

5th Sunday in Lent 18th March
Mark 10:32-45.
Hymns: 435, 430, 847, 857, 619, 895.

Introit: Psalm 119:9-16.

P How will a young man keep his behaviour pure?

C By keeping it according to Your Word.

P I have been seeking You with all my heart.

C Do not let me go astray from Your Commandments!

P I have treasured Your Word in my heart,

C that I may not sin against You.

P Blessed are You, O LORD!

C Teach me Your Prescriptions!

P With my lips I have proclaimed

C all the Decisions of Your mouth.

P I have been rejoicing in the way of Your Testimonies

C as much as in all riches.

P Let me meditate on Your Directions,

C and let me examine Your Ways!

All I shall delight in Your Statutes. I shall not forget Your Word.

Collect: Almighty God, by Your great goodness mercifully look upon Your people that we may be governed and preserved evermore in body and soul; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Old Testament: Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Epistle: Hebrews 5:1-10.

Gospel: Mark 10:32-45.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for the sermon is the Gospel heard before, Mark 10:32-45.

32 They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going ahead of them. The disciples were amazed, and the others who were following Him were afraid. Then He again took the Twelve aside, and began to tell them the things that were going to happen to Him: 33 "Look! We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the scribes. They will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles. 34 They will mock Him and spit on Him, flog Him, and kill Him, and after three days He will rise."

35 James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him. They told Him, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask."

36 He asked them, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

37 They told Him, "Grant that one of us may sit at Your right and the other at Your left in Your glory!"

38 Jesus told them, "You do not realise what you are requesting. Can you drink the cup that I drink, or be baptised with the baptism with which I am baptised?"

39 They said to Him, "We can."

Jesus told them, "You will drink the cup that I drink, and you will be baptised with the baptism with which I am baptised, 40 but sitting at My right or at My left is not Mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."

41 When the other ten heard about it, they began to be angry with James and John. 42 Then Jesus summoned them and told them, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. 43 However, it is not like that among you, but whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of all! 45 For even the Son of Man has not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us in your truth. Your Word is truth. **Amen.**

Dear friends in Christ,
Peace be with you.

You have often heard me say that Peter is the one who usually says out loud what all the disciples are thinking, - but today's Gospel demonstrates that Peter is not the only disciple who doesn't get it. A few weeks ago, we heard Peter stick his foot into his mouth. Jesus was explaining that, as the Christ, He was to go to Jerusalem, get arrested, suffer, die, and rise from the dead. Peter thought it was his responsibility to scold Jesus for saying such things. It was then that Jesus ripped into Peter and said, **"Get behind me Satan!"** (Mark 8:33)

This time, it is James and his brother John, the sons of Zebedee, who demonstrate that they don't get it. Jesus is all about His suffering, death, and resurrection, and James and John respond with a request for power. They said to Him, **"Grant that one of us may sit at Your right and the other at Your left in Your glory!"** (Mark 10:37) Have they been listening? Jesus has told them about His glory. **"Look! We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the scribes. They will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles. 34 They will mock Him and spit on Him, flog Him, and kill Him, and after three days He will rise."** (Mark 10:33-34) The way of glory goes through suffering and death on a cross, but these two disciples are not paying attention. They're just not getting it.

Jesus said as much. He flat out told them, you're still not getting it! do you know what you're asking? James and John were thinking that glory meant power and honour, but Jesus knew that it meant suffering and shame. The glory of God is opposed to the glory of this world.

Jesus then went on to instruct these disciples using the metaphors of the cup and baptism. Jesus said to them, **38 Jesus told them, "You do not realise what you are requesting. Can you drink the cup that I drink, or be baptised with the baptism with which I am baptised?"**

The Cup is a Biblical metaphor that can stand for all kinds of things. **You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.** (Psalm 23:5) **The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; You hold my lot.** (Psalm 16:5) **What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord, I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all His people.** (Psalm 116:12-14)

