



“When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.” (Mark 10).

You can learn a lot about a person from what you find in their web browser history. I just took a look at my own and was shocked to see some of the places I’ve journeyed over the course of the week. So, in the interest of transparency, here are a few of the places to which I’ve recently surfed: Some are obvious and others are just weird!

Facebook, Zoom, Constant Contact, Patheos Progressive Christian Blogs, NationalCathedral.org, elca.org; upstatenysynod.org and Google Translate English to Hillbilly. (Yeah, that last one’s a long story....)

In this past Sunday’s gospel story from Mark, Jesus has gone into the metaphorical web browser of the man who wants to know the 5 easy steps to salvation. In that browser, Jesus has discovered that this man knows all about the Scriptures and especially the Ten Commandments. In fact, we learn from his web browser history that this young man has hung out with God’s Word from his earliest of days. Pretty impressive if you ask me. But not so impressive to Jesus!

For Jesus, the problem is not where the inquiring man has “surfed,” but rather where he has not gone. Nowhere in this young man’s browser history does it show love and compassion for the poor – or any concern at all for the well-being of the larger community. He has only been concerned for himself; amassing possessions and bulking himself up on God knowledge in the hopes that he’ll have an “EZ Pass” to Heaven. Apparently, he knows a lot about God, but not who God is nor what God has come to do in Jesus.

So, when confronted by Jesus and told that his knowledge of God doesn’t cut it and that he must harbor concern for the poor by giving away all that he has, our aspiring bible bowl champion runs away grieving, unable to let go of the possessions that perhaps he thought he had earned as a reward from God.

I'd like to think that if Jesus looked at my proverbial web browser he would see that I have hung out with the marginalized, loved the unlovable, forgiven those who have wronged me, and been insanely generous in sharing my possessions with the poor, but I'm not so sure that he'll see all of that.

When push comes to shove, I am probably more like this man than I'd like to admit. Maybe you are too. But here's the hope of it all. Each and every week, I am privileged to be able to gather with you here at church on a Sunday morning, where with you,

- I can confess my shortcomings and hear God's word of forgiveness.
- I can hear and taste God's loving baptismal call to be bread for the world; to be a healing balm in Gilead – or at least here in our congregation and city.

Will I fall short? You bet I will! But thankfully God won't give up on my hard headedness as he continues to take me by the hand leading me to the places where love is needed the most. Despite the times I blow it, love will win the day. Because according to Jesus, "For God all things are possible."

Peace and Love,
Pastor Doug