

eLectionary Readings Discussion for Sunday, October 18, 2009

A Ministry of Christ the Redeemer Church, San Marcos, Texas

Just who do you THINK you are?

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The Lectionary Readings for the week:

[Job 38:1-7, \(34-41\)](#)

[Psalm 104:1-9, 25, 37c](#)

[Hebrews 5:1-10](#)

[Mark 10:35-45](#)

Who are we to “question” God’s love or God’s concern for His creation? With good reason, the psalmist asks God, **“What is man/woman/child that you are mindful of us?”** This discussion deals with “how we ‘see’ God” versus our “standing” in the Kingdom. IF we are unwilling to change our attitudes, we are lost. Since many of us deny anything that is “not in the Bible”, let us explore how scripture deals with this problem. **Just who do you THINK you are?**

Job 38:1-7, (34-41)

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind:

"Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?

Gird up your loins like a man,

I will question you, and you shall declare to me.

"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?

Tell me, if you have understanding.

Who determined its measurements-- surely you know!

Or who stretched the line upon it?

On what were its bases sunk,

or who laid its cornerstone

when the morning stars sang together

and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy? "

["Can you lift up your voice to the clouds,

so that a flood of waters may cover you?

Can you send forth lightnings, so that they may go

and say to you, 'Here we are'?

Who has put wisdom in the inward parts,

or given understanding to the mind?

Who has the wisdom to number the clouds?

Or who can tilt the waterskins of the heavens,

when the dust runs into a mass

and the clods cling together?

***"Can you hunt the prey for the lion,
or satisfy the appetite of the young lions,
when they crouch in their dens,
or lie in wait in their covert?
Who provides for the raven its prey,
when its young ones cry to God,
and wander about for lack of food?"***

Forgive me for using the masculine personal and possessive pronouns in the discussions as the alternatives are "stilted" and cumbersome. YES, I know that God is neither male nor female. This passage is a "conversation" between Job and God in which God asks, in response to the queries of Job, ***"Just who do you THINK you are?"*** Who are we to DEMAND anything of God? Who are we to QUESTION the motives or love of God? Do we, in our ignorance, try to "Monday morning quarterback" God? We ask "Why did you let my spouse, child, or friend die?" We ask "Why do you let wars happen?" We are childish in our attitudes toward the One who created EVERYTHING, including US. We ask "Why can't you make me pretty? Why can't you make me healthy? Why won't you do what I want?" Do we think of God as a "vending machine" that is free? We "want what we want when we want it" just like little kids. Is it because we do not TRUST God? Is it because we think ourselves to be "special"? What would make me more "special" than any other creation of God? Do I have the power to "create" anything? We "invent" things, we "make" things and we "do" things without understanding that we are merely children playing with the "toys" that the Creator made for our use and amusement. Do you think God puts our accomplishments "on the door of His fridge" like proud parents do their children's scribbled drawings? IF we could "make" weather, "make" life, "make" a sunrise or a sunset or "make" anything out of NOTHING, THEN we might have standing to speak equally with the One who created all things. In fact, the most humbling and amazing thing is that the One who created ALL things would even "listen to" or "care for" or "love" such disloyal and unappreciative creations/children. Does the sculpture question the sculptor or the painting criticize the artist? What have we done to "earn" the attention of our Creator? God gets to make the rules because he MADE EVERYTHING, including the rules. We have to TRUST the Creator to have the same beneficence toward OUR being as the Creator has for the rest of creation. All God asks is that we "play nice" and respect what he has created for our benefit. He gives us free will to be good stewards of HIS WORLD. God asks, "Is that asking too much?" ***Just who do you THINK you are to question God?***

Psalm 104:1-9, 25, 37b

1

Bless the LORD, O my soul; *

***O LORD my God, how excellent is your greatness!
you are clothed with majesty and splendor.***

2

***You wrap yourself with light as with a cloak *
and spread out the heavens like a curtain.***

3

***You lay the beams of your chambers in the waters above; *
you make the clouds your chariot;
you ride on the wings of the wind.***

4

***You make the winds your messengers *
and flames of fire your servants.***

5

***You have set the earth upon its foundations, *
so that it never shall move at any time.***

6

***You covered it with the Deep as with a mantle; *
the waters stood higher than the mountains.***

7

***At your rebuke they fled; *
at the voice of your thunder they hastened away.***

8

***They went up into the hills and down to the valleys beneath, *
to the places you had appointed for them.***

9

***You set the limits that they should not pass; *
they shall not again cover the earth.***

25

***O LORD, how manifold are your works! *
in wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.***

37b

Hallelujah!

The psalmist recounts the majesty of God's creation that surrounds each of us. As a surgeon who has been in every nook and cranny of the human body, I can state unequivocally that WE are indeed "wonderfully made". The psalmist attributes, rightly, all that we see and sense around us to the creative force that is GOD. God IS love but, God is also opportunity to live, to love, to hate, to kill, to die, to marry, to divorce, to "make" money, to lose money, to get sick or to get well. God is FREEDOM. God gives us this world and says "Have fun and do good things. Just remember that it is MY world and YOU, too, belong to ME." Have we ever stopped to adore the handiwork of God that nature represents?

