

Mark 10: 42-45

**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.**

**But it is not so among you:
whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant,
and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.
For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve,
and to give his life as a ransom for many.**

Meditation

**Isn't it exciting that Prince Harry and Meghan are expecting!
What!!! Keeping tabs British Royalty isn't your thing?
You are not as smitten with Harry and Meghan as I am?**

**Ok...I admit it. Ever since getting hooked on “The Crown”:
that wildly popular Netflix series, a couple of years ago,
I find myself reading more articles and looking at more pictures
about Prince William, Kate and their adorable children.
and yes...I did watch parts of Harry and Meghan's wedding..**

**and I just learned two interesting ..well, at least for me, interesting facts about Queen
Elizabeth:**

**1) she intentionally wears very bright clothes for public affairs so her people
can spot her....so she is easily distinguished among the crowd. It isn't an ego trip for her,
she just realizes that it is important to many of her people to say that they saw The Queen!**

and 2) She is the most widely traveled British monarch, ever.
Her secret is bringing her hot water bottle with her on every trip.
And did you know that she doesn't mind filling it herself?
Apparently one of her ladies in waiting forgot to fill it one night,
and the Queen had to do it herself!
Although it was reported the Queen was quite capable and didn't mind,
that lady in waiting is no longer in the Queen's service.

Ah...to be a Queen or even simply a Princess!
They live lives that are so very different than so very many people...
Though the British royalty do not wield political power these days,
they do wield a certain emotional or nostalgic power
in the hearts of the British and beyond.

But as we can see in the news from our globally connected world...
Royalty in other parts of the modern world still have the capability
of wielding great political and personal power,
great life and death power.

And that was the way it was in Jesus' day.
some things never seem to change!
Today's short reading is all about Power:
how it is misused and
how it will be used in the Reign of God...

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now: just to back a little bit:
Just before this reading that we heard today,
two of the Apostles: James and John were petitioning Jesus so that they could sit on his
right and left hand side:
so they could have positions of the great power and privilege.

When the other apostles got wind of their requests, they got upset because, essentially: James and John got to Jesus first!

Ahh...but not so fast boys, Jesus says!

You really don't know what you are asking!

And then he tells them:

“whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.”

This is not what they had in mind!

They thought Power was all about privilege and status.

But Jesus offers them a radically different understanding of Power, a mind shattering, mind blowing, way of using Power....

Power is to be used to serve the least among us.

Those in Power shall not be served but must serve.

We have not yet learned the lesson.

The proper understanding of power always begins with the awareness that true, authentic, human Power is grounded in the Divine Cosmic Power that brought all creation into existence.

This Divine Power always seeks to create life and extend hope.

Divine Power invites us to pause in wonder and enfolds us with love...

This Holy Power, when flowing through human persons, finds its truest expression when we finally understand that TRULY everything, everyone IS one.

That all of creation: the mountains and seas, the birds and the fish, the animals and plants, all humanity of every color and capability...

**all of it, all of us are have arisen from the
very same ground of Divine Love.**

**And all of it,
all of us,
have the very same Divine Love flowing through, in and all around us...**

**LOVE, indeed, is the most powerful force in the cosmos.
No other force, no other intelligence, no other determined willfulness
has even come close.**

**When we finally understand that what gives life to one, gives life to all...
when we finally get it that when one suffers, we all suffer...
when we finally love our neighbor AS ourselves...
it is then that we naturally, without thinking offer LIFE GIVING service....
it is then that we exercise true authority,
then we achieve authentic Greatness,
because it is then that we are conduits of that very Holy and Divine Power...**

**But, oh, how we have confused things!
Power has always been difficult for human beings
we have rarely handled it well....**

**Some of us become very power hungry.
We want to grab all the power we can get.
We take power by force, deception or betrayal.
Our egos inflate and we begin to think
that we deserve more than others,
We begin to believe that we ARE better than others...
We become dominating, pompous and arrogant.**

**We have the “king...or queen... of the hill’ syndrome”...
it is our right!
We become a deadly force.**

**Some of us try to refuse all power.
We see our selves as so much less capable than others,
that we don’t deserve anything,
we can’t do anything because we have no gifts nor talents....
When we think like this, we might think we are being humble,
but in fact, there is often an underlying and unacknowledged passive aggressive,
manipulating use of power....
Now we have the “poor little ole’ me” syndrome...
We become a powerful force that sucks the life out of life....**

**Most of us are somewhere between these two extremes,
BOTH of these extremes come from a unrecognized deep down belief that we basically
worthless and nobody.
Both extremes see their life and the world from the perspective of scarcity...that there will
never be enough for everyone...
not enough food, not enough respect, not enough Love...**

**Jesus, on the other hand, preached a world of abundance:
“I came so that the world may have life and life in abundance”
Jesus came to take away our fear of life and our fear of God
so that we might be able to trust both Life and God....
so that we might know that we will have enough
and that we are enough.**

**When we trust THAT Good News...
(which of course is the meaning of faith)**

there is a deep assurance that all is and will be ok.
Maybe not this week or even this lifetime,
but in the big picture: we are forever held in and by Divine Love.

Then...from the ground of Love we find strength,
and Authentic Power begins to flow....
and good things happen that we could have never imagined
in a million years.

This is how real Power works.
Authentic Power takes away all fear...
and in its place offers peace, joy and contentment.

Authentic Power is not having the biggest toys
or the largest bank account
or the mightiest army...all that will pass away.

Real, authentic Power is the Power of Love
flowing through our lives
Yes...It can be ignored.
Yes...It can be denied...
but it cannot be destroyed.

We live in precarious times.
Perhaps life has always been this way,
but in our 21st century we have the capability of ending all life on Earth through weapons
of mass destruction and/or ecological destruction.

So...shall we, the adults of this time,
choose the Power of Status and domination?

Shall we choose Power of Greed?

Shall we choose the Power of Fear?

**Shall we choose the Power to close our hearts, minds and souls
to the oneness of all creation?**

or shall we choose the Power of Love?

We each need to make the decision for ourselves.

Amen!