



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY September 30 & BEYOND”

“Do be using the Name of Jesus!”



The Gospel story for this Sunday (we hope you will join us at 8am or 10:30am to listen to it with us!) is one of the more misapplied sayings of Jesus. Taken piece by piece, and then added all together, though, it's a little easier to wrap my head, heart and spirit around, that there is a pattern that can be seen that is helpful for our walk with him, as

well as our increased understanding of who he is.

The first part of the lesson from Mark is of the apostles complaining to Jesus that others are doing works in Jesus' name even though they were apparently not known as disciples, that is, they were not committed disciples/followers. And Jesus said, essentially, “Let it go. If they're doing the works of God, they will eventually be on my side.” The money quote in this part is “For he that is not against us is for us.”

Just to show you that you have to pay attention when you're reading, the second half of that first response by Jesus is not about the people who are doing the good works of which the apostles had complained. Flipped around, he now talks about the apostles themselves being the recipients of good works and how those who care for the apostles -- because they are Disciples of Jesus -- those people, whether followers or not, will be blessed by it. Usually when we hear this verse we're being told to go out there on mission and give cups of water to people no matter who they are. That apparently is not the first intention of these words by Jesus!

The saying that can be a problem is “if they're doing the works of God, they will eventually be on my side.” I know the stories of how certain individuals who were OPPOSED to Jesus and who were focused like a horse with blinders on to destroy the mission of the Good News. The stories run across the centuries and millennium. This though is about those speaking and acting on BEHALF of Jesus and the Father's Kingdom, even though not a known disciple. Just using his name.

Put all together, you get the clear message that if you do things for God and for his kingdom, and even to the benefit of those who serve this God through Jesus Christ, your action will not be missed, it will not be overlooked by God!

Then Jesus, making use of his most recent discussion which incorporated allowing children to come to him for blessings, goes on to talk about consequences. In other words, Jesus has no intention of minimizing what it means to live as a disciple of God the Father through the Christ. The foundation of this discipleship whether for a leader-disciple or non-leader, will be making sure your interactions with others are pure; the guide or metric of such will be “servanthood.”

Here’s part of that following teaching by Jesus:

“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung round his neck and he were thrown into the sea. And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire.

With all that, let’s consider what it means. The mis-application I mentioned about this section is giving up too soon on the relationship that Jesus intends for these people who are doing “a mighty work in my name.” The saving grace of Jesus Christ provided in his death and resurrection certainly is universal, but it does NOT mean that Jesus is saying you don’t have to actually be a disciple to receive that eternal salvation! When you take all those very hard sayings at the end of this story: millstones, cutting off hands that offend, plucking out eyes that cause temptation and sin, etc., there is no releasing of a high moral standard just because you are doing mighty works in Jesus name! The day of judgment will be by Jesus Christ and he will provide mercy where mercy is what he chooses to provide.

But here is the other part which even MORE fully defines what the expectation of Jesus is, and that which can be difficult for us to even more fully understand. Jesus continued telling His disciples to let these people do their works because, essentially, “if they have come this far to recognize the power of my Name, they will not be able soon after to speak evil of me”, that is, they will become my disciples.

It is not about Jesus saying something generous about “other flocks” getting into heaven. This is about the absolute confidence Jesus has with the POWER of HIS NAME.

I don’t think the apostles have a handle on this yet. The Name of Jesus is powerful and effective, just as is the Blood of Jesus poured out for our sins to be released. Immediately a scene comes to mind from when, in the olive grove, Judas Iscariot is

accompanied by those there to arrest Jesus. They ask, “Who among you is Jesus?” And when he says, “I Am”, they fall back onto the ground. Claiming his own identity is in itself a powerful, consequential, physical force. Amazing, and quite boggling to the rational mind.

We end up with this, that those who are attempting to do spiritual, physical deeds in the NAME of JESUS, will find the power released affecting THEMSELVES as much as bringing release to others, as they saw being done. Jesus in this story has confidence in his own Name being invoked by non-believers, that his name, on their lips, will eventually bring them to be committed, baptized followers. Wouldn't I love to hear the follow-up story on those guys the disciples complained about!

Begin now to make use of the Name of Jesus Christ. It's not the word alone, but it is the word and knowing the power of the One to whom it belongs. And believing that, at the Name of Jesus, eventually, every knee shall bow.

Fr. Robert G. Eaton, Interim Rector

Readings for this Sunday – The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29 Psalm 54 James 4:7-5:4 Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

CALENDAR

SUNDAY: The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

8:00a Low Mass (Church)

10:30a Solemn High Mass (Church)

—*The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue*—

Note: Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

MONDAY: 7:00p (AA) Doctors' Group (Fireside Room)

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

FRIDAY: AA Meetings

8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)

8:15p Men's Group (Parish Hall)