

Sermon Mark 9 v 30--37 St Johns 22nd september 2024.

May these words I preach be acceptable to you our Lord and Father Amen.

I do find this passage a very confusing one to read, here you hear Jesus telling his disciples that the son of man is going to be betrayed, and killed by men, yet on the third day he will rise again. There is enough there to make me sit up and take notice, my Lord is going to be delivered into the hands of men, who will kill him, yet Jesus is telling them he will rise again from the dead in 3 days, yet all they seem to be bothered about is who is the greatest among themselves.

They seem to be avoiding the issue that Jesus is going to be killed yet on the third day he will rise again -- Why ?

If someone told me they were going to rise from the dead, I would certainly want answers as to how they knew that. Or was it because they were with him when he told Jairus daughter to get up after she had died, or the widow of Nain son and of course Lazarus after he had been in the tomb for four days, or were they simple too worried and scared to ask him?

So instead they start to question who was the greatest among them.

I don't know if any of you can remember the sketch that the two Ronnies and Stephen Fry did years ago about looking up to each other and down on each other?

it was of course very funny and made us all laugh.

So I was thinking that this is somehow how it would go between the disciples. I have chosen for this Judas, John and Peter, here is my attempt at drawing them for this purpose.

Judas "I look down on him because he is shorter than me. "

John "I look up to him because he is taller than me but I look down on him because he is shorter than me "

Peter " I look up to him because he is taller than me, but I can see the ants beneath my feet "

Judas " I look down on him because he doesn't use money, whereas I enjoy money"

John "I look up to him because he is better at looking after money than me, But I look down on him because I can see he needs to comb his hair "

Peter "I look up to him because he keeps his beard trimmed, whereas I look down to make sure people don't notice me "

Judas " I must be greater than him with ability to see opportunities "

John " I look up to him because he looks after our wealth but I look down on him because he does foolish things "

Peter " I look up to him because he is always so sensible, but I look down on the weeds "

But if they were standing in a group would it sound more like this

Peter " I look up to john as he was commissioned by Jesus to look after his mother Mary "

John " I look down on Peter for denying Jesus three times "

Judas " I am getting myself out of here now I have the money "

So how can you identify these scenarios with your own lives? I know I am guilty of thinking I am better than some people, I have walked away when maybe I should have stayed to help, maybe I could have given a little more money, food, or most importantly my time to listen and understand. I know I look up to some people and down on others as hard as I try not to I do.

But Jesus on hearing the arguments amongst his disciples of who they think is the greatest amongst them rebukes them all. That rebuke by Jesus must have really stung them, to make them understand what he is about to do, he takes a young

child and hugs him in the midst of his disciples telling them that if they receive the child amongst them, then not only do they receive him but also the one that sent him. He is talking about himself as god only son, if we receive Jesus in our lives then we receive God too.

It is all about receiving each other, being humble in all we do and say, to serve one another, just like Jesus came to serve us, remember how he washed his disciples feet, how he invites you to his table each to share the bread and wine, he doesn't ask only the elite but everyone, no -one is turned away, it has opened up the way for our hearts to question, to simply question how we ourselves as disciples of Christ will serve one another. We should always try to put others needs and wants before ourselves.

In our world today that is a very hard thing to do with all the different cultures of people and their faiths and sometimes out of fear we don't reach out to each other. we lose our way when the media are showing us such dreadful scenes on our tv sets, we see the injustices of certain groups of people who take the law into their own hands with out a thought to how it will affect everyone else. It's at times like this when we begin to blame each other of different cultures and race these protesters have stirred us all up, yet when the riot is over and the rioters have gone, the people who care about the community they live in come out together, different races, different faiths and help to clean up the streets again, They talk like they have never talked before, even seen things from each other perspectives and peace returns to the streets once more. They even realise these protesters are the ones causing the trouble, not race, culture or faith just simply protestors who think they are right, got all the Answers, Are they greater than anyone else ?

Jesus sees us all as we are right here, right now, he views us as equals, he knows we will always have the poor amongst us, those who have not yet grasped who he is and what it means to have faith, even those of no faith but who can still do good deeds. He also knows those questioning about him, are seeking and searching for him, he also knows that Some people of faith will use their faith to

manipulate people, and those also of no faith or those thinking they are acting in good faith, who will stir up hatred.

Our main focus in life should really be to lift our heads, hearts and hands up to him, keep looking up to him, hear his teaching in the words of the bible and try to do what we can for who we can, when we can and if we are in a position to do so.

Judas looked up to Jesus but still betrayed him, for nothing more than money,

Peter looked up to Jesus even tried to walk on water to him, but his faith was weak and he himself denied Jesus 3 times.

John looked up to Jesus and he was the disciple closest to Jesus also he was the only disciple at the foot of the cross with Jesus and Jesus's mother Mary, whom he took into his own home and looked after her.

So which Disciple do I think I am like? Have I always looked up to Jesus without a shadow of doubt? Have I never got cross over something that has personally affected my life and have deny him ? Have I always thought I have got the answers, but when things don't work out how I want them to, have I betrayed the fact that it is his will to be done and not mine ?my Impatience on waiting on God tells me I do. Yes I see a bit of Judas, John and Peter in myself.

Yes I think I see all those things in myself, but I do know that somehow from somewhere I am brought back and find I still look up to Jesus. He has taught me a lesson, just like my own father would rebuke me if I did something wrong, but eventually would take me in his arms and love me again.

I know I need to listen to Jesus more and not be like those disciples not listening to what he was trying to tell them whether it was through fear or lack of understanding, they took it upon themselves to think who would be the greatest, Yet the greatest was standing there amongst them all along. He is called Jesus.

Amen.

