

The Mind Is a Terrible Thing to Trust

(Mark 8:31-33)

(preached 3/29/15 Pine Grove BC; Sunday AM)

Introduction

The Amtrak train pulled out of New York headed to Los Angeles.

Somewhere in the middle of Oklahoma, the train slowed to a dead stop.

The train's engineer grabbed the microphone to make an announcement to the 200 passengers who were on board.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have some good news and bad news.

The bad news is that both engines have completely failed and we may have to sit here for a few hours until we can fix the problem.

The good news is you aren't riding in an airplane.

I've also had a few good news/bad news events in my life.

In 1992, my high school senior class decided to take a cruise to the Bahamas.

We were all so excited.

We loaded the bus and headed to Miami.

None of us have ever been on a cruise ship.

We had seen the commercials for these cruises.

We had been given the brochures advertising the cruise.

And I will never forget our bus crossing the a bridge in Miami.

Out the left window was row of endless cruise ships...

Norwegian, Carnival...

All the big cruise lines were there.

These massive boats...

10-12-20 stories high.

All of us knew that our cruise line was Dolphin cruise lines.

We knew that our ship was somewhere in that line.

Then our bus dropped us off in front of our cruise ship.

The good news....

We were going on a cruise to the Bahamas...

The bad news...

We were about to board the smallest cruise ship in Miami harbor.

Unfortunately, the news got worse when our first night at sea was met with unusually high waves.

A small ship + big waves only made it worse.

It was a great example of good news and bad news being real close neighbors.

Last week in Mark 8:27-30, the disciples came to understand some great news about Jesus...

He is the Christ.

He is the Messiah.

He is the coming King that the disciples had hoped that HE was.

However, there is some bad news that goes along the good news....

And that is what Jesus is going to share with the disciples today.

So, let's read our text this morning.

Mark 8:31-33....

Peter has just made the great confession that Jesus is the Christ..

And now Jesus drops this bombshell on that wonderful truth...

Mark 8:31...

³¹ And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

³² And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.

*³³ But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and *said, “Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on ^[s]God’s interests, but man’s.”*

Just 2 outline points this morning...

In verse 31, we will look at...

I. God’s Gospel (31)

In verses 32-33, we will look at...

II. Man’s Gospel (32-33)

Let's begin with

I. God's Gospel (31)

If yall haven't figured it our already, I am a picky eater.

I was an only child for most of my life, so I blame it on my parents and grandparents.

Tonya and I love my Dad's cube steak and gravy...

And bless his heart...When he prepares the gravy, he uses cream of mushroom, but he will strain the can because he knows I don't like chunks of mushroom in the gravy.

See, I am spoiled.

I also have a severe dislike of onions...

Now, if I don't know they are in there, I am usually fine.

The flavor of onions is delicious...

I just don't want to crunch them or see them.

I know I am crazy.

But this leads to a problem when I cook or Tonya cooks a recipe that calls for onions.

If I am doing it, I simply remove the onions from the recipe.

In my mind, what's the big deal of removing one ingredient?

However, in cooking, taking out the onions definitely changes the taste.

In all reality, the finished product without the onions is not a true product of the recipe.

Now, I say all of that to illustrate this....

The disciples' recipe for what the Christ should be...

Their idea of who the Messiah would be didn't include the ingredient that he would die.

Take your Bibles and flip with me to the book of Isaiah...

Isaiah 53...

This is such an important chapter in the Bible...

Though there are other passages in the OT that speak of the sufferings of the coming King, this is so clear...

I want to take time to read through some of this passage...

This was written centuries before Jesus ever went to the cross...

The context of the chapter was a promise to Israel to bring forth a servant to the people...

The OT is filled with promises of this coming King...

This coming deliverer...

The nation had suffered under its enemies because of their sin...

But the prophets always called Israel back to God and reminded them that their future was a future of hope...

So, Isaiah in chapter 3 is writing about this coming Servant of God...

But look how he describes him beginning in verse 3....

