

The theme for our morning's meditation is "Lessons of the cross for daily life." The cross is the most important event for each one of us for our faith. Without the cross there is no hope for our forgiveness. In John's gospel the cross is seen to be the place where the ultimate glory of Christ is revealed. It is only through the death and resurrection of Jesus that we too have a hope for the future.

In this morning's gospel reading we see that Jesus was teaching his disciples that, "the Son of man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." The disciples however did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it. The whole idea of Christ having to suffer and to die was incomprehensible to them because they were always thinking of Jesus as one who would rule as king and that they would be co-rulers with him. As they reached Capernaum and Jesus was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the road?" The disciples however could not respond to this because they were arguing about who was the greatest.

Jesus sat down and called the Twelve and said, "Anyone who wants to be the first must be the very last, the servant of all." Positions of power had become important to them and sitting on the right hand or the left hand of Jesus and to lord it over others was what they wanted. The self had become more important and they were wanting to be recognized as someone important. Jesus teaches us that who ever wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all. In other words from God's perspective it is people who serve others who will be the greatest in the kingdom. Our desire for power and authority, name and fame all needs to be given up, and an attitude of servant hood just like how Christ was a supreme servant is what is needed.

In Paul's letter to the Corinthians he gives us a few more lessons based on the cross. He tells the Corinthians that praising their own leaders whether it was Paul or Apollos, did not make any sense. Paul reminds them that they were only servants of God and that he had planted the seed, Apollos watered it and God has been making it grow. In other words Paul was telling the Corinthians that they were co-workers in God's service and that the people were God's field, God's building. He uses the illustration of a building that he laid the foundation's as a wise builder and somebody else built on it. He tells them whatever we build should be done well and with care and that on the final day our work will be revealed.

Paul further cautions the people of Corinthians they should not deceive themselves by thinking that they were wise according to the standards of this world. Instead he says that they became fools in order to become wise. In another place Paul states that, "the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing in this world." The message of trusting in Christ who died on a cross for our salvation seems to be ridiculous. Their rational minds tended to question as to how a crucified person can give us life. But for those who of us who are being saved the message of the cross is the power of God.

So as we look at the cross we are to put our trust in the crucified Christ for our salvation and live as servants serving one another in love. May the cross of Christ truly challenge as afresh this morning to think about God and his kingdom rather than our own selves.