was a guy that thought that he should be above me in leadership, even though I outranked him.

He was indignant because he was older than I was. It wasn't fair. And he let me know on various occasions that he thought this was wrong. Okay. Well, all right. Years pass.

[8:33] This is years passing. Okay. Now we're both old. I haven't seen him in years. I was old. I was like 30, 39. Yeah. And so, I was now teaching at the Air Force Chaplain School.

And this gentleman, who was a reserve chaplain, came to one of the classes. He was now at what you call a bird colonel. And I was at that time what you call a lieutenant colonel.

A bird colonel outranks a lieutenant colonel. He let me know that. He just kind of smiled at me and said, it's interesting that you used to outrank me, isn't it?

Well, I wanted to punch his lights out, but I was servant leadership. I was his teacher. I was to love and care for him. So, I chose the middle ground and I said, and also with you.

And that was the end of the conversation. Upgrade. we do this to each other all the time. Often the way we want to get forward is on the back of the person who's in front of us.

[9:48] No different than what happened with these apostles. They continually were vying for position. So, should we be surprised when it happens in today's life?

life. We are in a lifetime learning experience of how to be leaders and that's to be servants. Jesus said, if you're going to be the leader, you need to serve.

And then he hit the punchline, which is one of the punchlines for the whole gospel of Mark. He said, concerning himself, for the son of man came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many.

Is it a fact that he might have, if he had wanted to, spent the residue of his life making furniture? I mean, that's recreative, except for when I do it.

Most of the time, working with your hands is a great therapeutic way of living. He could have done that, but he was called to serve.

[11:04] And he served for somewhere around three years. He served humanity. He taught. He healed. He crunched people where they needed to be crunched.

He encouraged people where they needed to be encouraged. And then that final statement called to be a ransom for us.

Here's where we move from this story into the theology. You know that word ransom. If you live in Nigeria and you're a bishop in the church, you better have body guards because you will get grabbed by people who want something.

What do they want? A ransom. So they'll say, okay, we've got, and this has happened twice in the last year. We've got Bishop Oodle Oodle, and we'll give him back to you if you give us a million dollars.

And usually they settle for \$4.67. But that's the whole thing. If we're going to ransom somebody, we're going to pay something to get them back.

[12:16] That's what happened with Jesus. He knew what was going to happen. A ransom for many. He paid for us to be freed from slavery.

That's the gift that God gives us. The substitutionary atonement is the theological term for it. He died on the cross in our place.

Substitutionary atonement to bring us at one with God. Major point of Christianity. Okay, so, since we know all this, what does it mean to us?

How do we serve? How are we servants of the world? What's your particular mission in servanthood? Each one of us is called to serve in some way.

That doesn't necessarily mean that we need to go to Sudan and help the poor. It does mean that we are called in some way or another, maybe in several ways, to see the needs around us and to meet those needs.

[13:23] Primarily, their spiritual needs. To be willing to share the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and in deed. As a parish, we're called to serve, to serve the surrounding community and to serve internationally.

I once was going to take a group to Haiti on a mission and one of the wonderful people in the church said, you are wasting your time.

Haiti is wasted. You're going to go there and try to save some people? You can't save them. Why are you trying to take our money to go do that?

Well, it's that old story, we can't save them all, but we can save a couple. What's our parish's vision? For caring, for serving, sometimes even being a ransom.

Meanwhile, we live and we love, we love each other, we pray together, we look for what God has for us. Now, that ends the first phase of the sermon.

[14:39] Now, I'm going to go on to another phase that has nothing to do with this. I mentioned that we were in Florida, and we were at a retreat for our clergy and their wives.

And at one point, Bishop Julian got up and said, I have something for you all. And we're all thinking, what kind of a gift is he going to give us? He's got something for us.

He said, I would like to help wean you off the nineteen seventy-nine book of common prayer. And I'm sitting beside him and my thought goes, uh-oh, how are people going to feel about that?

He said, we have a new liturgy. I would like every parish by this time next year to be using the new liturgy. Well, I know about the new liturgy and I know it's superior.

It's much more atonement center. It's much more in keeping with our Anglican books of common prayer in the past. And so I said, maybe Julian said this, I can't remember, but one of us said to the congregation, show of hands, how many of you, there were like 60 people, how many of you are using the 1979 prayer book?

[15:59] A handful. Most parishes have already shifted either to the new liturgy or to the 1928 prayer book. Interesting.

Well, all right, so what does that mean for us? Well, I'm going to, today, in the Eucharistic prayer, use the new liturgy, short form, of the Anglican Church in North America.

I think you're going to find that it's an improvement. Now, the biggest thing, the biggest problem, I think, we're going to have with the new liturgy is a simple thing.

You know, if I say the Lord would be with you, what do you say? And also with you. Right? We've been saying that since 1967. Before that, how did we respond?

And with thy spirit. Okay, now, if you've been keeping track with the Roman Catholic liturgy, last year they changed from, and also with you, to, and with thy spirit.

[17:09] The question is, why bother? What's the big deal with that? And actually, it's not a big deal, but, the reason it was, and with thy spirit in the first place, was that's how the early church came upon the liturgical words.

And they got that from Galatians 6, 18. Ephesians. Oh, wait a minute, Galatians is before that. And it's after that. Oh, I found it. Okay. Galatians 6, 18. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers.

Okay. So, that was a kind of a spiritual way of saying it also with you. And so, in the liturgy, the person leading the service says, the Lord be with you.

And that actually could come down to the Lord is with you. You're not all alone, you have the Lord with you. And they respond, and with your spirit. It's a dramatic play.

[18:24] Now, you may think, I'm going to just use, and also with you, and I don't care about, and with your spirit. I read the fine print in the Anglican Church in North America document, and it says, you can respond either way.

So, when we get to that point, and I say, the Lord be with you, you can respond, and with your spirit, or you can respond to, and also with you, or you can even respond, same to you, buddy.

It all means the same thing. But we're going to go into that gradually. We're not going to throw out the 1979 prayer books.

They have a lot of valuable information in them. The Eucharistic prayer is weak, but there are a lot of good strong points in it to say nothing of the Psalms are in there that we read each Sunday.

So, we will just gradually, I'm kind of doing this now, so Caleb doesn't get faced with doing it later.

And I think you'll like the wording, because it is so much more traditional Anglican.

[19:31] Okay, so that's where we are. I think I have finished everything I wanted to say about the sermon, except a prayer. So, let us pray.

Lord God, we really want to be number one. You know that about us. We really do think the world revolves around us. You know that about us as well.

Lord Jesus, you dealt with James and John, gently, but firmly. We ask that you do the same for us, that we can learn to be servant leaders. We pray this, Jesus, in your holy name.

Amen. Amen. Turn off my two. And you can be turning, you can be turning to page 358 while I'm doing this.

Okay, I've got, I've pushed twice. No, you're recording now.