*He was despised and forsaken of men,
A man of ^[c]sorrows and acquainted with ^[d]grief;
And like one from whom men hide their face
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.*

*⁴ Surely our ^[e]griefs He Himself bore,
And our ^[f]sorrows He carried;
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,*

^[g]Smitten of God, and afflicted.

⁵ But He was ^[h]pierced through for our transgressions,

He was crushed for our iniquities;

The chastening for our ^[i]well-being fell upon Him,

And by His scourging we are healed.

⁶ All of us like sheep have gone astray,

Each of us has turned to his own way;

But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all

To ^[i]fall on Him.

Every Jew in Jesus day had read these verses, but for some reason, they had a different interpretation of them.

Even today, Jews have a different view of these verses or even ignore them all together.

Look at verse 7...

⁷ He was oppressed and He was afflicted,

Yet He did not open His mouth;

Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,

And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,

So He did not open His mouth.

Verse 10...

¹⁰ But the Lord was pleased

To crush Him, ^[i]putting Him to grief;

If ^[m]He would render Himself as a guilt offering,

*He will see His ^[n]offspring,
He will prolong His days,
And the ^[o]good pleasure of the Lord will prosper
in His hand.*

Skip down to the second half of verse 12...

*Because He poured out ^[r]Himself to death,
And was numbered with the transgressors;
Yet He Himself bore the sin of many,
And interceded for the transgressors.*

What is the clear ingredient here in the recipe for this Messiah?

For this coming King?

For this coming Christ?

Suffering, pain, affliction, death!

Isaiah clearly says that this coming King will die!

Psalm 22 is another description of a coming King who will suffer.

Peter has just confessed that Jesus is the Christ, but he had no idea that the Christ is going to suffer and die.

For some reason, Peter, the disciples, and the Jews in general had no place in their view of God for the coming King to be one who suffers.

And Jesus knew that...

So, in his mercy, he begins to teach the disciples...

He uses some language to describe what lies ahead of him in the days ahead...

Look at the actions that are about to come to Jesus in verse 31...

Suffering....

Rejection...

Killed.

This is so opposite of what the disciples...

They are thinking suffering for Jesus but
Honoring...

They aren't thinking rejection of Jesus, but
Acceptance...

They certainly aren't thinking death of Jesus, but
greater life for Him and them and all of Israel..

This is so hard to understand...

Imagine you are pinned down under enemy fire in
WW2...

Your group of soldiers is surrounded..

It looks real bad.

Then you hear the sound of planes approaching...

Could it be American pilots coming to your rescue...

Then you see it...

Under the wings of the plane is the star inside a circle...

These are American planes...

Your heart leaps within you.

You are going to be rescued and delivered from the enemy.

You are ready to jump out of the bunker but you are waiting for the planes to shoot first.

Then the unthinkable happens...

They pass over without firing a single shot on the enemy.

And instead of circling back and getting them on the second pass..

The crash in the field beside you.

The emotion that you would feel at the sight of that is the emotion that the disciples would feel here...

Here's their long awaited king...

The enemies of the Jews have them surrounded.

They are persecuted...

But the Messiah is here...

Peter just identified him as the Christ.

But now, he tells them that he won't fire a single shot at the enemy.

He's not been sent to deliver them from their enemies.

Instead, He is going to be shot at by the enemy, and they are eventually going to kill him.

Interestingly, he offers them hope but when he tells that that he will rise from the dead at the end of this verse..

But I don't think they hear a word of that promise.

They simply hear He is going to die, and it throws them into a panic.

They never consider the truth that Jesus' death will not be the end of Him, but rather the beginning of God's plan to rescue them..

Apparently, they stop listening after Jesus says that He is going to be killed.

But while the disciples are thrown in a panic, we need to remain calm and look closely at verse 31...

Because verse 31 is the true gospel of God.

That verse is the good news that comes to you today.

The truth of Jesus coming to earth and suffering for the sins that we commit....

And ultimately being killed in the place of sinners is the good news of God..

