

WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, July 7, 2020
Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN

“Noodle Soup from Krysiak’s”

READING: Matthew 20:20-28 – Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him. “What is it you want?” he asked. She said, “Grant that one of these sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.” “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said to them. “Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?” “We can,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.” When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise 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 your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

My dad’s days lately have been all over the place. Some days he’s been very weary and uninterested in the regular things of life like food, T.V., or phone calls. Then there are the other days, where the “Old Bob” shows himself with a definite will and an obvious thought process. For instance, I talked to him last Friday a week ago about 4:30 in the afternoon. We talked until his arm ached from holding the phone. About 6:30, I received a call from my nephew, Brad. He said, “Grandpa just called me and wanted your cell number. He says he can’t find it on his phone, and he wants to talk to you.” While I was on the phone with him, my sister called the house and told Becky that Dad had just called her and wanted to talk to me. So, I called him. He obviously didn’t remember our earlier conversation, but he definitely had a purpose for getting hold of me. He said, “I want a quart of chicken noodle soup from Krysiak’s!”

Now Krysiak’s is a Polish restaurant in Bay City, MI. Fortunately, I have several times visited that establishment with Dad, so I knew immediately what he was talking about. I laughed and said, “Pa, you know I’m a very long way away from Krysiak’s.” He said, “Yeah, I know.” Then he went on to tell me that for dinner that evening they had given him a grilled cheese sandwich and tomato soup. The soup had disappointed him and made him think with longing for the noodle soup at Krysiak’s. I told him I was sorry I couldn’t deliver on his wants, and he was okay for the time being. The whole thing made me a little sad, but it also makes me laugh. Dad’s always been good at giving orders.

I always have to chuckle at the lesson for today. James and John bring in the heavy artillery – MOM! She kneels before Jesus and asks a special favor of him, places of honor and prestige for her boys when Jesus establishes his “kingdom”. They’re thinking an earthly, hereditary “Throne of David” that would mean they would be King Jesus’ prime and second ministers. High stuff for the sons of Zebedee! Jesus says pointedly, “You have no idea what you’re

asking. There is a bitter cup that comes with your request.” They want to be important. They want to be able to give orders. They want to be right near the top of the heap. Who doesn’t? It’s always heady stuff to give orders and have them obeyed.

Just think what these two asked for and did NOT receive: According to John, Jesus was enthroned the moment he was crucified. That means that the “one of your right and the other on your left” were the two thieves who were crucified with Jesus. Those places were those prepared by the Father, and they were decidedly NOT places of honor and authority.

When the other disciples heard about this conversation, they were indignant. “How dare those two make such a request!” they harrumphed. (“Why didn’t I think of that?” they probably thought.) But Jesus uses the moment as an opportunity to teach them all something most important about the Kingdom: The world seeks power and status, but the followers of Jesus walk in HIS way. Humility, service, and love are the true Way that follows in the Master’s footsteps. We are called to be servants, of God and of each other.

This past week Dad had one of those “Old Bob” days. He called my brother, Larry, and my sister and said he needed a clevis and a length of rope. “Whatever for?” they asked. He said he had the idea to affix the clevis to the end of his bed and then use the rope to pull himself up to a sitting position in his bed! Then, later that same day he called Sally to say he wanted shrimp scampi from Red Lobster for supper. He did not get the clevis and rope, but they managed to tag-team and got him the scampi! He’s Dad and he’s old; he can give orders and we try our best to fulfill them because we love him. But Jesus makes clear that in our everyday walk, humility and self-sacrifice are the mark of the disciple; servants and slaves of one another. Amen.

PRAYER:

ANNOUNCEMENT(S): Saturday services and the regular Communion schedule have resumed. And, remember that both Sunday services will be live broadcast on the Internet regularly from now on.