Of course a cup does not always contain good things. **Let Him rain snares down on wicked people! Fire, sulphur, and a whirlwind will be the portion of their cup.** (Psalm 11:6) **For there is a cup in the hand of the LORD. It is full of foaming wine, and it has been thoroughly mixed. He will pour it out of it, and all the wicked people of the earth will surely drink it, and will drain it down to its dregs.** (Psalm 75:8) **You have been acting in the same way as your sister. Therefore I shall put her cup in your hand.' 32 "This is what the Lord GOD has said: 'You will drink your sister's cup, which is deep and wide. You will be laughed at and mocked. This cup holds a large amount. 33 You will be filled with drunkenness and agony. It is a cup of horror and desolation. It is the cup of your sister, Samaria.** (Ezekiel 23:31-33)

We learn exactly what kind of cup Jesus speaks of when we hear the words of His prayer in Gethsemane. He said, **"Abba! Father! All things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me! Nevertheless, not what I want, but what You want!"** (Mark 14:36) So Jesus was asking James and John, "Can you drink the cup of suffering and crucifixion with me?"

Jesus also used word baptism as a metaphor. The way He used the word indicates that this is a future baptism. It's not the baptism of John in the Jordan. When we look at the context, we see that He is using baptism in the way we use it when we say the phrase "Baptism of Fire." Within the context of this sentence, the word baptism is also a metaphor for His upcoming suffering, death, and resurrection. Once again, Jesus was asking James and John, "Can you endure the baptism of suffering and crucifixion with me?"

The answer that James and John gave to Jesus question was astonishing. Jesus basically asked them if they were able to endure suffering and crucifixion with Him, and they said to Him, **“We are able.”** You have to think that they haven't got a clue.

Jesus' reply is equally amazing. Jesus said to them, **“You will drink the cup that I drink, and you will be baptised with the baptism with which I am baptised,** Indeed James, John, and all the apostles joined Jesus in suffering. Except for Judas the betrayer, all the apostles spent time in prison for their faith. The Bible tells us that James was the first of the apostles to die for his faith. About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword. (Acts 12:1–2) Although John died of natural causes, church tradition indicates that his enemies tried to poison him and boil him in oil. The apostles did indeed drink the cup of suffering and death while they lived here on this earth. Millions of martyrs have drunk of this cup down through the centuries. Even now many Christians are drinking the cup of suffering at the hands of the Islamic State and the Taleban they aren't finished yet.

Jesus then continued, **“...but sitting at My right or at My left is not Mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”** Jesus told the disciples that they would suffer for their faith, but those who were to be at His right and left were already chosen as we read in the account of the crucifixion: **“It was the third hour when they crucified Him. ²⁶ The notice of the accusation against Him had been written above Him: “The King of the Jews.” ²⁷ With Him they crucified two robbers, one on His right and one on His left.. (Mark 15:25–27)** All we know about the two men who sat with Jesus when He came into His glory is that they were criminals. We don't even know their names. James and John, in their ignorance, were asking to take the role of these two criminals. They just don't get it.

The other ten disciples didn't get it either. Our reading tells us that the other ten were just as self-centered. **When the other ten heard about it, they began to be angry with James and John.** All twelve disciples struggled to make themselves the most important in their group. All twelve struggled for power.

Once again, we see that human nature hasn't changed. People still fight over who is in charge ... who has the most power. It's just as the Holy Spirit inspired James to write: **1 Where do wars and where do fights come from among you? Do they not come from this, from your desires for pleasure, which wage war among your members? 2 You desire, and do not have. So you murder. You try to get something, and you cannot obtain it. So you quarrel and wage war. You do not have, because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you are asking wrongly, that you may spend it on your pleasures.** (James 4:1–3) These words accurately describe the little dictator inside of each and every one of us ... the little bloke who wants to be in charge ... the little feller who wants to give the orders.

Fortunately for James and John, and you and I, Jesus doesn't have a problem with His role as servant and slave. Jesus did not just instruct us to serve one another, but He Himself is the ultimate servant. He continued to teach His disciples in spite of their stubbornness and He said, **“For even the Son of Man has not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”** Even though we don't serve as we should - even though we don't adopt the role of slave as Jesus commands, Jesus still became the perfect servant for us. **He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.** (Philippians 2:8) In Jesus Christ we see the glory of victory in the agony of the cross. We see Him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, - so that by the grace of God He might taste death for all of us.

