

**“Jesus, ECUs and egos...”**

**21/10/18**

**I speak in the name of Jesus the Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to the glory of God the Father.**

**Amen.**

If you know me really well, you will know that I do indeed have a tattoo. Now I might not seem to be the kind of guy that has a tattoo. After all, should a priest have a tattoo if the Bible tells us that our bodies are symbolic of the temple of the Lord? Well, I do. Back in 2006 when I was recently divorced, I was busy reconfiguring my life and the one aspect I felt really passionate about and still do to this day, was my Land Rover. So, it seemed logical to have the indefatigable Land Rover logo tattooed on my shoulder. It is still there to this day, a little faded and blurred, but there. It is a daily reminder of my personal journey and how far I have come... thanks only to His grace and love in my life.

My passion for Land Rover goes back to when I was a small child and my father, who was in advertising at the time, landed the Leyland account. He was part of a team at Van Zyl and Robinson who were responsible for the marketing and advertising of British Leyland vehicles in South Africa. One of these vehicles was the first Range Rover. I was smitten and somehow the passion remained to this day. (My father later told me that he was offered a new Range Rover at cost, which was R16 000. To put this in perspective, it was in the 1970s and he had just bought a brand new three bedroom house for the same value!)

I was privileged enough to actually visit the Land Rover factory in Solihull in 2006. (I learnt a valuable life lesson on that visit but that is a sermon for another day.)

You may be wondering what on earth Land Rover has to do with the Gospel reading telling us about James and John this morning.

Bear with me for a moment, as I pull these threads together...

As Land Rover grew through the ages, it became apparent that if it was to survive the fuel crisis of the '70s, it would have to introduce diesel engines into

its 4x4s in order to meet the growing demand for economical vehicles. This was no easy feat, as diesel engines up to this point, although reliable and economical, were notoriously noisy, smoky and very underpowered. All vehicle manufacturers were facing this challenge at this time. Land Rover was instrumental in designing some of the first diesel engines that were turbo charged. This feature solved the lack of power issue for many years. The next challenge was in the tightening government net in terms of exhaust emissions. Land Rover solved this problem, too, by designing ECUs that controlled fuelling much more precisely, thus reducing exhaust emissions. The acronym, "ECU" stands for "Engine Control Unit" and is basically a mini-computer that is able to take in various readings from different sensors and respond appropriately. Now here is the rub... many ECUs are now programmable or "flashable". This means that if you have the correct equipment you are able to remap the ECU to enable more power from the engine...

Today we read about how James and John sat next to our Lord and asked to sit next to Him, basking in his glory. Jesus responds powerfully, asking the question as to whether or not they would be able to drink from the same cup that He drank from. (You may recall my sermon earlier this year titled, "Jesus, Henri and the Cup of Life...")

What can we take from these words of Jesus?

What lessons can we learn and what does it mean for our lives as Christians?

I came across an interesting book recently titled "Out of darkness into the light" written by Gerald Jampolsky. Gerald writes very clearly that successful people are able to operate out of love and not ego.

Gerald writes, "When we adhere to the belief system of love, and have thoughts only of God, we begin to understand why our true identities are ultimately found in our love rather than our bodies. We are each the essence of love. Peace and happiness are at the centre of the heart of love. There is complete absence of fear and guilt and there is no pain or misery; there are only loving and forgiving thoughts. Within this belief system, love and life are eternal, and there is no death."

These are powerful words. You see, Gerald is calling us to stay true to ourselves as a body of love. As Christians, we are able to do this when we remain vested in the love and grace of Jesus. This can be challenging for us sometimes, for our egos are all powerful and sometimes, all consuming of both our lives and thoughts.

Remember the ECUs on modern diesel engines that I mentioned earlier? Well, some folk learnt how to remap or modify the original map that the engine was designed to operate with. Yes, they achieved more power and were now able to drive at higher speeds. While the remap often had a fuel penalty, what also happened is that engine longevity suddenly decreased and many drivers now faced expensive engine rebuilds. You see, Land Rover designed the ECUs to operate within certain parameters to ensure longevity and reliability. Change the map and there are consequences...

Jesus “mapped” each one of us sitting here this morning. We are all unique. We are all special. We are all different. We are all made to operate out of love, not ego. We are all made in His like to love not only Him, but one another. There is no space for ego. Ego moves us away from our core of love and into self. When we compare ourselves with one another, compete with one another, try to outdo one another, we are all operating from an ego map. This is not the map that Jesus wants us to operate from. This is in essence a “remap” where we have written over our core map of love. There are consequences when we do this. Our ego map moves us away from God. It isolates us from each other and in fact, it isolates us from ourselves. The consequences are dire. Operating from a map of ego can cause depression, jealousy, addiction and dysfunction. This is not what Jesus wants for us and our lives...

Remember the request that James and John had for Jesus in the Gospel this morning? They both wanted to sit alongside Jesus and bask in His glory. This was not their place or journey. Jesus challenges both of them by asking the question as to whether or not they would be able to drink from His cup? Obviously they would be unable to do so, for Jesus was the Son of God and He had a very distinct journey to travel in order to save humankind. James and John needed to travel their own journey in life, centred on the love for Jesus and not their egos. By doing this, they would both be basking in the glory of

God anyway but they had to follow their own map in order to be both true to themselves and God.

We have so many distractions in our lives that pull us away from our core map of love. Distractions like shopping malls, materialism, social media, money and the like. It is so tempting to remap our God given maps with maps that may seemingly bring us more excitement and wealth... but this is an illusion. We only have one true map in our lives and that is to follow our map of love based on Jesus. This means that we need to focus on our God given gifts and do everything possible in our lives to enjoy and live our individual maps. For when we focus on our own maps, instead of the maps of others, we will find true peace and happiness in our lives.

Gerald says it so well with the following words...

“Perceptions are corrected when we stop seeing value in interpreting or judging the behaviour or motive of others. We learn to quiet the ego and listen instead to our inner voice, which goes by different names, Holy Spirit, the inner teacher, the voice of wisdom, intuition, or the guide that is within the heart. This inner voice has been given to us by God, to interpret things based on love and joining.”

Stop being offended

Let go the need to win

Let go of the need to be right

Let go of the need to be superior

Let go of the need to have more

Let go of identifying yourself by your achievements

Let go of your reputation

Rather...

Find your map.

Keep your map.

Do not overwrite your map.

Cherish your map.

May God bless you this week ahead as to refocus on the map of life and love that Jesus gave you.

Amen.