

CCH PLATINUM JUBILEE SERVICE 5th June 2022 Luke 22:24-27

²⁴ A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. ²⁵ Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. ²⁶ But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. ²⁷ For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves". Luke 22:24-27

v26 Let's pray that these words of Jesus have great impact in our lives.

- Just over 70 years ago a young woman in her 20s was preparing for her Coronation as Queen of England.
 - The Archbishop of Canterbury at the time, Geoffrey Fisher, wrote a special book to help her prepare for the big day.
 - It's 76 pages long, bound in leather, and there are fewer than 12 copies that have ever been printed.
 - There are some quotes from it in this booklet "Our Faithful Queen" by Catherine Butcher, and we have 50 of these to give away today on the way out. Do take one for free!
 - It gives a kind of "look behind the scenes" into what the Queen may have been thinking and praying about as she prepared for that big day 70 years ago.
 - And on one of the pages are these words quoted from Luke 22:26 taken from our reading today...
 - *"The greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves"*
- I'd like us to consider these words of Jesus together today under 2 headings.

1) The kind of rule Jesus calls for is that of a servant.

- The theme of these words is Servant Leadership.
 - Just to get our bearings, these are words spoken by Jesus at his Last Supper, on the night before he died.
 - And you can see that he's calling his followers to be humble and sacrificial leaders,
 - to use their authority to serve and not to be served,
 - to give and not to get.
- You see sadly, not for the first time, Jesus' closest followers are squabbling in an ugly fight for who's going to be greatest. **v24. p1057.**
 - It's ironic, because he's just reminded them that tomorrow he's going to be betrayed and killed. And yet they are more interested in who's going to be top dog!
 - It's very similar to what goes on in our hearts.

- I think this is actually one of the reasons that we can trust the Bible. It rings true- it doesn't paint the people who wrote down the story in a perfect light!
- Constantly the disciples seeming to be jockeying for position. But Jesus says that's not how it should be. **v25.**
 - And he says don't be like the normal kings and queens, lording it over others and bestowing on themselves impressive titles like capital B Benefactors.
 - You are not to be like that. **v26.** In a world where the youngest was given the most menial jobs to do, Jesus says that the higher you go, the more you should look to serve.
- You don't need me to tell you how hard this is.
 - I wonder if anyone here has been given a position of responsibility.
 - Maybe you are a manager at work.
 - Maybe you are a teacher or a parent.
 - Maybe some of the kids here with us today are school prefects or councillors.
 - Will you use your position to serve or to be served?
 - Will you squash others beneath you or will you meet their needs? Does greater power mean greater power to be lazy or selfish or to use people or to create a name for yourself?
 - Or will you put yourself out to serve other people uncomplainingly and unselfishly?
- It's good to remember on this day of Pentecost, when Christians remember the coming of the Holy Spirit, that it's only possible with God's help.
- The Queen has been on the throne for 70 years (that's for as long as most of us can remember). There may just be some here today in their 80s who like my dad tuned in on the family's first TV set to see the Coronation live in 1953.
 - But for as long as she has been on the throne she has sought to be a servant.
 - Garden parties for the public, Maundy money at Easter, Civic events, schools and hospitals that she has opened. These are all expressions of a desire to serve the citizens of this country.
 - I know that not everyone is a fan, and that's OK. Even in recent weeks there have been billboards calling for the monarchy to end.
 - But I do believe that she has sought to use her reign to serve others, and in this regard, she has sought to put into practice these Bible words given to her for her coronation.
- In fact in her first speech at Christmas before her coronation she said. *"At my coronation next June, I shall dedicate myself anew to your **service**.... Pray that God may give me wisdom and strength to carry out the solemn promises I shall be making, and that I may faithfully **serve** him and you all the days of my life".*

The Kind of rule Jesus calls for is that of a servant.

