



The Gospel
Mark 8:31-end

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

A Reflection on the Gospel
From Revd. Maureen

Today's Gospel contains the information that Jesus begins to teach that he will undergo suffering, be rejected and be killed – but after three days that he will rise again. I don't know about you but for me it tends to be the "negative" in news or information which sticks in my mind, even if there is a "positive" included somewhere along the line. The negative pushes itself forward, and plants itself at the forefront of memory. This why poor Peter is rebuked, quite harshly it would seem, for majoring on the negative and not hearing "and after three days rise again." It seems a bit unfair because, after all, surely Peter would be aware of the concept of suffering but

rising from the dead was not a concept with which anyone would be familiar!

Jesus' rebuke must have been even more hurtful and shocking for him, after he had (as recorded in chapter 8 of Mark's Gospel) made the great pronouncement of recognition that Jesus was the Messiah. Also, if I can draw upon my own experience once again, a rebuke is always more painful and hard-hitting when it is received from someone with whom you are close and for whom you have great respect.

The other thing which struck me about this week's Gospel reading is that Jesus doesn't just restrict his teaching to his disciples but opens up the opportunity to the crowd to join them. The rest of what is recorded in this particular Gospel passage continues the straight-talking – and yet, it throws up more questions than answers. If I was hearing this, or reading it for the first time, I would probably be wondering what on earth Jesus means. 'Those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.'



This what I just love about Jesus' teaching throughout the Gospels. He doesn't make it easy for us, because I think he wants us to work things out for ourselves. It is up to each one of us to reflect and work out our own personal relationship with God, because for each of us it will be different. We are provided with these sayings to stimulate our thinking and our own faith, and what better exercise could we be offered during this season of Lent when we are looking at our spiritual lives and discipline and giving up things and taking on the new? As each Sunday in Lent goes by, we are presented with so much to guide us on our way, if only we can recognise the opportunity as we travel with Jesus towards Holy Week.

Our prayers – from Revd. Mark

We pray, thanking God for his loving faithfulness and bringing to him our own concerns and the needs of the world around us.

Lord, we pray for your church during this season of Lent. We pray that all of us who believe in you will be strengthened to remain faithful to our calling; to work for understanding and unity where we have created divisions and to show your love and compassion to each other and to all your children.

Lord, bless us and keep us.

Lord, we pray for the countless numbers of your children who suffer in this world because of violence, oppression and injustice. We pray for all who suffer because of flood or drought, lack of food, clean water or medical help and supplies. We pray for ourselves that we may learn to see more clearly the needs of your children and to respond to those needs for they are our brothers and sisters.

Lord, bless us and keep us.

Lord, we pray for our own communities and churches. We thank you for our families and friends and pray especially for those in particular need today. We pray that your peace and love will surround them bringing them comfort and strength.

Lord, bless us and keep us.

Lord, we thank you for those who have travelled before us on the way of the cross and are now at peace in your eternal presence. Help us to live in the assurance of your promise to us that this road of faith will lead into your kingdom.

Lord, bless us and keep us.

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Lord, bless us and keep us.

Lord we thank you that you receive our prayers with grace, mercy and love. Trusting in your compassion and faithfulness we commend to you all those for whom we have prayed and commit ourselves to seeking to do your will and to bringing in your kingdom here on earth.

Lord, bless us and keep us.

Amen.

"Conversations in Lent"

Please join us as we continue to read "[A Word for Lent](#)" and enjoy our conversations together.

The sessions will continue on **Monday afternoons between 2.30pm and 4.00pm** and it doesn't matter if you were unable to attend last week's.

Please let Katharine Smith know if you would like to join this group which meets via Zoom (or by phone if you can't use Zoom). Some of you may still have the books from last year but we also send out copies out by email.

Please join us to discuss: "Acceptance", "Celebration", "Forgiveness" and "Passion".

The link for these Zoom meetings is [here](#). You can contact Katharine by phone: (01823 325425), or email kfmsmith@gmail.com for further information.



We are also offering a short service of Morning Prayer every morning from Monday to Saturday at 9.00am. These too are via Zoom with a phone link for those without Zoom.

You can use [this link](#) to access morning prayer.

We look forward to seeing you at one or both of these series of events.

Katharine

The funeral of Ken Norris

Ken's funeral will take place in church at 12 noon on Tuesday 9th March. The normal restrictions as a result of COVID 19 will apply.

May Ken rest in peace and rise in glory.

Thought for the week

"Thank goodness for the disciple Peter. Honest, earnest, bumbling Peter, who boldly says the foolish things I wish I could say, too. If it weren't for the Peters of the Bible, I'd feel inadequate and inept most of the time. Mercifully, Peter reminds me that we're all inadequate and inept most of the time. We're not saved by our ingenuity. We're saved by God's grace."

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