

- As Jesus just told us, true discipleship is not found in seeking glory or honors or acclaim; quite the opposite.
 - True discipleship to Christ, and true love of neighbor—and thus our true humanity—consists serving both the best we can.
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- We, in our pride, tend to seek acclaim and honors. The applause of the crowd. Notoriety.
 - We tend to have a great desire for attention...like a child, who is happy to play on his own...until his mother is on the phone, diverting her attention away from him.
 - The sports figure longs for the applause of the arena. The scientist the acclaim of his peers...to be remembered for some great discovery. And often priests and pastors as well...to be praised for his—real, or imagined—holiness and oratory.
 - Such acclaim may come, but should not sought, by the sincere disciple of Christ. In fact, a constant seeking of attention and acclaim can be a type of spiritual “arrested development”.
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 - As you scientists and engineers know, sometimes it is the unheralded discovery which may have the greatest impact.
 - For us it may be a simple kind word to someone who is low, or the unflinching proclamation of faith in Jesus Christ...that sways the doubter...that converts the unbeliever...or softens the heart of one who hates...to the truths of our faith and the love of God.
 - The great composer Leonard Bernstein was once asked which instrument was the most difficult to play.
 - He thought for a moment...and then replied, “*The second fiddle. I can get plenty of first violinists, but to find someone who will play the second fiddle with enthusiasm—that’s a problem. And if we have no second fiddle, we have no harmony.*” (Illustrations for Biblical Preaching, p. 198)
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- By our own efforts, we are fruitless...of true fruit, at least.

- Oh, we may make this-or-that discovery, or have this-or-that achievement...but will your name then be remembered? And, more importantly, does that really matter?
- In the scope of history, one thing we see for certain: we are mortal—not only in body, but in memory.
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- We should certainly seek the good of society and those around us. We help to advance the world and the kingdom of God by our daily employment, in our learning, and in our lives; by our work we do make real contributions to mankind.
- But in the expanse of time, our only true achievements are those which redound to eternity...that elicit the joy of the angels and the saints—and of God Himself—love of God and neighbor.
- ...and thus Jesus' pivotal statement: “...*what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?*” (Mar 8:36 RSV)... meaning, of course, his eternal life.
- Because, in the parable of the rich man who cares only for himself and comes to his unexpected death, God says: “*Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared [for yourself alone], whose will they be?*” *So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*” (Luk 12:20-21)
- Service to God and neighbor: that is our calling as disciples; that are the only things which bear true fruit.
- Do we not see that in whom we admire? Do we admire those who seek themselves...or do we not rather admire those who give of themselves for others?...who sacrifice their time and their goods—and even their lives—for their fellow man.
- Jesus does this for us in the ultimate degree. The first reading was from one of the servant songs of Isaiah—speaking of how God's greatest servant, the Messiah, becomes our servant as well...giving Himself for the salvation of all mankind.
- What greater service can be offered for another than to die for him? This is what Jesus did for every one of us.

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- And so...as His disciple...we seek to be that true servant of God and neighbor...to give generously of ourselves. THAT is how to achieve real greatness in the eyes of God.
- But always in humility...realizing that it is only God's grace acting within us that drives us to be the true servant. Our contribution—our merit—comes simply in cooperation with the grace that God provides.
- As Jesus says: *“As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing...”* (John 15:4-13 RSV)

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- There is a story of a woman Corrie Ten Boom was a Dutch Christian who, along with her father and other family members, helped many Jews escape the Nazi Holocaust during World War II...and she was imprisoned for her actions.
 - She was once asked if it was difficult for her to remain humble... and her reply was simple.
 - *“When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday on the back of a donkey, and everyone was waving palm branches and throwing garments on the road, and singing praises, do you think that for one moment it ever entered the head of that donkey that any of that was for him? If I can be the donkey on which Jesus Christ rides in His glory, I give Him all the praise and all the honor.”*
(Illustrations for Biblical Preaching, p. 199)
 - In this she had a wonderful grasp on Jesus' words: *“..when you have done all that is commanded you, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.’”* (Luke 17:10 RSV)...and yet, in doing our duty diligently, He promises to us eternal life.

Reading I

[Is 53:10-11](#)

The LORD was pleased
to crush him in infirmity.

If he gives his life as an offering for sin,
he shall see his descendants in a long life,
and the will of the LORD shall be accomplished through him.

Because of his affliction
he shall see the light in fullness
of days;
through his suffering, my servant shall justify many,
and their guilt he shall bear.

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22](#)

R. (22) Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Upright is the word of the LORD,
and all his works are trustworthy.

He loves justice and right;
of the kindness of the LORD the earth is full.

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

See, the eyes of the LORD are upon those who fear him,
upon those who hope for his kindness,

To deliver them from death
and preserve them in spite of famine.

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Our soul waits for the LORD,
who is our help and our shield.

May your kindness, O LORD, be upon us
who have put our hope in you.

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Reading II

[Heb 4:14-16](#)

Brothers and sisters:

Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens,
Jesus, the Son of God,

let us hold fast to our confession.

For we do not have a high priest

who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses,
but one who has similarly been tested in every way,
yet without sin.

So let us confidently approach the throne of grace
to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help.

Gospel

[Mk 10:35-45 or 10:42-45](#)

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus and said to him,
"Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you."

He replied, "What do you wish me to do for you?"

They answered him, "Grant that in your glory
we may sit one at your right and the other at your left."

Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking.

Can you drink the cup that I drink
or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?"

They said to him, "We can."

Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink, you will drink,
and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized;
but to sit at my right or at my left is not mine to give
but is for those for whom it has been prepared."

When the ten heard this, they became indignant at James and John.

Jesus summoned them and said to them,

"You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles
lord it over them,
and their great ones make their authority over them felt.

But it shall not be so among you.

Rather, **whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant;
whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all.**

For the Son of Man did not come to be served
but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

or

Jesus summoned the twelve and said to them,

"You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles
lord it over them,

and their great ones make their authority over them felt.

But it shall not be so among you.

Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant;
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