

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! The theme for this morning is, 'True greatness is shown in humble service and self-sacrifice.' In the Old Testament reading we note that Miriam and Aaron begin to talk against Moses because he had married a Cushite woman. They had become proud and were saying to themselves 'Has the Lord spoken only through Moses?' And 'Has he not also spoken through us?' The narrator records that Moses was a very humble man more than anyone else on the face of the earth. The Lord was immediately aware of the pride in their hearts and he called all three of them to the Tent of the meeting. He summoned Aaron and Miriam and told them, 'When I speak to a prophet among you I reveal myself in dreams and visions. But with my servant Moses I speak face to face and not in riddles. Why then were you are not afraid to speak in front of Moses. There is uniqueness in the revelation that is given to Moses and that supremacy had to be acknowledged and understood by all including Miriam who stood as a prophet as well as Aaron. Moses on the other hand was a man who had humbled himself to such an extent that he never thought of his calling and election as something that he could be proud off. Miriam and Aaron on the other hand had become jealous because God was speaking face to face with Moses. Their way of thinking was that proximity to God meant power at their disposal; power to show off, power to lord it over others. Very often we who are Christians behave like that. We are jealous of others who are in the ministry or think that we are better than them. Moses was an example of true greatness which he showed through his humble service and self- sacrifice and we are called to follow that example.

In the Gospel that was read from Mark we see that James and John request Jesus the right to sit on His right hand and on His left when He comes in glory. They were probably thinking that Jesus would be the King and they would be His deputies. They were only thinking of power and authority. 'You don't know what you are asking,' Jesus said. 'Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?' The cup was the cup of suffering and death that He was to undergo shortly. The disciples answer that they will indeed be ready to drink that cup. However, Jesus tells them that it was not for Him to decide but for the Father who is in heaven. For Jesus it was all about self-sacrifice and humble service. He called the disciples together and said that 'the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and their high officials have authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give His life as ransom for many.'

The call of Jesus to His disciples is to empty ourselves of all pride and to stop lording it over others. Instead He calls us to take on the role of a servant. If we want to be first then we are called to be the slave of all. In the kingdom of God it is always upside down mathematics. The first will be last and the last first. Jesus set an example of what it means to be servant leader. Jesus calls each one of us this morning to follow His footsteps so that by humble service and self-sacrifice we may achieve true greatness. May we follow in His footsteps.

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