

**Sermon - 10/24/2021**  
**Ps 104; Job 38:1-7, 34-41;**  
**Heb 5:1-10; Mk 10:35-45**  
**22<sup>nd</sup> Sun after Pentecost**  
**Jesus' Humble Leadership**

We spent time with the Patriarch Job. Recall his cry, "Oh that I had an arbitrator (or a mediator) to step in for me in my struggle with the Almighty!" Job found no Mediator – but you and I do have one. We have been given Jesus to take our part in the matter of divine justice. What a gift – what grace!

Today, we wonder at the sovereign power of our Creator God (in Psalm 104 and in the passage from the Book of Job. The writer of Job quotes God – speaking out of a whirlwind. The poetry is beautiful and strong when God asks Job, "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth...When the morning stars sang together and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?" (vv 4, 7) God's poetic speech never answers Job's questions about heavenly justice. God, through the author's poetry, paints an immense picture of the power and majesty of all that is – the planets, earth's weather, its features and its amazing animal life. In suffering or in joy, we have the evidence that God provides, God is mindful of humans, animals and every living thing in the world. God breathed all this into being. And Jesus was present with the Father and the Spirit when creation was unfolding.

With these attributes of God in mind, we take up what the writer of Hebrews calls "the source of eternal salvation for all..." (v 9) From the beginning, God's plan was to send His own Son – as High Priest – Shepherd King – into the world. And wonder of wonders, this God-Man is born in Bethlehem – grows up in Nazareth. Folks looked at Him and because He was flesh and blood, did not always see God's purpose in Jesus Christ.

Some weeks ago I was reading the Gospel of Luke. In Luke chapter eight Jesus was crossing Lake Galilee with His disciples. Jesus fell asleep. Suddenly, a storm blew up and the waves were about to swamp the boat. The disciples wake Jesus up in a panic shouting, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" Jesus gets up and "He rebuked the wind and the raging waves, they ceased, and there was calm." (Luke 8:24)

This is not natural, but supernatural proof of God's power. Jesus is God – God in the flesh, no less mighty or sovereign than He was before He walked the earth as a human being. The disciples were as afraid of Jesus as they had been of the storm – more in awe because of what He did. He asked, "Where is your faith?" They said to one another, "Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?" (v 25)

It makes me think of the old Disney film, *Aladdin*, when the genii describes life inside the magic lamp: Immense cosmic power – itty bitty living space. The Gospel brings again and again the witness of Christ's supernatural signs and wonders. A flesh and blood man in whom is the power of the Creator God.

Jesus was no genii – and magic is not what God does in our Savior. No, rather, having no other servant – not Adam, not Noah, not Abraham, not Moses – no other servant who could do the supernatural work of cleansing fallen humans of sin – God sent Jesus to be the Sacrifice to end all sacrifice. The writer of Hebrews explains that Jesus, the best and most High Priest, is able to deal gently with us. He was tempted, He felt pain, He became tired and hungry because He was dwelling in a house of flesh. Yet, the feature of His life that saves you and me is His obedience to His Father's will. He saw it to the end.

We cringe when we hear James and John, like children, ask for the greatest honor in the universe. Dr. Donald Meichenbaum, an influential psychotherapist, tells the story of the time his car was struck by lightning while he was driving. He was terrified, but he emerged uninjured. He managed to drive home and later was sharing his near-death experience with his son. The young man listened, then immediately said, "Dad, let's go buy a lottery ticket. They say the chances of being hit lightning are like the chances of winning the lottery." (David B. Howell, *Feasting on the Word*, Yr B, Vol 4. p 188) Not a word of concern. No mention of joy that his dad was alive, not dead.

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So, in the same way the sons of Zebedee ask for the honor and power of the living God to be handed to them. Why? So they could rule the world. This angered the other disciples. But Jesus proclaimed that they would live lives of sacrifice – drink the cup Jesus drank, be baptized with the baptism Jesus experienced. Meaning, the radical obedience and self-giving of Messiah – the Christ – would be their destiny. But, to sit on thrones in heaven, Jesus told them, was something only the Creator God can accomplish. Jesus is enthroned in heaven as we speak. James and John had not yet seen it. The writer of Hebrews had seen it. We experience this exalted power of Jesus Christ today. God's work in our lives – in each of us and in us as the church.

How gentle Jesus was explaining the ways of God to his followers. He said:

“You've observed how godless rulers throw their weight around,” he said, “and when people get a little power how quickly it goes to their heads. It's not going to be that way with you. Whoever wants to be great must become a servant. Whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave. That is what the Son of Man has done: He came to serve, not to be served—and then to give away his life in exchange for many who are held hostage (by sin).” (Mk 10:35-45 MSG)

This humble Ruler of the Universe wields breath-taking, immense cosmic power – sent to us in a flesh and blood person. Our selfishness is also pretty amazing. In our day, there are some humans plotting and maneuvering to gain power over others. Those who want to decide who matters and who doesn't matter in our world.

Jesus sent His disciples – you and me – to live out this New Covenant in the midst of selfish, greedy humanity. Jesus' humble leadership is our way of being. His call is to follow Him and to lead as many as possible to know, love and obey God. It is our humble service that proves who Jesus is. Amen.