

Pentecost 18 9/23/18
Mark 9:30-37 20B

THEY WENT ON FROM THERE AND PASSED THROUGH GALILEE. AND HE DID NOT WANT ANYONE TO KNOW, FOR HE WAS TEACHING HIS DISCIPLES, SAYING TO THEM, "THE SON OF MAN IS GOING TO BE DELIVERED INTO THE HANDS OF MEN, AND THEY WILL KILL HIM. AND WHEN HE IS KILLED, AFTER THREE DAYS HE WILL RISE." BUT THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE SAYING, AND WERE AFRAID TO ASK HIM.

This past Wednesday morning, I heard the prediction I didn't want to hear: that four-letter word. S-N-O-W. And I suppose I'm supposed something like, "Boy, I'm sure glad that didn't come true". Well, ok, but it is of no consolation that it didn't happen. I don't understand how this can happen in September. Honestly, I don't want to hear it in October, January, February, or the 4th of July. I don't want to hear it.

You know who else struggled with a prediction? The disciples in our lesson this morning. Jesus predicts His upcoming passion and death, and "they didn't understand the saying".

What happened was this: Jesus and the boys in the band went on a little trip. First, they went from "there," which is code speak for the neighborhood of Caesarea Philippi. Then, they passed through Galilee and ended up in Capernaum.

Quite a trip! And, Mark tells us it is a secret trip. Jesus didn't want anyone to know and for good reason. He wanted to spend time with disciples to teach them. And what He was teaching them was this: "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise." To which the Evangelist adds these words, "But they did not understand the saying, and

were afraid to ask Him.” They should have understood. After all, this was not the first time they had heard the saying.

The first time was back in Caesarea Philippi. You remember what happened. Jesus asked the twelve, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptism, others says Elijah, or other Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” Jesus asks them, “But what about you, who do you say that I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” Jesus said, “Blessed are you Simon Bar-Johan! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.” (see Matthew 16:13-16).

And, then Jesus predicted His passion the first time, showing His disciples that “He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised” (Matt. 16:21). Now, traveling through Galilee, when the disciples heard those words again, they did not understand and they were afraid to ask Him. Those words are really pretty easy to understand – delivered, killed, will rise. Yet, they didn’t understand and, more than that, they were afraid to ask Jesus what they meant. Maybe, just maybe, the reason they were afraid to ask goes back to Caesarea Philippi and the first time Jesus told them about His passion.

At Caesarea Philippi, Peter was the one who confessed Jesus. Jesus said He would go, suffer, be killed, and rise again the 3rd day. And, yet, what did Peter do? He pulled Him aside and “corrected” Him. Yes, when Jesus talked about His passion, Peter thought He made a mistake. This suffering and dying was not the way it should be. And Jesus turned to Peter and called him “Satan,” which explains why they were afraid to ask.

They did not understand what God was trying to accomplish by handing His Son over, having Him killed, and raising Him to life again the 3rd day.

Know what? They're not alone. When you are suffering under the weight of the cross or the guilt and shame of your sin is ever before you, the world, the devil, and your own flesh will come after you baiting you and badgering you to try to convince you God doesn't care and cause you to fall in despair. When the pressures, and the tensions, and the stresses of life weigh heavy upon you; when death is staring you in the face or someone you love is on their deathbed, that is when you **need** to hear the passion of Christ. You need to hear how God brings forgiveness, life, and salvation; strength and peace. That's what you need to hear.

But, so often what you hear is something like this: It's only sin if it bothers you. You're a good person, so don't get down on yourself. God helps those who help themselves. Stop thinking negative thoughts, think only positive things so that you can go out and live your best life now. Hang in there, everything will be fine. Oh yes, and this: death is a natural part of life.

When you hear things like that, it is crystal clear that people do not understand the significance of Jesus saying He will be killed and, after three days, rise again. In this world in which there are any number of voices telling itching ears what they want to hear, you will hear the lies of the devil, the folly of the world, and some really dumb things. But, the one thing that will deliver you from your sin and all its wages is this: "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And when He is killed, after three days He will rise."

The Son of Man, yet Son of God, was handed over into the hands of men. And those hands of men pronounced Him guilty on trumped-up

charges, beat Him, whipped Him, crowned Him with thorns, and nailed Him to the cross. He battled the devil, the world, and your own flesh. He suffered the punishment for your sins. He died a bloody death upon the cross to be the one, all-atoning sacrifice for your sins. Because He did, your sins are forgiven. He overcame the world and the devil, and three days He rose again to bring forgiveness, life, and salvation to you. And, oh, what sweet comfort it brings!

For when you are feeling guilty over your sin; the world condemns you; and the devil and your own flesh are beating up on you left, right, and center, each and every minute of every day of your life, remember Christ has died, Christ has risen for you. Because He did, your sins are forgiven and God remembers them no more.

So when the pressures of life come upon you and you are feeling low, the Holy Spirit brings to your ears and your remembrance the words of Jesus, “the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And when He is killed, after three days He will rise”. In Holy Baptism, you died with Him and you rose with Him. You are His and He is yours, and never will He leave you or forsake you. He is with you always, to bring you comfort, His love, His care, His forgiveness.

Even when death, that dreaded enemy and invader, comes calling and is staring you in the face, our faith clings to Jesus, so that death has no victory over you because Jesus died and rose for you. If you should die before He comes again in glory, He will take your soul to be with Him in heaven. And the day is coming when He will raise your dead body from the grave and, body and soul together, you will live with Him forever in the bliss and joy of heaven, where there is no crying or pain or suffering or despair or death.

You will hear many voices in this world. But, what you really NEED to hear is this: Jesus was delivered into the hands of men, to die upon the cross, and rose again the 3rd day. This He did for you. And that brings you the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation, victory over death and the grave, and strength and peace for the facing of this hour. All that is yours because the Son of Man was delivered into the hands of men. They killed Him. And after three days, He rose again.

TO GOD BE THE GLORY. AMEN.