

Freedom: The One Thing We Lack

October 11, 2009

Mark 10: 17-31

St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Waco, Texas

After we found out that Susan was pregnant with our first child, we began to go through all the usual rites of passage for new parents. We enrolled in a birthing class, so that I could help Susan during labor and delivery (which I must admit, didn't do much good). We bought a crib and we painted the nursery. And we purchased a video camcorder.

For the first several years of our son, Scott's, life, we tried to record on video as many of his early events as possible. We took the camcorder with us to birthday parties and t-ball games and Christmas pageants that Scott was in. However, it always seemed that the battery on the camera went dead right as Scott was ready to go on the stage. It always seemed that many of the parents that I knew saw the most important events of their children's life only through the viewfinder of a video camera.

So one day I decided - that I wanted to be free. I wanted to be free to actually enjoy our children's school plays and t-ball games, without looking at them just through the lens of a video camera. So we began to leave the video camera home more often. And I began to experience freedom - the freedom of enjoying each moment as it happened.

For each of us have one thing that we lack:
We lack freedom.
We lack freedom from things.
We lack freedom from our possessions.
We lack freedom from our quest for money.

In Mark's Gospel, a man runs up to Jesus and kneels at his feet. This man has obeyed God's commandments, but this man is not free. This man is not free – because he is tied down by his many possessions.

So Jesus looks at this man, and loves him and says:
“You lack one thing;

Go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor,
Then come, follow me.'

And when [the man] heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions."

What Jesus offers us is freedom – the freedom to live our life in the moment, without being tied down by always squinting through the lens of a video camera.

What Jesus offers us is freedom – the freedom to live a life of peace, where we are not tied down by our money and our possessions.

My guess is that most of us in this church are in some way, help captive by our quest for money and held captive by our quest for more stuff.

Yet Jesus tells the man in the Gospel story, and Jesus tells us, that the way to be truly free –

Is to just let go of those things that we cling to so tightly.

And, in my experience, the best way to be truly free, is to open up our wallets and our purses and give away our money away.

In the Church, we have a fancy name for finding freedom through the letting go of our money and our things.

We call this freedom – stewardship.

Contrary to what you might hear others say, stewardship is not just about funding the budget for St. Alban's for the next year.

Instead, stewardship is about finding peace and freedom, by putting our money into the offering plate so that God's work can be done in this place.

Stewardship is about not being tied down by our money – but about finding freedom in giving money away.

I realize that I can tell you all about how I have found freedom when Susan and I write our monthly check to St. Alban's.

But sometimes I think it helps when you hear about this freedom from someone like you, someone who does not wear a clerical collar.

Therefore, I invite David Tekell to come up and to complete this sermon.

{David Tekell then completes the sermon by witnessing to his own freedom in stewardship}.