- The Queen has sought to put that into practice. And that's one of the reasons for this church service today.
 - To be able to thank God that we have a ruler who is not like Putin who uses his authority to squash and steal.
 - But rather she seeks to serve.
- But she will be the first to admit that she hasn't done that perfectly. The Queen has made mistakes.
- [One of the more amusing mistakes the Queen made was recorded in the Times newspaper in 2017.](#)
 - [When the Queen can't sleep she likes to go for a walk around Buckingham Palace. But this time she hadn't telephoned security to let them know about her extra early morning meanderings. An armed guard jumped out of some bushes and pointed his gun towards her shouting "Who's that?", only to discover that it was the Queen. He swore \(slightly embarrassing\), and then said "Your Majesty, I nearly shot you". Calmly she responded "That's quite alright, next time I'll ring through so you don't have to shoot me!"](#)
- But any leader will have made mistakes in more serious ways. You see my aim this morning is not so much to big up the Queen, but to big up the standard that Jesus holds out here.
 - The Queen would be the first to admit that she hasn't always ruled perfectly.
 - Perhaps some will question the lavish amounts of money spent on her. They say that everywhere the Queen goes it smells of new paint because everywhere has just been done up for her visit!
 - She herself spoke in 1966 of her regrets over not visiting the Welsh mining town of Aberfan sooner where 116 children were killed.
 - There was criticism over how the Queen responded to the death of Princess Diana.
 - I'm sure privately there are other things that she knows she hasn't got right.
 - **Whether we are the Queen of the United Kingdom or just King or Queen of our own little world, we don't just need a standard to measure up to. We also need a Saviour who can rescue.**
- And that takes us onto our second and more important point.
 - 1) The kind of rule Jesus calls for is that of a servant.
 - 2) The kind of rule Jesus brings is that of a servant.

2) The kind of rule Jesus brings is that of a servant.

- And this is such a relief, because Christianity isn't first good advice. **Be a servant**. It's good news. **There is a servant**. In v27 Jesus asks a Q...
- "For who is greater, the one who is at the table, or the one who serves?"
 - I had the privilege of working for the British Embassy in Paris for a day as a tour guide in the dining room.
 - The Butler had set up the dining table to replicate what it would have looked like when the Queen came to visit for a state banquet several years earlier.
 - It was amazing- crystal cut glass, crested china, silver salvers.
 - The tablecloth itself was one massive piece of white linen stretching across this huge table without any join.
 - They used string and rulers to make sure that everything was perfectly lined up.
 - And in central place was the place name for the Queen: Her Royal Highness Queen Elizabeth the Second.
 - Now who is more important?
 - The Queen- the royal guest of honour, or the guy out the back doing the washing up.
 - That's the question Jesus asks in v27 "Who is greater the one who is at the table or or the one who serves?" And then Jesus answers his own Q "Is it not the one who is at the table?" v27.
 - And then here are these amazing words "But I am among you as one who serves".
 - Jesus puts on an apron and does the washing up.
- This Jubilee weekend the focus has rightly been on the Queen- Rock concerts, Pageants, Trooping of the colour all in her honour.
 - If you think about it she has GREAT POWER...
 - she only needs to ask for her Royal Bagpiper to play each morning and it happens.
 - The list of things named after her around the world is legendary...
 - 25 awards
 - 56 geographic places
 - 85 buildings
 - 28 hospitals
 - not including the bridges, roads, schools & trains!
 - She is known by millions across the world. (although once in Balmoral she popped into a local shop to buy some cake. The Shopkeeper said "you look just like the Queen" "How reassuring" she said!)

