

THE LESSONS: Isaiah 53:4-12

Psalm: 91:9-16

Epistle: Hebrews 5:1-10

Gospel: Mark 10:35-45

THE SERMON: Awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion,

put on your loveliest garments, holy city of Jerusalem;
for never shall the uncircumcised and the unclean enter
you again.

Rise up, captive Jerusalem, shake off the dust;
loose your neck from the collar that binds it,
O captive daughter of Zion. **(Isaiah 52:1-2)**

But you should not come out in urgent haste
nor leave like a fugitive;

For the Lord will march at your head,
your rearguard will be Israel's God.

Behold, my servant shall prosper, he shall be
lifted up, exalted in the heights. **(Isaiah 53:12-13)**

In this scripture taken from the 52nd chapter of Isaiah, the prophet speaks the words the Lord has given to him. The Lord is awakening the people of Israel telling them that the exile in Babylon is coming to an end. The Lord promises

that never again shall Gentiles/foreign invaders rule over them. He encouraged them to rise up, stand tall, loosen up the collar that bound their necks and to shake off the dust.

Shaking off the dust meant moving away from the past and looking to the future. They are not to be apprehensive, fearful of taking control of their future for the Lord will lead them and protect them. He also promises them that he will raise up a great servant that will be exalted, having more power than kings and nations.

This servant, we have come to know will be the Messiah, Jesus Christ. This portion of the scripture of Isaiah affirms this. Isaiah prophesizes everything we know about the passion of Christ. That time when he was taken, tortured, and killed. It was the will of God that he suffered for our sins. Yet, he asked the Lord to forgive us.

The second lesson/the Epistle of Hebrews tells us that, "In the days of his flesh (when he was alive) 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."

In the Gospel, Jesus, the servant of God is going about his ministry. From among his followers, he has selected a specific 12 men to work alongside him in his ministry. He has breathed on them giving them the power of the Holy Spirit to drive out demons, cure the sick and deal with disabilities among the Israelites. God, himself, on the day of Pentecost, gave them the power of the Holy Spirit allowing them to speak and be heard in many different tongues or foreign languages. This allowed the work of Jesus to be shared with the rest of the world.

Now, as the ministry of Jesus is progressing, two of his disciples, the brothers, James and John have a question and a proposition for Jesus. They have witnessed his work and know that he has power, they ask that he do whatever they ask of him.

When Jesus asks what it is that they want, they reply, “When he comes into his kingdom, one of them is to sit on his left and one is to sit on his right hand.” They want Jesus to give them power in his decision making.

This appeared that they wanted not only to share the power of the Holy Spirit but to be co-equals of Jesus having the same power. Jesus told them they did not know what they were asking. He asked them if they were able to drink the cup he was to drink or baptized with the baptism he was to be baptized with. With great certainty, they answered, “We are able.”

Jesus acknowledged that they would experience some of the same things he would experience, but it was not he, but God who decided who sat on his right or left hand.

When the other ten disciples heard what James and John had asked, they got angry. They saw James and John as being power hungry and perhaps wanting to rule over them. This was unthinkable, they understood each of them to be students of their teacher, the rabbi, Jesus. They were equals!

Jesus in an effort to quell the rage of ten disciples called them all to him and pointed out that the Gentiles leaders lorded over and at times and even their great leaders could be tyrants. But among the disciples, whoever wanted to be a leader must be a servant to others. He said, “I (the Son of Man) did not come to be served but to serve and give my life for others.”

The message was that they should be focused on taking care of or helping each other. What was most important was their service to others not their position within the group of disciples

If one is a leader, he expects the followers to be obedient. The leader also has the power to decide what actions are right or wrong for the group. The leader also takes away individual choice for the followers. The leader also has the responsibility of taking care of the followers and seeing that their needs are met.

With these demands on his time, the leader might not be able to deliver the quality of service that his followers are able to.

Jesus knew this and set himself as an example for his disciples. He did not Lord over them as a boss, but showed or instructed them in giving service to others. He was free to offer service to anyone he encountered at any place and at any time. Amen,

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