

Date: November 11, 2009

Title: I've Got Shotgun

Scripture: Mark 10:35-40

Mark 10:35-45 (NLT) ³⁵ Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came over and spoke to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do us a favor." ³⁶ "What is your request?" he asked. ³⁷ They replied, "When you sit on your glorious throne, we want to sit in places of honor next to you, one on your right and the other on your left." ³⁸ But Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you are asking! Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of suffering I am about to drink? Are you able to be baptized with the baptism of suffering I must be baptized with?" ³⁹ "Oh yes," they replied, "we are able!" Then Jesus told them, "You will indeed drink from my bitter cup and be baptized with my baptism of suffering. ⁴⁰ But I have no right to say who will sit on my right or my left. God has prepared those places for the ones he has chosen." ⁴¹ When the ten other disciples heard what James and John had asked, they were indignant. ⁴² So Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. ⁴³ But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."

I wonder if any of you have ever experienced this: A group of people you are with are leaving someplace getting ready to get into the car and just before you get to the car someone cries out, "I've got shotgun." And so the person who called it gets to sit in the seat opposite the driver in the front seat. If the day is nice, they get to roll the window down and crook their elbow out the window just a little bit.

Now, I have heard this term, *shotgun*, ever since I was a young man and I still seem to hear it more from the teenagers I associate with from time to

time. I know that when I was a teenager myself the reason that seat was favored was because if a group of guys in a car pulled up along side of a group of girls in the car, it was usually the guy ridding shotgun who got to flirt the most with the girls. When you get older though, you can see a little better up in the front seat and there is more foot room.

And you may not realize it, but because the passenger's seat next to the driver is the most coveted seat in the car, there are rules to calling shotgun. There is indeed a website that gives the approved rules to how one calls shotgun. Listen to these rules:

RULES FOR CALLING SHOTGUN

You must say the word "Shotgun" to stake your claim on Shotgun. This must be done clearly and loud enough so that at least one other to-be occupant of the vehicle can hear you. No variations of this word are acceptable. After you have rightfully called Shotgun, you have exclusive rights to Shotgun for that ride. However, if no one hears you call Shotgun it is still fair game for everyone.

The Deed Must Be Done Before Shotgun May Be Called

For these rules to work properly, it is essential for you to understand and accept the concept of the "Deed". Shotgun may only be called after the "deed is done". Simply stated, the deed is any activity or objective that directly precedes the ride in the automobile. The deed can be anything ranging from a visit at a friend's house, to a shopping trip at the mall, to a visit to the Grand Canyon. We cannot stress how important this is because this establishes a Shotgun-calling time frame that ensures everyone has an equal chance of recognizing when to call Shotgun.

There is no crime greater than calling Shotgun on Monday in reference to the

ride to the concert on Friday. Some people choose to play this way, and they are fools.

You Must Be Outside To Call Shotgun

The best way to establish exactly when the deed is done is to define this moment as the instance that you have left the building in which the deed took place. All passengers need not to have exited, but someone must hear you call Shotgun.

Some people choose to use a variation of this rule and require that all occupants be out of the building before Shotgun can be called. This does not work. It leads to everyone calling Shotgun at the same time and often ends in physical violence.

The Barefoot Rule

Since you must be outside to call Shotgun, some people will just grab their shoes, jump outside, and call Shotgun before putting their shoes on. This has been deemed "[gaping](#)", and is not a legal procedure. You must have your shoes on, if you choose to wear any, before you may call Shotgun.

The Re-entry Rule

If you call Shotgun and then go back inside for some reason, you must re-call Shotgun after leaving. After you have re-entered the building, Shotgun is once again fair game to all.

So, there you have it. You didn't realize that sitting in a prescribed seat could be so involved did you. I guess it is just human nature to try to decide what is the best thing and then try to get what is valued before other people.

That is pretty much what James and John were doing that day with Jesus. They were thinking about this Kingdom of God that Jesus kept talking about and thinking that if it was a Kingdom there must be a throne for the King and surely there would be a place for the favored disciples to sit to the

right and the left of the King. They were in effect calling “Shotgun” for those favored seats.

Now about this time the other disciples get interested in this conversation. You can almost hear the, “who do you guys think you are” tone in their voices can’t you? I mean, just because they didn’t think of it first, doesn’t mean that these two should have the favored seat. That selection should be made on more than just who called “shotgun.”

