

When I was a boy, the best and the brightest in my town were the doctors. My town had two, both seemed wealthy, respectable and absolutely dependable. No one encouraged me to think about being a doctor. There was nothing to indicate that I was bright enough or hard working enough. But I think the most frightening thing about it was the education. It takes not 4 years, but 8 years to be a doctor. But after I finished high school I began to discover that I was brighter than most of the people I worked with and in the Navy I was certain of it and my best friend was a pre-med major and I believed I was at least as smart as he was. So when I was discharged and started college, I put down pre-med as my major, and proceeded to make all A's to confirm ability. Then one day I finished med school and an internship and had to decide on a specialty. I knew enough about general practice to know that I did not want to return to my home town and be one of the 2 or 3 doctors there. But there was new idea abroad. Psychoanalysis had been discovered by the doctors who served in WWII and they believed it could cure all the neurotics who were the despair of doctors because they neither be cured nor rejected by the doctors they visited at least once a month. In the clinics I learned that every doctor had a favorite placebo that he dispensed to his crocks as we called them. Psychiatry promised to cure them. So I majored in psychiatry and guess it what, if helped them all, but it required living with them and understanding them. To be a psychiatrist one had to understand that we are the same as them. They claimed sickness because they felt inadequate to deal with the problems they were given. To become one of the people I wanted to help, I had to discover through my own therapy that I too felt inadequate to deal with the problems, them, that I was given to work with. That took a lot of humility because in america we are taught to be more than the crowd, more than the neurotics, more than the poor people, more than the dying people, more than the weak people. Doctors had to believe in themselves. I was humbled because my treatments were no more effective than the placebos I had learned about in the clinics of the city hospitals where I got my training.

By accident, I got a job working in an alcoholic clinic with a group of ministers and psychiatrists who believed we were the same as the poor people we were working with and gradually I learned that I was one of them too. Not that I was addicted to alcohol, but that I was addicted to wanting to be more than I was which made me the same as them. The ministers helped me to discover a Jesus I had never met, an humble rabbi who did not believe he had anything but love to offer anyone, but he had love to offer everyone and those who came to love him and be like him, were made stronger because like him they discovered that being more than other people does not improve humans. It is impossible to be more than another person. All I could be sure of was that I was not a patient in an alcohol clinic or locked up like the mental patients I had in my mental hospital. Later when I tried being a pastor here at St. Martins, I knew that I was not one of the residents in the nursing homes that I took communion too. I was better than them. Once when I tried to work with deaf people, I was impatient with them because they had learned to dependent and deaf. I was deaf but had no advocates to depend on. In this life unless we sick or weak, we do not get to be dependent. Jesus seems to love sick and weak people, but the rest of the world does not. This is a problem for people who try to follow the apparent commandments of Jesus to respect the weak and the captives. The best that

most of us can do is fake it and hope they don't notice that we wish they were not dependent.

Jesus said one time, maybe when he thought they were expecting too much from him, "Peter who do these people think I am?" And Peter tried to answer him by saying, "Now me I think you are going to be the new King David?" And Jesus said, "Yes, but not until I have suffered and a captive as they are." As we know that threw Peter into a fit because that was not Peter wanted for Jesus or for himself.

That is the lesson I see in parable today. We sow the seed in the dirt, it dies and then grows to become valuable to the people who use it. I think Jesus knew that he could not become really one of the people until he had become like them: suffering, a captive and dying as we are. And he knew that if he lived long enough he would be suffering, a captive and dying. It was on the cross that realized his humanity, the situation in which we finally become like everyone else.

About 2 months ago, I discovered that my knee was not healing and growing stronger because it had become chronically infected. They captured me, put me in the hospital and a nursing home and made me dependent on people were all stronger than me. One day when I was with all the other nursing home patients, I looked at them all taking the same exercises I was and waiting to be lifted to a bed that I couldn't control. When I wanted a bed pan, I had to call the nurse to ring it. I looked at the other residents eating their porridge as I was and said to myself. I am one of these now. I recalled Jesus looking down from the cross, saying, now I am truly one of these now. He died and was buried and then he became the ripe fruit that we could call our Christ. He did not become the Christ of God that Peter wanted, and he has not become the savior of the world that a lot of us long for when we talk about the second coming, but he has become one of us if we are willing to identify with him as a suffering captive, dying, but still serving all those who love him as he is for what he is truly one of us.