The fact that Jesus became the sinner's substitute is the greatest news the world has ever heard.

The fact that he offered up his body to pay the penalty for the sins of His people is a precious truth.

And on top of that, God accepted him as the substitute for sinful man by raising him from the dead.

We had substitutes in school.

Our regular teacher would normally ask us the next day how did the substitute do.

And you all know how kids answer that question.

If the substitute was easy on them regardless of how they actually taught, the answer is always....

“Oh she was perfect. We love her.”

On the other hand, if he sub was mean and unreasonable (even if she was a good teacher, the response was always “We don’t like her.”

How do we know if Jesus was an acceptable substitute who hung in the sinner’s place on the cross?

How do we know that Jesus wasn’t a phony?

How do we know that God’s wrath against our sin was satisfied by Jesus on Calvary?

God raised him from the dead!

We know that God saw Jesus as the perfect substitute because Jesus walked out of the tomb!

We don’t have to wonder if one man’s sacrifice can pay for all our sin..

God settled that question when Jesus rose from the dead.

Unfortunately in this scene, the disciples were still hung up on the fact Jesus is going to die...

And so we must move from the glorious gospel of God to what man thinks the gospel should be...

II. Man's Gospel (32-33)

We all know people like Peter...

If the thought comes into Peter's head, it comes out of his mouth.

Everyone one of us know people like this, and though we may think it is a good quality...

It usually never is..

The saying goes like this...

“It is better to be thought a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt.”

Peter never heard that saying...

And neither have countless people in our day...

Every week, we hear of someone who says something dumb on social media like Facebook or Twitter...

Used to be that folks were protected from their stupidity because there voice was only so loud and their friends were limited.

Now, your voice can travel the world over in a matter of seconds and you can have friends all over the globe.

And people say some very dumb things and it immediately gets them into trouble...

Well, Jesus just barely gets the words out of his mouth, and Peter takes him aside to talk to him...

Can't you just see this in your mind..

Jesus is offering eternal truth here.

He is sharing the perfect plan of God with these men.

What Jesus just said was how salvation is accomplished.

How your sins can be eternally forgiven.

These disciples have just heard the most incredible news in the world...

But Peter, grabs Jesus and carries him away from the group..

And begins to rebuke Him.

Can you imagine that?

The Creator being scolded by the creature.

“Hey, Jesus come here.”

“I need to tell you something.”

“You aren’t going to die.”

Now, people have said that Peter was moved by a deep love for Jesus here..

And I can understand that.

He loved the Lord, so he would never want to see him die.

But I think the overwhelming motivation here is Peter’s idea of who Jesus should be.

Peter and the disciples were ready for a King to deliver them.

And when Jesus explains that there is no deliverance coming but only rejection and death, Peter steps in to say, “No way, Jesus.”

The missing piece of information here is that Peter had no idea what he was saying.

Simply put, if Jesus never dies for sin, Peter will then have to die for his own sin.

When Peter rebukes Jesus, he does it out of selfishness and ignorance.

The selfishness comes from Peter’s own desires to see Jesus deliver his nation from oppression..

And on top of that, Peter knows that if Jesus is that king, he is going to have a pretty good position in that kingdom.

I mean, he has left everything to follow Jesus.

Surely, Jesus is going to reward that when he demolishes the Romans and sets up his kingdom.

Peter is in line for a pretty good job if Jesus takes the throne now.

So, I think there is some selfish motivation here.

But I would also suggest to you that ignorance is also playing a role here.

Peter and the other disciples still don't understand the depth of their sin.

If they understood that they were condemned sinners at this point, they would have been pushing Jesus to the cross to die in their place.

Only when people see their sin and understand God's wrath against it, will they be looking for a rescue...

Peter is not looking for a rescue from his sin, he is looking for a rescue from the Romans.

And again, Peter may also be motivated by love here.

I'm sure he has grown to love Jesus.

I'm sure he has a deep affection for him.

