

## **MATTHEW 20; 17-28**

### **FREEDOM**

**From our gospel today, “Whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant, whoever wishes to be first among you will be your slave”. With the same meaning we hear at least once in each gospel, “Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, whoever loses his life will find it. And the first beatitude, “Blessed are the poor of spirit”, all three mean the same thing, we must give up ourselves, our own self- interest. I recently read another interpretation of the first beatitude, “Blessed are those who need God”. Do we serve ourselves or do we serve God? This is as true for our path to heaven, as it is for, true life, here on earth, something for us to think seriously about during this Lenten season.       Isn’t Jesus talking about freedom, isn’t true life, true freedom? Is Jesus not saying that desire for**

**recognition, attribution, or possessions, destroys our freedom, that our desires get in the way of our freedom, our true life? In Luke chapter 4 Jesus tells us what He was charged by His Father to do; bring glad tidings to the poor, liberty to the captive, sight to the blind, and to let the oppressed go free? He has come to set us free?**

**By our secular, materialistic, world we are taught that happiness, freedom, peace, and fulfillment come with the next purchase, possession, or achievement, that happiness and freedom comes with the fulfillment of our desires and preferences.**

**But Jesus is saying that the poor, blind, captive, and oppressed, are you and I? How is this so? We are made poor, captive, blind, and oppressed by our own desires and preferences.. The world's message is a lie! We are possessed by our own desires, not just the desire to have stuff, but even our simple preferences. Make a list of the burning desires that you had last year, a vacation, a new**

**dress, or coat, a new car. Then ask yourselves where is the freedom, peace, joy, and happiness from the desires that you fulfilled last year?**

**In a interview I saw on EWTN's, "Life on the Rock", some years back with Matthew Kelly, a young Catholic author and speaker. He was explaining, to an audience of college students, that we are called to give ourselves to Christ but are unable to do so because in order to give ourselves we have to possess ourselves and we do not possess ourselves. He said that the list is endless of what we are possessed by, that we are possessed by our own desires.**

**The world says we are what we have, that peace and happiness comes when we have what we want, a lie. True peace and happiness comes with how little we need not how much we have. You might say, I don't have to worry I'm poor, I don't have the money to get much of anything. But the truth is that we can be just as possessed by what we**

**don't have as we can with what we do have.**

**God made us so that He could love us, but we have to be free to accept and return that love. Instead we use our time and energy putting "stuff and things" between us and God so that we aren't free to receive His grace and love.**

**Jesus in scripture, by His words and by His life shows us that we can gain control of ourselves by giving ourselves. Give up what we want, give up what we desire, see and respond to the needs of others rather than our own desires. We know from our own experience that, when we give up something we desire, to be kind to someone else, with no expectation in return, we have this sense, this feeling of joy. That feeling no matter how slight is grace, is freedom.**

**We were created to be loved by God. Jesus desires you and I. God says I love you, I'll send my Son to prove my love for you, and we say? What do we say? If we are not free we will have little to say.**