

Peace Lutheran Weekly Walk - Mark #5

Peace Lutheran invites all members and guests to follow a weekly Bible reading series at home. For past handouts and suggestions for leading a family devotion, go to <https://peacewels.org/weekly-walk/>.

Questions about the readings can be addressed to either pastor or emailed to weeklywalk@peacewels.org

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you show us who you are: the mighty Lord, the promised Christ. Now teach us again what you have come to do. Show us your saving cross and resurrection and lead us to follow you and battle what our selfish sinful nature wants. When we fall, lift us up by your perfect cross-bearing and bring us to the eternal glory you won. Amen.

Day 1: Mark 8:14-26

Why was it foolish for the disciples to be worried about bread in this situation? They had Jesus with them who had twice fed great crowds miraculously. Clearly, He could take care of their bodily needs!

What did Jesus want them to be concerned about instead? Spiritual concerns, to watch out for the influence of the Pharisees self-righteous ideas and teachings and the Sadducees' focus on the here and now.

What does this tell us about the importance of even necessary things (like food) for our body and life when compared to spiritual matters? Spiritual matters are far more important since they have eternal impact, as Jesus will teach us in tomorrow's section: "what good is it for a man to gain the whole world and yet forfeit his soul?" (Mark 8:36)

Jesus compared the teaching of the Pharisees and Herod (this reference could include the Sadducees who generally supported Herod) to yeast. How is false teaching like yeast? (see Galatians 5:9 for help) Yeast keeps growing and spreading throughout a batch of dough, it multiplies. So it is with false teaching, its nature is to grow and spread and endanger faith!

What are some unusual features about Jesus' healing of the blind man? Uses spit, the man's full sight is not restored right away, but after the second time. **Why might he have done things this way?** Jesus is not bound to one way of healing people. Ultimately we don't know why Jesus healed the man in stages (it certainly wasn't because he lacked the power to do so at all once), but we can certainly say Jesus treats people as individuals, he knows exactly what each one needs and takes care of his people as individuals. You are not just a "grain of sand" in a vast seashore of

humanity to God, you are dear to Him, known by Him and cared for by Him personally!

Day 2: Mark 8:27-9:1

Who did many people say Jesus was? John the Baptist, Elijah, one of the prophets.

Who did Peter, answering for the disciples say Jesus is? The Christ, that is the Messiah, the long-promised Savior, the Son of God.

What did Jesus say would happen to Him as He carried out his work as the Christ (Messiah)? He would suffer! Be rejected and killed. And rise again after three days!! **How did Peter react to this?** He didn't like it! He rebuked Jesus scolded him and said He was wrong! **Why?** This didn't fit the disciples mistaken notions that the Messiah should only be a victorious and glorious king in this world to bring wealth and power to his people and his followers and drive out enemies to their nation like the Romans...

Will following Jesus be easy and popular? No! What instead does Jesus say it will be like? Denying oneself, taking up a cross, dying a painful death!

What does this mean? It means following the Lord will put us in conflict with the world and its ideals and that of my sinful nature within (serve self, how can I get ahead, I should just get the most out of life) and instead loving God, His Word, His ways above all things. **Is it worth it?** Absolutely since such "cross bearing" is a result of following Jesus, and those who trust in Jesus have eternal life as a fruit of Jesus' cross (not our own). Often as we suffer difficulty, we see all the more clearly how we always need Jesus and His saving cross, rely on His promises, hunger and thirst for heaven and so are richly blessed! When all is going well, it is all too easy to think life in this world and our comfort is our goal, rather than having heaven as our home as God's gift and wanting to live for this Lord and imitate Jesus now.

Day 3: Mark 9:2-13

What happened to Jesus on the mountain? His glory as true God shines through His human nature so that he appears differently, He shines with glory including his clothing (note- throughout the Old Testament God's made his presence known in such brilliant glory)

Moses' life and ministry took place around 1500 BC and Elijah's around 850 BC. What does their appearing alive and well in glory on the mountain tell us about those who trust in the Promised Savior? Both these men (who had both seen a glimpse of God's glory on Mount Sinai, also called Horeb) are alive even though they hadn't been on this world for

centuries! Yet here they are with Jesus! Those who trust in Jesus have everlasting life, just as God has promised (John 3:16).

