

Who Do You Want to be When You Grow Up?

Psalm 104:1-8
Mark 10:35-45

September 2, 2018
Faith Community

What do you want to be when you grow up? Do you remember dreaming and wondering about that? Maybe you still are.

A thousand years ago, when I was a little guy, I was all over the charts. I wanted to be a fire fighter, so I'd play with my toy fire truck and rescue helpless grownups. I could even imagine working the siren and everyone watching as I sped past, ready to save the day.

The way my teachers talked about him, I knew that the janitor of my school was a very important guy, and I thought maybe someday I'd be important just like Mr. Wilfong of Civic Park School.

I was a ham radio operator having built my own equipment, hammering out Morse code, pushing buttons and turning dials to my heart's content, so it seemed natural to look ahead to a career in radio or TV on the engineering side.

One thing was certain. In my entire high school career, my parents let my drop out of just one class, and that was speech class. The last thing I was ever going to do was stand up in front of people and talk.

If nothing else, that taught me that God has a great sense of humor.

How about you? What did you want to be when you grew up? How'd that turn out for you, if you made it? Maybe you're still in school and waiting to find out yourself.

After all these years I've discovered a more important question that almost never gets asked. Instead of, 'What do you want to be when you grow up?' spend time with 'Who do you want to be when you grow up?' It may be that you're having trouble with the 'what' because you've never been sure of the 'who.'

The 'what' is what you do, what position you occupy, what you accumulate. The 'who' is identity. It's character, attitude, and relationships. In reality, friends, the 'who' drives the 'what' every time. If you don't settle the 'who'

question in a healthy way, all the 'whats' in the world will never be enough.

We all want to make a difference. We want to count, we want to make an impact; we want people to know that we've been around, but it won't really matter until we settle the 'who' question.

It's like that David and Goliath story. Here's Goliath, the biggest and baddest of them all, and here's puny little David, with nothing but a handful of stones and a slingshot, and good gracious the little guy who didn't know any better comes out on top. We love that story.

Isn't it ironic that while we love that story, we still do our darndest to become a Goliath all our own? Why is that, do you suppose? Making a difference in the world all too easily morphs into becoming the biggest and baddest. We want to be on top of the pile.

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask....Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory." (Mark 10:35-38, TNIV)

They were stuck in the 'whats.'

Poor Jesus. Do you ever feel sorry for him? He'd just finished with that rich young man who had his priorities out of whack, and now this from his very own posse.

Apparently, their request didn't go down well with the rest of the team.

When the other ten heard of this conversation, they lost their tempers with James and John. Jesus got them together to settle things down. "You've observed how godless rulers throw their weight around," he said, "and when people get a little power how quickly it goes to their heads. It's not going to be that way with you." (Mark 10:41-42, The Message)

I bet they quieted down real fast. I can imagine him going from face to face and saying to each one of them,

It's not going to be that way with you.

The world doesn't need another rock star. We don't need more high achievers who get that way on the backs of

people as they climb the ladder. We have smart people who impress us, strong people who intimidate us, and good looking people who never let anyone get close.

- If you want to really make a difference,
- If you want to leave the world a better place,
- If you want your name to live forever, this is who you become:

Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. (vv. 43-44)

Here's what I know: only a truly strong person can pull that off. Only a person who's willing to change can do that. Only a person who's becoming more like Jesus in his or her character and emotional and spiritual development can get a place at that table.

And we have the best teacher of them all:

Even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (v. 45)

There are all kinds of logos and symbols that get our attention. Golden arches steer us to the nearest fast food place, a swoosh tells us what to put on our feet, and everyone knows that a piece of fruit with a bite out of it assures us of our place in the gadget pecking order.

I have another one for you. It has nothing to do with your rights, accomplishments or status. It also doesn't matter how many times you've felt cheated, overlooked or stepped on, this applies to you anyway.

It's a towel. Jesus took one of these and washed the feet of his disciples one day. It was a common task in that time and place. It was also the most demeaning thing a person could do, a job reserved for the lowest of the low. There sat the disciples with their filthy feet playing a waiting game, every one of them too good to do what everyone knew had to be done. So the main man, Jesus himself, took one of these and gave them a graduate level course in what it means to be a real leader.

Maybe in addition to all the logos and symbols that attract us, maybe even instead of all that, think of replacing

them with one of these. Put that on a piece of jewelry, a lapel pin, a book cover, stationery, even a work of art.

Best of all, see it as a call to a God honoring lifestyle. After all,

Even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (v. 45)

How will you serve?