

Mark 10:32-45

Free in Christ and a Servant in Christ

Two statements which require a true or false answer: A Christian is a perfectly free lord and subject to none. A Christian is a dutiful servant of all and subject to all. If you answered true to both statements, you would be correct. A Christian is perfectly free and a dutiful servant. Martin Luther wrote those seemingly contradictory words in a treatise, "The Freedom of a Christian." Martin Luther did not come up with this idea on his. He took this thought from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus says just as much in our gospel from Mark 10.

Two things come that we get from our gospel for today are these. Jesus became a servant to set us free. And we as Jesus' disciples are set free to be servants of one another. Let us look at both these aspects of the disciples' life.

First, we free in Christ because Jesus has set us free through His death and resurrection. That is why He tells His disciple that He must go to Jerusalem to and be handed over to the chief priest and teacher of the law, get the death sentence and then be handed over to the gentiles who then make fun of Him and kill Him, but on the third day rise to new life. This now makes the third time Jesus has told His disciples what happen to Him, except this time Jesus adds that the gentiles will be involved. Why would Jesus go through this? Because of our sinful nature we are not free from sin and we fall short in God's eyes when it comes to serving one another.

James and John step up and show us what it means to be a slave to self and sin and their own self-interest. They approach Jesus asking for a favor from Him. "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left hand in your glory." Give us what we want. Let us have our way. We would you to remember us when comes to handing out places of honor at your royal throne, oh yes, place right next to you would be great. It sounds they are following Jesus for what they can get, rather for what they can give.

When Jesus asks if they able to drink the cup that He will drink, they answer, "We are able." Jesus reminds them that they will drink the cup, but the seats are not His to give. God will grant those seats of at the right and the left. All I think of are the two criminals crucified at the right and left of Jesus.

Then the other 10 heard it and are angry at them. For bringing up the subject of places of honor. Or are they angry because James and John are trying to jump ahead of them. Jesus had to call them all together to straighten them out. Which He does.

Jesus tells them what not to be like. Do not be like the worldly rulers who will use their power and position to get what they want. The same is true today in that there is no shortage of self-serving attitudes in the world today. Such is the way it is when we do not turn to God for help and guidance. We too can become self-serving vie for power and prestige in the church and in the community and the world.

So, we have looked at the disciples, world leaders and ourselves. But there is Jesus, the one to free us from our sins. He is the one whom God sent into this world of brokenness and sin and self-serving people by becoming a servant. He tells His disciples that he did not come to be served, be to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. Jesus's mission would be that of a Servant King. That would mean

He would have to drink the cup of suffering. And Jesus would pray in the Garden of Gethsemane, "to let this cup pass, nevertheless, not my will but your will be done." The cup is the cup of suffering. And on the baptism of the cross, He would drink the cup of God's wrath by taking all our sins on himself as He suffers our punishment for our salvation. In this Jesus would redeem us from our slavery to sin, and free us from the power of the devil and the fear of death. He would drink the cup of wrath and we would get the cup of blessing which is the new testament of His blood shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sin.

Christ has done this for you so that you can have life and have it abundantly. But there is more. "Christ has done this so that I be His own and live under Him in His Kingdom and serve in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness." We have been ransomed for a purpose. We have been set free to serve. Being set free from slavery to sin and self-centeredness and death, we now get to serve in the most blessed kind of servanthood there is. That is, we are free to be servants of one another.

The church is not in the business where climb the ladder to success walking all over each other. This is not a place where try to live our ambitions. The Church is counter – cultural. A loving, serving community of disciples serving each other and those in need. What a refreshing oasis in the desert of a world of self-serving attitudes. People should see the difference.

People of Bethany. Jesus Christ the servant Christ has set you free by giving His life as a ransom. Now He has set you free for a purpose, to serve in these walls and outside these walls out in the community. Will mean rejection from others, maybe. But the crucified and risen Christ goes with you bearing you up as you go.