What does the transfiguration tell us about who Jesus is? He is the Son of God, sharing God's glory, He is the one the Father tells us to whom we are to listen. **What does the transfiguration tell us about Jesus' mission? (Hint, consider where going down that mountain would eventually take Jesus.)** He does not come and remain in His glory in this world, but has come to hide His glory as God beneath His suffering and death to save us and set us free so that we will share His heavenly glory not in this life, but in the everlasting life to come. Jesus' path down the mountain will finally lead to the cross. Hymn 97 in *Christian Worship - A Lutheran Hymnal* contains a beautiful meditation on this truth.

Who was the "Elijah" Jesus was talking about who came before Himself and to whom "they did whatever they wanted?" This is John the Baptist, the special forerunner of the Messiah foretold in the Old Testament, whom Herod had put to death. See Malachi 4:5-6 and Mark 1:2-8 for more on this.

Day 4: Mark 9:14-29

What was wrong with the boy? He was possessed by an evil spirit, a demon.

How did things look utterly hopeless for this boy? He had been this way from childhood, the demon often tried to harm him, and Jesus' disciples had been unable to do anything.

From what Jesus says, why were the disciples unable to cast out the demon? Perhaps it was a beginning to think they had the power to do these things, rather than relying on Jesus' promise that He had given them authority to cast out demons. Such self-confidence turned to fear when the demon proved difficult and they failed to turn to the Lord in prayer and trusting Him to help. **What does this remind us about the Apostles?** They were not perfect! They needed Jesus as their Savior too. Their power to do miracles was not from themselves, but from Jesus.

No matter how hard the devil may fight against us, what does this lesson show us? Once again it shows us though the devil is an enemy beyond our abilities, Christ has power over Him and has come to destroy the devil's power and influence. In Jesus, we are safe!

We may never have to cast out a demon, yet how else might we apply these words to ourselves: "this kind only comes out by prayer?" Let us always depend on the Lord and His promises for strength. Let us go to Him in prayer, which is confessing we need His help every moment, every hour!

Don't face your troubles (or anything!) along, but "take it to the Lord in prayer."

Day 5: Mark 9:30-37

Why does Jesus want to avoid crowds at this time? He was teaching His disciples important things they needed to understand.

What is Jesus teaching them about? About his suffering, death and resurrection, the culmination of His saving mission as the Christ. (notice how in the first portion of the book the focus on Jesus has been who is this? - now starting at 8:31- the focus has turned from that He is the Christ to what the Christ will do...

What new detail does Jesus add as He talks about His suffering compared to what He foretold in Mark 8:31? Now Jesus adds that he will be betrayed!

What had the disciples argued about? Which was the greatest? What did Jesus need to teach His disciples about greatness? Greatness is not thrusting oneself forward, but in putting others first and serving, even if that means serving a helpless child who cannot repay you (by the way, notice how that is exactly the way Jesus serves us!)

Note there is a parallel here to the progression of thought and his disciples' actions to when He first foretold his death on Day 2 of this week (Mk 8:27-9:1). The first time Jesus announced his suffering, Peter objects because he has in mind the "things of men" - things like earthly power, glory, accomplishment, self-service. Once again Jesus announces His suffering and sacrifice, but the disciples are caught up in which one of them is the greatest, which gets the most glory and credit. How hard our sinful nature fights against our focusing on what God desires and what matters most!

Thank God for Jesus' love and His patience persistence with the disciples of old and with you and me still today!

Blessing: May the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth, bless you from Zion (Psalm 134:3).

Final thoughts: Jesus teaches us the cross is central to the Christian life. Only His cross--His suffering and death saves us. The result of following Jesus is a cross, learning to die to what our sinful nature thinks about power and glory and pride. Lord, we do believe. Help us with our unbelief!