

Scripture Reading:

Luke 22: “24 Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. 25 And [Jesus] said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' 26 But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. 27 For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves?

Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves. 28 But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. 29 And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, 30 that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." “31 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." 33 But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death." 34 Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."

35 And He said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?" So they said, "Nothing." 36 Then He said to them, "But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. 37 For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: 'And He was numbered with the transgressors.' For the things concerning Me have an end." 38 So they said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough." "

"Preparing for Leadership"

Last week we closed with a look at the example of Jesus serving His disciples at the beginning of this final Passover Meal by washing their feet. This week we will see another major failure on the part of His disciples and Jesus using His example of service to teach them about Christian leadership in His coming Kingdom!

What we will see Luke do in his orderly account over the next few weeks is to carefully intertwine the suffering of Jesus as He presents Himself as the great sacrifice for the sins of His people with the failure of His disciples:

- They fail collectively, as we will see here at the Supper today and in two weeks in the garden.
- And they fail individually as we will see next week with Peter.
- In both cases Jesus looks past these failures, as God has often done with the failures of His people down through the centuries

Jesus knows that His suffering and death will fully satisfy the punishment due their sins and that He will rise in power to establish His Kingdom: Thus He diligently prepares them to be its leaders

- They must learn to serve, because they will be Lords in the Kingdom!

So let us turn to our text and see the latest failure of these very human disciples...

- Luke tells us that a dispute irrupted among them regarding who should be considered the greatest

We need to ponder carefully what has happened here:

Jesus has given them the example of service by washing their feet.

They have been told there was a betrayer in their midst and that it would be better for that person had He not been born.

- **So how do these followers of Jesus get from those lessons to an argument about who is the greatest??**

Well those who have raised children, been involved with education or training folks in the work place should be able to relate here...

- **So often, those you are instructing or training seem to learn all the wrong lessons!?**

The classic example comes when concerned teachers show the history of Nazi Germany so that the children will not want to repeat these grave errors of history... At the next recess they look outside and see the boys boot-stepping around the playground... and groan. I think such was the case with the disciples...

- **When Jesus washed their feet He explained that He was showing them how leaders should serve**
- **When He warned them about Judas at first they were concerned, saying ‘is it I,’ but since Jesus did not say who it was, they probably felt relief and moved on to this prideful dispute over who is the most important!**

Rather than ponder what Jesus meant about leaders serving, or being concerned about the warnings of a betrayal, these disciples go right where the flesh loves to lead, into a prideful discussion of WHO is going to be #1!

- **Who is the greatest?**

This is sad, but it does not come as a surprise to Jesus: In the early part of John’s Gospel we see many ‘believing’ in Jesus at Jerusalem because of all the miracles... However, in verse 24 of chapter 2, John tells us that “Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.” Many of those same ‘believers’ would be here again in Jerusalem for the Passover meal and on Friday many would be crying with the crowds “crucify Him, crucify Him!”

One of His own disciples has betrayed Him and now even the other eleven are having a prideful argument and will go on to desert and deny their Lord this very night.

- **Again, we must remember that none of this comes as a surprise to Jesus, just as our sins and failures do not surprise Him today!**

Those without the gift of faith who have hardened their hearts are going to come under severe judgment for their actions...

- **It would have been better that Judas had never been born, and he dies in his sin hanging himself in what would be called the field of blood**
- **Jesus weeps over those who send Him to His death knowing that the utter destruction of Jerusalem is coming in AD 70**

BUT what we see here this morning, with His chosen ones who have faith, it is quite different...

- **Their sins are forgiven and they are called to serve in the Kingdom**
- **Jesus continues to instruct them toward this end until the final moments of His earthly ministry!**

WE are to learn from this instruction and their example as well: The Apostle Paul says of the Old Testament Saints in I Corinthians 10:6... “Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them.”

Hebrews 11 gives the example of faithful Saints in the Old Testament as a ‘cloud of witnesses’ for US!

- **With the exception of Enoch and Joseph, those who know their Bibles realize there is no one on this list that does not bring with his or her saving faith, some serious problems with sin...**

Think of Abraham who lied about his wife in Egypt, or Sarah his wife who laughed at God!