Early in today's reading from the Gospel, we heard Jesus tell the disciples that He would not only serve with His suffering and death, but that He would also serve by rising on the third day. His resurrection certified His perfect service - His role as perfect slave in order to offer us perfect salvation. Even though we still fight for power over others, He gives us forgiveness. He forgives our self-centered search for glory, power, and pride. He gives the salvation that He earned with His glorious victory on the cross.

Jesus still gives us a cup to drink and a baptism with which to be baptized. Because He offered Himself up as the perfect slave, we won't drink the cup of God's wrath. Instead, we shall drink the cup of salvation. We shall not endure the baptism of eternal fire. Instead, we receive the baptism of water and word. We may suffer in this life, but our eternal salvation is secure in Jesus Christ, our perfect suffering servant.

We, like James and John, want glory for ourselves. We want popularity, fame, power, security, and all the other things that serve our own self-interest. This is one more symptom of the sin that is around us and in us while we live in this world.

Jesus came for a different kind of glory. He came to rescue us from this world of sin by submitting to death on a cross. He has special honour and glory because of the suffering of that death. He revealed that honour and glory with His resurrection from that death. Now He offers salvation to us through the Holy Spirit's gift of faith for He has given His life as a ransom for many. **Amen**

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. **Amen.**
3rd Hymn: 847,

Prayer of the Church 5th Sunday in Lent

P As people of God, called out of the darkness of our sins into the light of Christ in Holy Baptism, let us pray for ourselves, for the Church of God, and for everyone in need.

Brief Silence.

P Almighty and everlasting God, since You have revealed Your glory to all nations in Jesus Christ and in the Word of His truth, keep in safety, Your Church, spread throughout all the nations, that it may be defended against the works of Satan and may serve You in true faith and persevere in the confession of Your holy name; . Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Almighty God and Father, because You always grant growth to Your Church, increase the faith and understanding of our congregations that, recalling the new birth of the water of Holy Baptism, they may forever continue in the family of those whom You adopt as Your sons and daughters; . Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Almighty God, heavenly Father, You have blessed parents with the joy and care of children. Give all parents strength and patient wisdom that they may teach their children to love whatever is just and true and good. Grant that by Your Spirit children and young people may grow in grace and in the knowledge of Your Word. Grant that they may serve You well and usefully, developing their talents not for their own sakes but for Your glory and for the welfare of their neighbour; . Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Almighty and everlasting God, we pray for those in authority over us, especially our prime minister, federal, state, and local governments. Those in the police, doctors, nurses, fire and ambulance and state emergency services, and our military personal serving to aid all Your people. Instil upon them the conviction that they are Your servants to guide, protect, defend, and to promote peace and good order in our land. Lead them to act honestly and justly for the welfare of all. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Almighty God, heavenly Father, we pray for our pastors and their families.- Bless Your Church and all the congregations of the A.E.L.C., and continue to strengthen them in the bonds of Christian love so that we may rejoice with all those who rejoice. - Strengthen those that are in nursing homes, hospitals and care facilities [*especially*], that You would give them with unity of heart, mind and witness, that nothing may hinder the work You have called us to do.....Lord, in Your mercy.

C. hear our prayer.

P Blessed Lord Jesus, we give thanks to You that the kingdom of God remains as near to us as Your presence in Your Word and Sacraments. Bless the Word that is proclaimed in Your Church this day, faithfully sending Your Holy Spirit to work repentance and faith. Bless all who partake of the Holy Communion this day. Preserve them from doubts in Your presence or temptations to misuse this supper. Give to them repentant hearts, that they might receive Your body and blood for the forgiveness of sins and rejoice in the common confession of Your Word with those around them at Your altar.....Lord in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P O heavenly Father, into whose keeping we entrust our loved ones, grant us, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to look to You and to Your Son, who is the Resurrection and the Life, recalling the great cloud of witnesses with which we are surrounded, and grant that we on earth may share Your joys with those who rest in the eternal peace of Your joyful presence; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

4th Hymn: 857,