Has the “glory of God’s creation” ever made you say, “Hallelujah”? Have we ever thanked God for our world OR do we see only the floods, the forest fires, the droughts, the earthquakes, the tornados, the tsunamis or the H1N1 virus and curse God? Once again, it is our ATTITUDE that matters. Again I ask, **“Who do you THINK you are to question God?”**

Hebrews 5:1-10

Every high priest chosen from among mortals is put in charge of things pertaining to God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness; and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not presume to take this honor, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him,

***“You are my Son,
today I have begotten you”;***
as he says also in another place,
***“You are a priest forever,
according to the order of Melchizedek.”***

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Again, remember that this epistle was written to JEWS who already had the understanding of a High Priest and sacrifices made for sins. This is a statement of warning for those who would offer sacrifices for the sins of others. The “priest” must also offer sacrifice for their own sins while being humble towards the sinners for whom they offer “sin sacrifices”. The High Priests must be compassionate and understanding towards those for whom he offers “sin sacrifices” because they are also sinners. Being “known” requires a personal relationship built on trust. This “honor” of being a representative of the people to God is “God-bestowed” in the same way that God anointed Melchizedek a High Priest. The Order of Melchizedek was outside the “priestly tribe” of Levi that was established by God through Jewish lineage. The Levitical priesthood became a political and seething quagmire by the time of Jesus. Jesus was and is the “perfect High Priest” in that he was “God-anointed”, outside the desire of the Levite priesthood, to take our sins upon “his body” and to offer Himself as a “sin sacrifice” for the sins of ALL the people who “honor His title of High Priest”. Because we proclaim and honor Christ as High Priest, he has “standing” both as our High Priest and OUR SACRIFICE as a propitiation for OUR SINS. Because Jesus is the Son, the High Priest AND the sacrifice, He is able to offer US

salvation. No earthly High Priest can offer the forgiveness of our sins. If we don't recognize Jesus as our High Priest and don't gratefully acknowledge his selfish sacrifice, He cannot offer us the salvation we seek. Salvation begins with trust and FAITH that opens the floodgates of salvation to the ones who believe in the Priesthood of Jesus. His standing as High Priest came through his obedience to the will of God and OUR salvation comes through our obedience, as in the statement ***"God is not willing that any should perish but, that all should come to repentance."*** IF we think ourselves able to save ourselves outside the Son, as the High Priest, we deny the sacrifice made by our High Priest and we suffer for our arrogance by being lost. Just who do we think we are to deny so great an opportunity for salvation? Repentance requires humility and acceptance of the GRACE of God made available through our FAITH in the risen Christ. You want to deny Christ? ***Just who do you THINK you are?***

Mark 10:35-45

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to Jesus and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." And he said to them, "What is it you want me to do for you?" And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They replied, "We are able." Then Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."

When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. So Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Speaking of arrogance and being "self-serving", these guys, James and John, take the cake. They asked Jesus to grant their "wishes" as though He OWED it to them. They wanted to be seated at his side so as to partake in the honor and glory that was due the King of Heaven. Jesus threw cold water on their dreams when he told them that those places of honor were "reserved" for those who for whom it has been "prepared". He basically told them to "take a number" and get busy serving. They obviously missed the "sermon" on Heaven that Jesus had been preaching continually: There are no "greats" and "not-so-greats" in the Kingdom of Heaven. All "faithful servants" are equal in their blessing and honor in God's panoply. This presumption of being "special" angered the other Apostles toward James and John, the sons of "thunder". You might say that Jesus "stole their thunder". Pun intended. He restated their equality and observed that the Gentiles have kings who "lord it over them" but, they were all

EQUAL in the Kingdom of God. IF they wanted to excel in the Kingdom, it was a choice of becoming the “greatest servant” in the Kingdom. This was against their human nature. What, ME serve? What, I have TO SERVE **THEM**? How will that make me “famous”? Service is what determines the ones who are “greatest” in the Kingdom AND it gets you nothing more than what those who are served will receive? This is not logical, is it? Jesus came to SERVE and to SAVE. If we want to emulate Jesus, we have to become “chief servants”? Yes, that is the message. Are we “too good” to serve others? I don’t get to be Elder or Bishop just because I hang around a long time? I don’t get “honor” just because I draw breath and attend “church” every Sunday? “That’s not FAIR”, we scream. Get over it. Just who do you THINK you are? Those who become Elders and leaders in a church must become “chief servants” to be worthy of any honor. Those who should be “leaders” in a church are easily identified. They are the “doers”, the “servants” and the “people of ACTION” among the flock. They have lived long enough and experienced enough to be empathetic with those they serve. You want to be a “famous leader”? First, learn to follow and SERVE with the same fervor that you desire to become a leader. You want to jump ahead in leadership without becoming “chief servant” because you are “special”? If God’s own Son learned obedience through humbling himself and becoming a servant, it is not impossible for us. ***Just who do you THINK you are?***