We have Moses the coward, Rahab the harlot, Gideon the idolater, Samson the fornicator, Samuel the failed parent, and King David who was a murderer and adulterer!

- **No one who honestly reads the Scriptures can fail to see that it presents God’s gracious story of redemption!**

Throughout all of history we have those who are being saved and those who are being lost

- **We should note a major shift that takes place from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant:**

In the Old Testament the faithful tended to be a small remnant:

Ten spies are weak and afraid and only Joshua & Caleb are faithful.

We see ten tribes rebelling in the northern Kingdom and only Judah and Benjamin in the south

In the New Covenant things have been reversed: Now we have only one betrayer and eleven disciples who will be faithful!

God has always taken these faithful Saints and used them to advance His plan of redemption which Jesus has come to finish and now an abundance of faithful Saints will be used to advance the Kingdom. And that is what we see in the response of Jesus to the sin of His disciples this morning...

- **He gently rebukes them for having the wrong argument and reminds them of who they are!**

Jesus points out that it is the “Kings of the Gentiles” who exercise Lordship the way they want to...This rebuke is quite pointed when you consider how popular Rome was in Jerusalem back then! Jesus says it is not to be so with them: On the contrary “he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves.” Jesus now brings His own act of service in washing their feet back to center stage when He says, “For who is greater, he who sits at table, or he who serves?”

- *Asking them to simply confirm how the world or Gentiles would view things, and giving the answer*

“Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves!”

- **Even the Disciples could not have missed the point here with the feel and smell of their own fresh feet to remind them**

Then Jesus relates what they have done and who they will soon become in His Kingdom... “But you are those who have continued with me in My trials.”

Obviously, Jesus is NOT saying they are the sinless...

- **These disciples have had their share of problems, right up to this current argument and their failures would continue later that very night**

When they shortly come as the new Lords of the Kingdom they will not serve as perfect Saints!

- **They will serve as forgiven Saints!**
- **They will serve as faithful Saints, continuing with the Lord in the midst of their failures**
- **They will be those who will endure the trials thrown at them by the world, the devil and their own flesh!**

This is what we will spend much of our time in the Book of Acts studying

- **We will see their trials, their sins, and their victories, as the new Lords of the Kingdom!**
- **First the disciples must begin to understand who they are... So Jesus tells them:**

“And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Jesus then turns to address Peter whose fall will be especially hard this night giving him a warning and encouragement which we will consider next week.

In verse 35, Jesus continues His instructions for these new leaders: “35 And He said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?" So they said, "Nothing." 36 Then He said to them, "But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.”

- **The rules of engagement have changed**

Like a soldier who has been carefully trained at boot camp, moving on to the real battle field.

Like one of our covenant children who has been lovingly trained and disciplined in our protective homes who is now ready to face the world and do their part to carry out the Great Commission.

- **A mature soldier does not continue doing basic training**
- **A disciple is no longer a child**

An effective soldier or an effective disciple is one who learned the lessons about authority and obedience well:

- **A good soldier and a good disciple knows who is in charge and that they do not act alone, but as part of a unit.**

To demonstrate His point, Jesus reminds them about how they were sent out in boot camp and how things will be different as they go out to serve in His Kingdom...

First Jesus talks about the money bag...

Here at Church of the King we are blessed with MANY young covenant children in our congregation. So as I look around at all those, say under the age of ten, I could ask if they worry about how the roof over their heads is going to be paid for?

Some of them do not even know that it costs money to keep a home ☺

BUT there will come a time when these young boys will be the men who provide for their own houses... AND these young ladies will be responsible for managing their own households as they are instructed to in Proverbs chapter 31!

In our text the knapsack pictures personal needs which again those young recruits and young children do not have to worry about.

- **Chow is served up three times a day at boot camp and there is always soap in the showers!**

- It will not be so on the battle field where they will have to carry their own food and toiletries.

Our young children don't have to worry about where the toothpaste comes from, it is always right there in the drawer! From nursing infants up through our young adults there is often not much thought given to where food and provisions come from, other than learning better ways to ask for more and more!

