

St Peter's Anglican Church, Bundoora

22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

Sunday 20/10/2024

Reading Job 38:1-7 / Ps 104:1-10, 26 / Hebrews 5:1-10 / Mark 10:35-45

(Readings are from New Revised Standard Version)

**Sermon Theme:**

By Rev'd Stephen Monsieigneur

---

### **Job 38:1-7**

- <sup>1</sup> Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind:
- <sup>2</sup> 'Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?
- <sup>3</sup> Gird up your loins like a man,  
I will question you, and you shall declare to me.
- <sup>4</sup> 'Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?  
Tell me, if you have understanding.
- <sup>5</sup> Who determined its measurements—surely you know!  
Or who stretched the line upon it?
- <sup>6</sup> On what were its bases sunk,  
or who laid its cornerstone
- <sup>7</sup> when the morning stars sang together  
and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?

### **Ps 104:1-10, 26**

- <sup>1</sup> Bless the Lord, O my soul:  
O Lord my God, how great you are!
- <sup>2</sup> Clothed with majesty and honour:  
wrapped in light as in a garment.
- <sup>3</sup> You have stretched out the heavens like a tent-cloth:  
and laid the beams of your dwelling upon their waters;
- <sup>4</sup> You make the clouds your chariot:  
and ride upon the wings of the wind;
- <sup>5</sup> You make the winds your messengers:  
and flames of fire your ministers;
- <sup>6</sup> You have set the earth on its foundations:  
so that it shall never be moved.
- <sup>7</sup> The deep covered it as with a mantle:  
the waters stood above the hills.
- <sup>8</sup> At your rebuke they fled:  
at the voice of your thunder they hurried away;
- <sup>9</sup> They went up to the mountains,  
they went down by the valleys:  
to the place which you had appointed for them.
- <sup>10</sup> You fixed a limit which they may not pass:  
they shall not return again to cover the earth.
- <sup>26</sup> Lord, how various are your works:  
in wisdom you have made them all, and the earth is full of your creatures.

### Hebrews 5:1-10

<sup>1</sup> 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.  
<sup>2</sup> He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness;  
<sup>3</sup> and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people.  
<sup>4</sup> And one does not presume to take this honour, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was.  
<sup>5</sup> 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';  
<sup>6</sup> as he says also in another place,  
 'You are a priest for ever,  
     according to the order of Melchizedek.'  
<sup>7</sup> 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.  
<sup>8</sup> Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered;  
<sup>9</sup> and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him,  
<sup>10</sup> having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

### Mark 10:35-45

<sup>35</sup> James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, 'Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.'  
<sup>36</sup> And he said to them, 'What is it you want me to do for you?'  
<sup>37</sup> And they said to him, 'Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.'  
<sup>38</sup> 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?'  
<sup>39</sup> 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;  
<sup>40</sup> 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.'  
<sup>41</sup> When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John.  
<sup>42</sup> 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.  
<sup>43</sup> But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant,  
<sup>44</sup> and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.  
<sup>45</sup> For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.'

## SERMON

### ***Suffering servant, Son of God, supreme high priest, Son of Man.***

Titles of Jesus are threaded through today's readings. While they trip off the tongue with ease, they confound us with the baffling mystery of who Jesus is. Is Jesus a leader or a servant? Our society struggles with the idea that one can be both.

Jesus with his apostles is continuing his journey to Jerusalem. Multiple times Jesus has spoken not only about what awaits them and in particular himself in Jerusalem, but the significance of these events taking place. So, we might wonder how is it that James and John, do not get the message. Their action suggests an understanding that whatever happens, whatever Jesus does, there is a reward to be found, and they want a significant share. The reward of course is in Jesus' glory, but they fail to understand the path to that glory. To have resurrection there must be death.

It can be easy for us two thousand years later to be critical in our judgement of James and John, but we need to be cautious for while we reflect on the situation, they were in we just as easily fail to notice our own current situation. How often have we felt unappreciated, short changed or cheated from a greater reward that we believed was more reflective of our effort? How have we responded on such occasions? Why?

While Jesus came to redeem the relationship between God and humanity, he came not just to open a door shut by the fall of humanity, but to lead us through it.

When we look at the world today it is easy to see many people with power, people given titles such as 'world leader' who want others to respond to their direction, to serve their vision, but I wonder how many of these individuals you would willingly follow. Even in the church there are many preoccupied with wanting power to control rather than to serve. Like the Pharisees they want to be noticed and praised rather than simply and quietly labouring to the materially or spiritually poor and dispossessed. We whether ordained or lay are all called to serve.

Are we, could we or should we, whether as a community or as individuals be leaders?

The answer is yes. In fact, it is in being the body of Christ on earth that every Christian is not only called to leadership but given authority to lead. However, we are not called into a leadership of self service but rather service to others, what many know as 'servant leadership' and the style of leadership Jesus describes in today's Gospel. This style of leadership often sits at odds with what the world illustrates as leadership. The world sees leadership as the person who commands, makes the calls that others without expression or question follow. Whereas leadership of service to others is sacrificial, done with humility and led by example does not command or force.

True leadership, Christian leadership is witnessed not in the grandiose fanfare of a glorious success, but gloriously when someone who not only has power to act but more importantly authority to use that power does so with total regard for the other without fear or coercion to drive action but rather guided by the Holy Spirit to be an example of the action of love they desire in others.

We remark how Jesus came to lead us to God. But how might Jesus definition and example of leadership align with our own? How do we serve the world in which we live? Do we simply aspire to comfort withing the church, regarding ourselves as superior to those outside?

Jesus present us with an inverted power structure: servant leadership. A leadership where real authority comes not through power but service to others – washing the feet of others. We can trust the leadership of Jesus because it places the wellbeing of others before the self and that is no more evident than the events of easter.

Amen.