

10/18/09
Proper 24 20th Sun after Pen

Isaiah 53:4-12
Ps 91:9-16
Hebrews 5:1-10
Mark 10:35-45

May the words of my mouth and the secret meditations of our hearts be always acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our strength and redeemer. AMEN

How well do you know your co-worker.. your partner.. your best friend?

This week, after 2 intensive days of clergy conference, I came home to relax.. in front of the TV.

And as I like English mystery, I looked forward to PBS Mystery Theater .. An Inspector Lewis story.

It opened with Lewis kneeling at his wife's grave, placing flowers, making a comment about how he still missed her after 5 years.

From then on, the story gets a little involved.. a murder of course at a dress rehearsal and a con man whose alibi was his ticket to the play.

While Lewis was focusing on the murder, Sergeant Hathaway seemed to be ignoring the murder, to focus on the con man. As the story progressed, Lewis was annoyed.. but Hathaway was discovering that the con man was the hit and run driver that killed Lewis' wife.

Should he tell? Lewis had been sharp with him and told him never to bring up "his wife", and he was busy with the murder.

What to do?

In the end, Lewis quizzed Hathaway as to why he was so distracted. And the information was shared.

Why did you not tell me? Because....
In spite of our working together so long you obviously do not know me! How can I continue to trust you?

Of course there was much more to the story.. and in the end, they moved on, and their relationship continued.

Now what has this story got to do with our gospel?

Let us look at it again.

Two of the twelve that have been spending time with Jesus.. have been traveling with him, have heard his public teaching, and been privy to the private instruction that

Jesus frequently gave his disciples to be sure they understood the parables...

James and John came to Jesus and said to him, “We want your to do for us whatever we ask of you.”

And like any wise friend, Jesus asked what the favor was before he said of course, whatever you ask, I will grant.

“Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.”

Think of the image.

A king, a “Caesar” ..a powerful ruler on a throne.. with his trusted advisors at either side.

After all the time they had spent with Jesus, did they still not understand his mission, or even who he was. Maybe they believed what

they hoped.. that Jesus would become a world ruler, like King David. No more Roman rule.. Jesus would be it!

How well did they know Jesus?

Listen to his answer.

“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?”

How well did they know Jesus?

We know about his baptism, about the cup that he drank and ...

We know the story. They thought they knew the story and how it would come out. And they wanted to be in positions of power when it did.

They thought whatever they had to go through would be worth being so close to the most powerful what shall I call him...king Jesus.?

Their response was.. ”We are able.”

Jesus responded.. “The cup that I drink you will drink; and the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant...”

In his own way, Jesus was as frank as Inspector Lewis when he told Hathaway.. “You don’t know me at all.”

“For the Son of Man came” Jesus said “not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

For as we read in Hebrews.. “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'"...

"Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered, and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.."

How well do we know Jesus?

Yes we know the story.. we can tell many of the stories about him. We can share with others about his birth, his life, his death, and his resurrection.

We can tell others they should get to know about this Jesus.

I remember a TV program many years ago, when Madeline O'Hare the very vocal atheist of the time was challenging prayer in

the schools. Many in the audience were telling her about Jesus and what he stood. She knew the tradition better than they did.

Then one woman stepped to the microphone..

"I'm sorry you don't know my Jesus." This woman had moved beyond 'knowing the tradition' to experiencing Jesus.. to the spiritual gift of wisdom.

Like Lewis and Hathaway who worked together but had not really taken the time to KNOW each other, like James, John we may spend time with Jesus.. we may know his story..

But no matter how much we know about Jesus, and what we believe about God, we all need to pray for wisdom, the spiritual gift that moves us beyond the knowing about the story.. about Jesus.. about God..

so that we may move beyond all that head knowing, opening our heart so that we may experience God in our daily life and know who we are in God.