- An important part of our training as parents is to give them a growing awareness and responsibility for making these provisions.

For example, our young daughters were given hope chests & encouraged to begin filling them with treasures that now adorn their own homes. Our young men must learn a proper work ethic, consider what vocation they may be called to and learn the responsibilities of budgets & finance

- Done properly their training and education toward their calling at a very young age, can be a time where they learn these important lessons

They should be working hard to learn their trade and to make money to help offset the costs of the needed training and education. I fear we have done a great disservice to many of our young people with our colleges today...

- Not only have most campuses become moral cesspools, but we often give them a free ride during a time where they should be learning to earn their own money and carry their own knapsack!

The last comparison or shift might seem a little strange to our modern ears, but the disciples would have understood that having sandals or swords was a matter of protection. In the harsh climate of Israel in the first century sandals were essential, kind of like boots and horses were to the cowboys of early west!

- Men would travel with an extra pair of sandals and they would often have a sword for physical protection

Young recruits do not have to worry about protecting their boot camp!

They might wonder why SO much time is devoted to firearm training, but when they see their first battle they will certainly understand and THERE they certainly are expected to have their own weapons.

Our young children feel safe and don't give it a second thought, unless they watch the evening news!

- They are protected, but the day will come when they must be the protectors.

Many of the commentators spiritualize the reference to swords here, saying Jesus is referring to the Word of God or moral protection: These are certainly essential and even more important than physical protection: Jesus said to NOT fear those who can only kill the body, but to fear Him who after death can cast body and soul into hell.

A well armed home that is not hearing and doing the teachings of Jesus is no protection at all from the fires of hell!

However, when Paul tells us that "if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" this must include the physical protection of his family as well.

- Again a 'Bible-centered' home with high moral standards that allows burglars or rapists to enter unhindered is NOT a home that is being provided for properly!

So the point of all this, as we often see, is maturity!

The disciples as children in the faith are sent out by Jesus and told not to take the money bag, not to take a knapsack with provisions and not to take a second pair of sandals

- **They were to learn the lesson that they were completely dependent on Jesus!**

Such is the case with our covenant children and we pray it is a lesson they learn well!

This is why the command to honor your father & mother is the first with promise:

- **The promise of long life because IF you faithfully follow this command, you will exit your family to establish your home as a well trained disciple who knows who they are in Christ and how he or she will serve in His Kingdom!**

Again, this does not mean that you will be perfect children... You are born with the same sin-nature that has our disciples arguing about who is the greatest in the very midst of the first Lord's Supper! No, just like them, and all of the faithful Saints in the Bible, you will stumble and you will sin, but like those faithful Saints you will come to Jesus asking Him to forgive those sins, to cleanse you and prepare you for proper service.

So, what if we have not had the blessing of being raised in a Christian home? Then we must follow the command of Jesus where He says, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

We do not have to pass any theological or spiritual health test to enter the service of the King of Kings...

- **We simple must turn to Jesus in repentance and trust Him and Him alone.**
- **We do this when we are first saved and then each week as we confess our sins and come before His throne to be instructed and fed, and then sent out to serve in His Kingdom.**

We do this with confidence because of the finished work of Jesus which He reminds His disciples about in verse 37:

For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: 'And He was numbered with the transgressors.' For the things concerning Me have an end.'

- **Jesus has come to save His people from their sins and He will accomplish this task!**

And finally the disciples respond to Jesus saying, "Lord, look, here are two swords." And [Jesus] said to them, "It is enough." "

- **It does not matter if you are rich or poor with lots in your money bag or little**
- **It does not matter if you live in a big home with lots of cloths or live simply in a rented apartment**
- **It does not matter if you have the latest shotgun or a can of mace**

What matters is that we have obeyed our Savior and been faithful with what we have to make these types of provisions in our lives, trusting that God will establish the work of our hands as we advance His Kingdom!

Jesus said that He has bestowed upon us a Kingdom...

- **Let us believe Him and serve Him well by following His example of serving others as we reign with the Kings of Kings!**