**Two Contrasting Disciples**

**Jesus was walking along with his disciples; they were on their way to Capernaum. Jesus told them exactly what would happen to him. He said to them, “The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.” Did the disciples gather around Jesus and say something like, “No lord this can’t be so?” Did they ask one another if they’d heard what Jesus just said? Were they quiet for a while contemplating the words Jesus just said to them?**

**No, they were not quiet, and they certainly were not thinking about the words Jesus had just said to them. In fact, they were arguing among themselves about who was the greatest among them. Their argument was such an inappropriate conversation after Jesus had just told them what would happen to him. Still, we know the disciples were no more perfect than we are. There are many scenarios in the New Testament to remind us they were no more perfect than any of us are perfect. Knowing the disciples were not perfect can help us remember our human foibles and mistakes should never stop us from attempting to do what’s right for those we meet along our way.**

**Besides I don’t believe any of us could possibly match these betrayals of Jesus done by two of the original twelve disciples. Judas betrayed Jesus and then hanged himself. Peter’ s great act of betrayal was his claim that he didn’t even know Jesus our Lord. Then he remembered the words Jesus had said to him, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times. When Peter heard the roster crow, he wept bitterly. Can any of us even come close to how awful Peter must have felt when he realized he had betrayed his Lord three times before the rooster crowed? Just as Jesus had predicted Peter would do. These huge acts of betraying Jesus can help us remember even if we’re not perfect, we can serve our Lord as best we each of us can. Perfect is not our goal, helping one another never requires perfection.**

**What a difference in these two disciples. Judas realized he had done great harm when he betrayed Jesus to the soldiers who were looking for him. I believe Jesus would have forgiven him even this egregious act of betrayal. But Judas must have not trusted or understood many of the acts of forgiveness he had seen Jesus give to others. He died a bleak death, knowing what he had done to Jesus. Peter’s fate was so different than the fate Judas suffered. Peter realized, the minute he heard the rooster crow, he had betrayed Jesus. He wept tears of sadness, yet somehow he knew Jesus would forgive him, over, and over again. Through his tears, Peter remembered what he said to Jesus. ,“You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Peter believed the words he had said to Jesus. Then he started on his journey to become St. Peter. A man honored by many even two thousand years after his death.**

**Peter learned about forgiveness when he asked Jesus, “How often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?** **As many as seven times?”** **Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven.” Judas didn’t hear or didn’t believe the words Jesus said to Peter. What would his life have been like if Judas had asked for forgiveness from Jesus? We will never know. Lord help us to remember you will always forgive us, if we truly want forgiveness and ask from our hearts. This is a gift beyond measure, one to hold in our hearts. One for us to remember.**

**As the disciples and Jesus walked toward Capernaum, Jesus heard some of what the disciples were saying. The words became louder and louder and seem to Jesus some of the disciples had grown more agitated as they walked along. Jesus could hear a voice coming from one of the disciples. Then their conversation would become low with a sense of urgency. Finally, Jesus and the disciples walked into Capernaum. They came to the house where they were staying. They walked into a large room; the disciples gathered around Jesus. He looked at all of the disciples then and asked this question, “What were you arguing about on the way?” Jesus had heard some of their conversation, but he wanted to hear the whole of what his disciples were arguing over. Remember what Jesus had said to the disciples. He clearly told them, “The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.” The disciples didn’t understand what Jesus was saying. If the disciples and Jesus were in our time, it would be hard for any of us to understand stand what Jesus had said to his disciples. We would certainly have trouble with the end of what Jesus said, who among us could understand these final words. “…and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.” When anyone hears these words for the first time, they can become flummoxed, perplexed, and bemused.**

**I don’t blame the disciples for becoming disoriented and arguing over who among them was the greatest. It’s what they could understand. A silly question for them to argue over. It was a question they could understand and hang onto as they tried to understand the strange event Jesus had just describe to them. None of the disciples had ever heard of anyone rising from the dead. It was a whole new concept. They didn’t understand, but they did understand the question of who was the greatest among them.**

**Jesus had heard enough of what they had been arguing about. Still, he wanted to hear it from them. Then he said this to his disciples. “Whoever wants to be first must be last and a servant to all.” They understood what he was saying, yet they may not have liked the idea of being a servant and letting everybody go ahead of them. The idea certainly isn’t practiced today by many of us. What was probably true in Jesus’s time, is also true in our time. The rich go first, and the poor are at the end of the line. Today the poor have at least some of their needs met. Then Jesus picked up as little child and said, “Whoever welcomes such a child welcomes me…” We all know the neglect some children endure. Still it leaves this question. why does our society let one out of every five children go to bed hungry?**

**The truest reality about Jesus is he loves everybody equally. We don’t have to earn his love, yet as George Bernard Shaw wrote, “The more we do for others. the more we do for ourselves.” Amen**