**Sermon for Otatara, 20 September 2015**

Mark 9.30-37 **If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all** (Mk 9.35)

Changes in the leadership of political parties: Malcolm Turnbull, Jeremy Corbyn. Why be such a public and vilifiable leader? Not as bad within a local church, but question remains.

As Otatara seeks a new pastor/leader this passage from Mark is very fitting. What Jesus thinks of leadership is important. TEXT.

Things to state:

[1] not limited to men (early church had female leaders eg Lydia, Priscilla).

[2] Jesus assumes leadership is focused on one person alone. Should the leadership here be focused on a single person, or shared by the Leadership Team more formally?

In any case, what kind of leader do we tend to look for, and how does this contrast with the kind of leader Jesus was?

Background: Jesus has stated that he will die, with the hint of Resurrection – which the disciples did not understand. *Then*, argument about who is the greatest naturally follows – who would be Jesus’ successor? They all vie for ‘top spot’.

Leadership is often seen as about seeking self-glory, being ‘in charge’, running the show, having our own way, being great. Disciples thought this (Mark 9.34).

A church leader might dress this up by declaring that God has spoken to him…

TEXT. For Jesus, a leader is about being last, being a servant, the exact opposite of normal.

He demonstrated this by pouring his love through teaching, healing.

How might the leader here do the same?

* It is more about giving than receiving (Acts 20.35, JC on the cross)
* It is about offering, not demanding (*If* anyone wants to follow me…)
* It is about being prepared to do the menial jobs (washing feet)

Power corrupts: Jim Jones, and the Jonestown massacre of 1978, when over 900 died.

Whether we continue to look for someone ‘out there’, paid to lead us, or whether we look within ourselves for that leadership, it is important to have the right kind of leader. And since power does corrupt, we need to pray not just for a leader, but for all our leadership.