

Pastor T.C. Arnold
18th Sunday after Trinity
Matthew 22:41-46
October 3rd, 2010

Those who have made an impression on our lives, live on in our minds and in our heart. We still think fondly of them from time to time. Whether it be a loved one who has preceded us into heaven, or someone who lives far away and we never get the chance to see, these people remain in the fore-front of our minds and in our hearts.

And if you ever watch on the television documentaries, old movies, or classic sports channels, you quickly discover other people we recognize and still live on. They live on for years upon years – well beyond their time on this side of eternity. They, too, live on in our minds, and even in our hearts. There are people with big names and with big accomplishments. These people have made big impressions and are people who have “big names.”

And as far as “big names” go, there may be no bigger name in the Old Testament than the one referred to today in the Gospel reading for the 18th Sunday after Trinity. There may be no bigger name, who made a great impression, than King David. We are told of this great man that all of Israel and all their descendents have heard of and knew about. They knew what was written of him. They knew of this boy who fought the mighty Philistine, Goliath. They knew how God was with him as he was chosen king over and above many others who seemed more deserving. They knew of his great conquests and they knew of what he did by bringing the Ark of the Covenant back to the city that they even called, “The City of David.” There is none greater, none bigger than King David.

Except one. There is one greater and it happened to be a direct descendant of David – a son of David. This is unheard of. A son cannot be greater than his father. A grandson cannot be greater than his grandfather. And, if we are talking about King David, nobody, especially a son, can be greater than the greatest. But that’s not what we hear in the text. David calls his descendant “Lord.” Hear again this portion of Matthew chapter 22

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” “The son of David,” they replied. He said to them, “How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him ‘Lord’? For he says, ‘The Lord said to my Lord: sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.’ If then David calls him ‘Lord,’ how can he be his son?” No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

“No one dared ask him any more questions.” They marveled at Him. They were speechless. These educated professionals who where schooled in Jerusalem were being overshadowed by a layman from Galilee. How was that possible?

And they talked. Oh, yes they talked. They couldn’t believe that this man, a mere mortal, a carpenter’s son, is the greatest – even greater than David. Was this a disappointment to them? Did they laugh behind His back wondering how this “commoner” could possibly be the one who would save the people? After all, they were only human and saw nothing more than a mere man before them.

A mere man. Even today when we look at Jesus Christ on that cross it is easier to see a man than our God -- just a man, like any other. It’s easy to see just a man among so many other gods. What difference is Jesus dying going to make for me? How could a man be God? How could He be better than Allah, Buddha, one of the many Hindu gods, or even the god we find within ourselves? What is it that makes Jesus special? He was just one of many, right?

Often times what we confess before our God in this place and what we actually do when we are not in this place is different. In other words, we bow to other gods. We may bow to the god of alcohol. We may bow to the god of lust. We may bow to the god of indifference when it comes to getting up on Sunday morning or even Saturday morning when it’s your turn to mow, or carry out your duties for the altar guild or maybe teach. We may bow to the god of greed, we bow to the god of sports, and Sunday morning television and the list can go on. Whatever it is that makes us turn a cold

shoulder to Jesus when He says, “*Come to me*” and “*No one comes to the father except through me.*” Whatever it is that becomes our god, we put before this man who is truly the God of all life.

But through it all and through everything we put Him through – through everything we put others through – God still became man to die for His people – born of a virgin to take our place in death so that we will live. Through it all He still loves us and reaches out for lost sinners, and is with us always unto the end of the age – just as He promises. Now that is a mark of a great man – who happened to be God.

Great men today put themselves behind Christ. The world and the Church need great men who are leaders and who are also servants. And yes – men, I’m talking to you – with our eye on the greatest of men – the man Jesus the Lord. Being a man of God means acknowledging that God is in charge of our lives. That’s hard for men to do – it’s a masculinity thing. Men are king of their own domain and they don’t want some one or some “god” to tell them what to do. Our world is lacking men who are educated to know how to take leadership roles of servant-hood. We struggle with our God-given roles for our families. Men are becoming more and more passive in the home. They have decided that the easiest thing to do is nothing. Men, this is not what your home needs. Your home needs a man who is a leader that shows his children and his wife what it means to put Christ at the very center of life and service.

King David was a great man. He was a man respected and revered – a leader, a role model, and a sinner. He spoke of a man, a descendant, who would come after him and be much greater. When Jesus said, “*I am He*” they must have laughed a little and said, “It can’t be.” They said, “It can’t be” because they couldn’t believe that God would come to them like this, like a common man, like a servant. But that’s how much He cares. He comes not as a great king, but a servant of all people, washing our feet, eating at our tables, and shedding His blood for His people, for you and me.

And we think, “How does that translate into homes and into Christ Lutheran Church in Platte Woods?” He was our servant and we are His. We serve Him by serving others and taking care of His bride the Church. Look around you. Thank God you cared enough to be a servant like Christ. Did you hear that beautiful music that was played? That was a servant at work. Did you see those plantings when you came in? Have you taken a close look at this well maintained building? Have you looked in the classrooms during Sunday school or been here during the week when MLA has classes – or during weekday school and church on Wednesday? Have you looked around lately? Look at this place and all that goes on. This place is a clear indication that there are God’s servants at work. That’s you. You put this place together. You keep it together. Our Lord uses you and needs you to make Christ Parish what it is today.

You care about your Church because you are a child and a lover of God. Keep on caring. Next week you will have the opportunity again to show to your Lord what you desire to give back to Him. You will have the opportunity to keep on showing, maybe this year in a bigger and better way, how much you care about what He did for you and for your family by lowering Himself to be a servant. Next week you will have the opportunity to bring forward your pledge of time, talent, and treasure during the Service. You built this place with your sweat and sometimes with your tears. Christ Jesus built this place with His blood. How are you going to pledge this year?

“*The Lord said to my Lord.*” There is one greater that will come. He came as a servant of all servants. He is greater than King David. He was and is God of gods and Lord of lords. He was and is David’s King. He’s our King too. And yes, Jesus was greater than David. We are made to be as great as King David because of what Christ has made us to be in Him – a servant who is loved, forgiven. Amen.

The Peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.