

Sunday, October 18th, 2015 — JOB 38:1-7, 34-41;  
PSALM 104:1-9, 25, 37b; HEBREWS 5:1-10;  
MARK 10:35-45



**A READING FROM THE BOOK OF JOB**

38<sup>1</sup>Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind: "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up your loins like a man, I will question you, and you shall declare to me. Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements – surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars sang together and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?" "Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, so that a flood of waters may cover you? Can you send forth lightnings, so that they may go and say to you, 'Here we are'? Who has put wisdom in the inward parts, or given understanding

to the mind? Who has the wisdom to number the clouds? Or who can tilt the waterskins of the heavens, when the dust runs into a mass and the clods cling together? Can you hunt the prey for the lion, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions, when they crouch in their dens, or lie in wait in their covert? Who provides for the raven its prey, when its young ones cry to God, and wander about for lack of food?"

JOB 38:1-7, 34-41

**Psalms 104:1-9, 25, 37b**

- 1 Bless the Lord, O my soul; \* O Lord my God, how excellent is your greatness! you are clothed with majesty and splendour.
- 2 You wrap yourself with light as with a cloak \* and spread out the heavens like a curtain.
- 3 You lay the beams of your chambers in the waters above; \* you make the clouds your chariot; you ride on the wings of the wind.
- 4 You make the winds your messengers \* and flames of fire your servants.
- 5 You have set the earth upon its foundations, \* so that it never shall move at any time.
- 6 You covered it with the deep as with a mantle; \* the waters stood higher than the mountains.
- 7 At your rebuke they fled; \* at the voice of your thunder they hastened away.
- 8 They went up into the hills and down to the valleys beneath, \* to the places you had appointed for them.
- 9 You set the limits that they should not pass; \* they shall not again cover the earth.
- 25 O Lord, how manifold are your works! \* in wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.
- 37b Hallelujah!

*O God of eternal light, heaven and earth are the work of your hands, and all creation sings your praise and beauty. As in the beginning, by your Spirit, you gave life and order to all that is, so by the same Spirit redeem us and all things, through Christ our Lord.*

## A READING FROM THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS

Every high priest chosen from among mortals is put in charge of things pertaining to God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness; and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not presume to take this honour, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"; as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek." In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

HEBREWS 5:1-10

## THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO MARK

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to Jesus and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." And he said to them, "What is it you want me to do for you?" And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They replied, "We are able." Then 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 hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. So Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

MARK 10:35-45

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*But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."*

Tomorrow, tomorrow is election day in Canada! What we do at the polls will affect our lives directly over the next ½ decade! And then there are the fallout effects that will extend for years on top of that. We are making no small decision on Monday, October 19<sup>th</sup>.

That seems a bit scary, doesn't it? And it is scary. Yet, I am a big fan of democracy. I am a bigger fan of democracy where the electorate does its homework on major issues and demands answers from the candidates.

I think today's readings are particularly well placed for just before election day. These readings talk about human motivations and the wisdom of God. We hear things today that we can take into our hearts as we decide where to place our mark on the ballot. Not only are we to try and find out those who are competent. We are to seek out those who seek election for more than only the power that goes with the position.

Power is a strange commodity. There are times when we as human beings need extra power for the benefit of others. Sometimes to save lives, or prevent hunger or promote good health.

But we all know that power in the wrong hands at the wrong time can lead to disaster and even death. We have seen examples of this at every level and aspect of society, from those who have been elected to power, to those who may seem to be ordinary folk. It can be all too easy for power to lead to violence, hurt and corruption.

Now people are not God. Some may want to be. Some may think that having great power would be really neat! They see themselves as potentially enjoying all the power associated benefits.

Today we read from the Gospel of Mark about the behaviour of two of the disciples that seems oddly like the behaviour of children fighting over a prized family possession. These disciples are expecting Jesus to be crowned king, and they want to know if they will be given the honour of sitting next to Jesus' throne. They said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking"

Jesus was correct. James and John didn't understand what Christ meant. They had no idea what it was that they were asking. At the time, they thought glory was an honour to be given away. In the politics of those days, this was often the case. But rather than sitting on a seat of power and luxury, James would eventually be the first apostle to be killed for his faith. And John, for his faith, would be exiled to a prison island. They served God at great personal cost.

I remember reading once of a mayoral candidate in one large city who was known for his great joy in being elected to the position — but letting his people down through inaction while in office. He wanted the glory — but not the work! And Jesus tells us it is the work of serving that we are to be about. Real meaning in life comes from our love of others and our willingness to serve them in times of need. As the people of Canon Davis know, that is what true hospitality is about.

Now some office seekers may think of themselves as being very important. But no matter how important they think they are, they are never too important to roll up their sleeves and work for the people that elected them. This is especially true when one considers God's Son was willing to come to earth in love to serve God's people.

Are any of us better than Jesus? Is any candidate for public office better than our Lord? In no way! Then they too should be expecting to enter public office with serving people as their primary job. For it is the primary job of all Christians as valid situations arise and to the degree that we can actually be of help. As it is in politics it is in everyday life. We need to be a discerning people.

**B**ut one thing we are all capable of is going to the ballot box and voting for the person who we think will serve us best — serve us best as local constituents, as Ontarians, as Canadians, and as people of God's earth. May we and they always keep in mind Jesus' words:

*.....but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.*

Thanks be to our loving God who asks that we serve one another as our way of serving Him.

Amen.