I remember one time in my life I was carpooling to Denver on a regular basis with a group of men and there was one of the men who would always sit in the ‘shotgun’ seat. He didn’t actually call, “Shotgun”, but he always seemed to get into that seat and he never would offer the seat to others. After a while, that began to irritate me. I began to ask him under my breath of course, “What makes you think that you are so special?” Why don’t you offer that seat to some the rest of us?” Eventually, I began to out maneuver the man for that seat, you know, just to teach him a lesson. I’m not sure it ever taught him a lesson, but it made me feel a little better. My reaction reminds me of the reaction of the other disciples who overheard James and John asking Jesus if they could have the favored seat.

This is really typical, isn’t it? I mean we human beings, and actually dogs it turns out are concerned with fairness.

I recently heard of a behavioral study that was done with dogs. The dogs were all lined up and given a treat when they lifted their paw. When asked, the dogs would lift their paw and usually they would receive a treat when they did so. But even if they didn’t receive a treat, they would still raise their paw. Now, at one point all the dogs were lined up together and some of the dogs were rewarded with a treat for the trick and some were not. After a short time of observing the other dogs receiving treats for the trick, the

dogs that were not receiving treats would no longer raise their paw. See, even dogs are concerned about fairness.

So, when considering this scripture, where do you see yourself in this story? Are you like the disciples asking for favor, seeking to take your rightful place of honor, or are you more like the disciples who are dismayed with the bold power grabbers of this world.

I see it is like this: Jesus is driving the car on this grand journey to see and be a part of creating the Kingdom of God. Some people are calling *Shotgun* while others are sitting in the back seat grumbling about never getting a chance to sit up front in the favored seat.

Where do you think Jesus wants our attention to be, on the seat we are occupying or on the purpose for our journey?

John and James are asking Jesus to give them a position of status in the coming Kingdom. Who is this point of view focused on? Is it focused on Jesus, and where he wants to take them..... or, is it focused on the disciples and their small and limited perspective?

The other disciples see John and James maneuvering for position and they protest. On whom is their point of view focused? Is it focused upon Jesus, or is it focused on their own small and limited perspective?

Ultimately, the disciples' focus is on themselves, and Jesus is trying to get their focus off themselves and onto the one who sent him; God, the creator.

Jesus wants the disciples to focus on God and God's Kingdom well above their own petty desires for status and fairness. And that is where Jesus wants our focus to be as well.

Beginning in verse 42 of our scripture for this morning, *Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. ⁴³ But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

Did you catch what Jesus said? "*But among you it will be different.*"

So let me ask you, is it different with you?

- I know that in this world people spend a lot of time and effort trying to establish that they are worthy or significant human beings, but is it different with you?
- I know that in this world, people are taught that they must look out for their own interests because nobody else is going to look out for them, but is it different with you?

I know we are not there yet, but in the Kingdom of God, I believe that people will be so concerned with the well being of even the most insignificant person that no one will need to protect him or herself because all will be cared for even if they are a little different; even if they are less desirable. We are not there yet, but when we surrender our lives to the one who started all of this, we can do our part to build upon the beginning that Jesus brought into this world.

But please don't make the mistake of thinking this will be easy and comfortable and enjoyable at all times. Jesus told us just like he told the

disciples that the Kingdom of God will not come into existence without sacrifice and without struggle. *Are you able to be baptized with the baptism of suffering I must be baptized with*, Jesus asks his disciples.

Are you? After 2000 years of Christian history, we have a pretty good idea of what can happen when you put everything on the line for Jesus Christ:

- It can get messy,
- difficult,
- expensive,
- and dangerous.

But also it can be

- fulfilling,
- joyous,
- inspiring,
- and encouraging.

Ultimately, it can be the most important and meaningful work you will ever do. So, here is the question for each of you: Are running through the days of your life and ministry calling “Shotgun?” Or, are you sitting in the back or maybe not even getting in the car because someone else is always getting to sit in the favorite seat? I certainly hope not.

I hope you see that the more we can make our lives all about Jesus, and his Kingdom, and not so much about ourselves, the better the ride will be all of us. Oh, it will likely be bumpy and dangerous at times, but, hey life is meant to be an adventure and that is what adventure is like. When we follow Jesus with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, the adventure is nothing short of incredible.

You know, It doesn't matter what seat you get, the important thing is.... make sure Jesus is driving and then just get in and go for it! Amen.