- But consider just for a moment the far GREATER POWER of Jesus Christ.
 - We saw in our sermons from Mark's gospel Power over **disease**, the **devil**, **disaster** (the storm on the lake) and even **death** itself (raising Jairus' daughter).
 - All these things proving that he is not just a man, but the Son of God sent from heaven.
 - Join our next Christianity Explored course, or take a Jubilee copy of John's gospel to go through that evidence if you would like.
- But what did Jesus do with his great power?
 - He didn't open the doors of a **hospital**.
 - He opened the doors of **heaven**.
 - He didn't **live** a life of serving others.
 - He **gave** his life in serving others.
- You see when Jesus said "I am among you as one who serves", we need to know what that looked like.
 - Here during this meal, they would have arrived with open sandals covered in sweat and dust and even dung from the streets.
No-one had bothered to clean one another's feet- it was the job of the most lowly servant.
 - But Jesus got up from the meal, put a towel around himself and got his fingers in between the toes to clean his friends' feet.
 - That is the kind of humble sacrifice that Jesus brings.
- But that's not the half of it.
 - The next day Jesus died on a cross.
 - Do you understand the cross?
 - Do you know why he died?
 - It wasn't to wash our feet.
 - It was to wash our souls clean of our sin.
- It was to serve us in the greatest possible way.
 - ▲ In the houses of parliament there is a throne that the Queen sits on for the state opening of parliament.
 - Apparently once a tour guide was showing a group of people around the Houses of Parliament and for a moment while the tourguide's back was turned an Aussie tourist sat on that throne.
 - *"What are you doing?"*
 - *"I just wanted to have a go".*
 - The tragedy of humanity is that we want to take God's throne and live as if we are in charge of our lives instead. And we don't do it very well.
 - So the heart of the human problem is the problem of the human heart.

- Perhaps there's someone here today or watching online who is very conscious that their life is not what it should be.
- The Bible calls it sin.
 - You and I are guilty
 - And one day we will face God and his judgement.
 - We need our hearts to be washed before we meet him.
 - No amount of good works or charitable action can cover it over.
- But "I am among you as one who serves".
 - The True King, God's son has come into this world.
 - Instead of condemning us as we deserve
 - He came to die in our place to take the punishment we deserve!
 - If you put your trust in him you will be washed whiter than snow.
 - Well that's astonishing.
- Why would one so great, the King of Kings, stoop so low?
 - The answer is his love.
 - He loves you and he loves me.
 - He knows the worst about us, but he loves us.
 - He wants to bring us back.
 - He didn't open a hospital, but he opened heaven.
- In the Old Testament there is a passage written hundreds of years before Jesus- we looked at it at Easter last year Isaiah 53.
 - It is known as one of the Servant Songs- right on target with what we see in these verses.
 - It says "We all like Sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity (sin) of us all".
 - This verse shows to what an extent Jesus serves.
- Imagine this book represents the barrier between you and God.
 - Whether you have grown great or just are the king of your little world, we have all rejected God's rule.
 - We all like sheep have gone astray.
 - But the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
- You and I will meet God one day. Jesus will be the judge. The perfect servant.
 - will you turn back to him as Saviour
 - and will you then follow in his footsteps as Lord?

- The Queen expressed her faith in Jesus Christ in her Queen's Speech in 2014. She said *"For me, the life of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace whose birth we celebrate today is an inspiration and an anchor in my life"*.
- And in 2016 she said *"Jesus Christ was maligned and rejected by many though he had done no wrong. And yet billions of people now follow his teaching and find in him the guiding light for their lives. I am one of them"*.
- And so I must ask you this morning Are you?
 - Do you seek not only to follow his example of service, but more fundamentally, have you come to be served by him?
 - Have you put your trust in his death on the cross for you?
 - That act of service and sacrifice on the cross was enough to wash all your sins away and make you right with God.
 - I am among you as one who serves.
 - If you have not. Why not ask him today?
 - And if you have will you follow in his footsteps and use any responsibility and gifts you have
 - not to get but to give
 - not to be served but to serve.
- Queen Victoria was once asked what she would do if she met Jesus Christ. She replied with a sentiment that our own Queen I think would echo.
 - "If I met Jesus Christ, I would take off my crown and lay it before him".
- **Let's pray.**