

## The Two Sides of the Coin (31st. Sunday)

(Mark 12:28b-34)

So I would like to ask you about your Home-Work ? Did you do home-work ? Do you remember what it was ? Yea I really do want you to do home-work ! Otherwise this is only idle talk.

The home-work from last week was based on that great story of Bartimaeus ....the blind man. I asked you to please spend time during the week reflecting on "What is my chief blindness in life. My Great Blindness ! Do I really desire for the Master to heal my Blindness ? Or am I unwilling to let go of my security blanket and let him Really come into my life.

How important is it to really let Jesus into my life ? In all honesty if I do not let Jesus into my life then what do I have in my life ?

Truth is I have nothing of my own .....all I have is Here say. Yes Here say. What I have been told by others. As I said three weeks ago I got all of that "Conditioning" from my family growing up, then I went to Church and received similar "Conditioning" and went to school and received more of the same ..... So in short all of my knowledge, all of my understanding, all of my faith experience is Hear-say .....learned from someone else ..... and that remains so until I come to know Him Personally ..... The One True God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent !

Only when I come to know Him Trust Him .. Choose Him as my Savior ..... only then is not Hear-say any longer !

Two weeks ago when I spoke of the two disciples James and John wanting places at the left and right of Jesus in the Kingdom ..... I suggested to you that they might indeed be very much like ourselves ..... what they were asking for is something we all probably ask for at times ... ASSURANCE .... Blessed Assurance .... O'k it might have been a little over the top with that Left and Right side ... but I believe they wanted to be assured more than anything else. What Jesus told them is : I cant give you that ..... what I am offering you is Faith .... Faith is the other side of the coin of Assurance. We all want, and crave assurance in life ...what Jesus offers us is Faith not assurance ... not knowledge that everything will turn out o'k .... just an invitation "Trust me I Promise you All will be well in my care"

A man coming out of the 8:00a.m. Mass said to me : that meant a great deal to me : Faith Or Knowledge ! That hit me between the eyes .... which do I desire more .... Faith or Knowledge ? I have got to reflect on that .... Now thats a good man who settles in to look seriously at that question ! He is a man who in my opinion has a lot of knowledge, and also a broadness of lived experience ! However .... he saw the trap ..... I can become much more attached to Knowledge than to Faith unless I have come to know Him, and practiced Trusting him !

The Gospel is a wonderful example a Scribe (A-lawyer) one who writes and scribes the law. There were great discussions in those days, as there are today indeed on which were the most important Commandment or Law.

Some might argue Loving neighbor ... for in doing so you are loving god too..... others would say no “you must first love yourself because if you don't love yourself, then you have nothing to give. Others would say absolutely no .... You must first love God .... forsake everyone else, and everything else ! So this discussion with Jesus was pretty important.

In essence Jesus takes all of the commandments and the Old law and reduces them to 2 ..... Love the Lord Your God .....

Love your neighbor as yourself.

Something that we have got to deal with is that God Has First Loved Us.

Some of the best teachers are those who have really suffered in life. Some people who have experienced unspeakable trauma and pain in their personal lives. People like Victor Frankl the great psychiatrist, who survived the Holocaust, and wrote the book ‘ Man’s Search for Meaning’ and guided so many through their own pain and suffering.

Rabbi Harold Kushner in his forward to that book says :

Frankl says the greatest task for any person is to find meaning in his or her life. He saw three possible sources sources for meaning : in work ( doing something significant), in love (caring for another person), and in courage during difficult times. Suffering in and of itself is meaningless; we give our suffering meaning by the way in which we respond to it .....

He said, forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation. You cannot control what happens to you in life, but you can always control what you will feel and do about what happens to you.

Victor Frankl may very well unwittingly have been describing Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He found meaning in His work .... in Loving .... and in being courageous for us !

So loving Him and loving our Neighbor As ourselves is the summation of the Law and the Prophets.

That is why the final line of the their conversation in the gospel is of such importance :

‘And to love Him with all your heart, with all your understanding, with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself’ is worth more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.

In other words, I could show up for Mass all of the time, I could come to all of the prayer events ..... but if I am not conforming my life to Him and to His love ..... What’s the point in my life ..... What is the real meaning ?