It is obviously horrible to think that a loved one is approaching death.

Maybe a whole range of reasons motivated Peter to rebuke Jesus...

Either way, Peter's rebuke is answered by Jesus' rebuke of him.

In verse 33, Jesus says to Peter..

“Get behind me Satan, for you are not setting your mind on God's interests but on man's.”

What does this mean?

Well, there are a couple ways to view this?

Some say that Satan entered Peter and spoke through him here.

Others say that Peter was momentarily possessed by a demon to say this..

Personally, that is the way that I have heard it preached most often.

And that may be your view, and that is fine if it is.

I simply think that Jesus was saying that Peter's rebuke put him in company with the devil.

Satan had no interest in Jesus going to the cross.

It would mean his defeat.

Jesus was the One sent to crush Satan's head, and the first step on his head happened at the cross.

Satan's interest was to keep Jesus away from the cross.

Though Peter may have had different reasons for not wanting Jesus to die, trying to keep Jesus from the cross simply put him in agreement with Satan.

Here's an illustration...

Let's say the light bulb goes out in the carport of the parsonage.

One of the girls asks if they can climb the ladder to change it..

I tell them no because they don't know how to do it.

Their mom tells them no because she is afraid they will fall.

Though each of us have different reasons for letting them climb the ladder to change the bulb, we are in agreement that they shouldn't go.

And that is what Jesus is telling Peter here.

You want to keep me from the cross, and when you say things like that, you are on the same team as Satan.

So, get behind me.

And then he ends with this...

“You are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but on man’s...”

That is why I entitled this section, “Man’s gospel” because man thinks he has a better plan than God.

And here Peter is giving Jesus his plan for what he should do.

Imagine that.

A mere man telling God what He should do.

A mere man coming up with his own plan for what Jesus should and shouldn’t do.

Yet, our world is full of people who do that every day.

God commands men everywhere that they should repent and place their trust in Jesus, who he says is the only way to salvation.

Man says there are plenty of ways to God other than Jesus.

God says to not trust in your own good works to save you.

Man says that we need to work our way to heaven.

God says that we will know others are saved by the fruit they produce.

Man says that if we simply say a prayer and get wet, we are saved and can live anyway we want.

Proverbs 14:12

*¹² There is a way which seems right to a man,
But its end is the way of death.*

Peter didn't think it seemed right for Jesus to die, but without Jesus going to the cross, Peter's sins would not have ever been forgiven.

And he would have died in them.

And there is a greater lesson for all of us.

We don't put our trust in human reasoning.

WE don't listen to the world.

The world is condemned in their sin.

The world is under the power of the evil one.

The world is passing away.

Yet, so many people seem so fascinated by the world.

They want the world's treasures.

They listen to the world's advice.

They chase the world's dreams.

They measure their lives by the world's standards.

They seek the happiness that they think the world offers.

And many fall for the world's gospel.

They see God as this big slot machine in the sky who hands out wishes and dreams to people.

They see Jesus as simply a good example to follow.

A man who teaches them how to live and passes out blessings like candy.

That is what Peter wanted out of Jesus.

He wanted a Jesus who would wipe out his political enemies.

He wanted a Jesus who would give him a good job in the kingdom.

He was his own interests.

He was setting his mind on man's interests.

Instead, he and we need to be those who set our mind on God's interests.

The interest of God is that Jesus is the only one who satisfied God's wrath against man's sins.

The interest of God is that Jesus had to go to a cross and die in man's place.

The interest of God is that man needs to repent of his sin and believe in Christ alone to be saved.

And the interest of God is that man stops trusting in what he thinks is right and starts believing in what God says is right in His word.

Conclusion

In 1992, the NCAA held its track and field championships in California.

The 6.2 mile race was held on a golf course.

As the group of 127 runners approached a turn in the course, one of them noticed that the course actually went up a steep hill.

His name was Mike Delcavo, and though he yelled for the other runners to go with him...

Only 5 followed him.

The other runners simply refused to believe that the course would take a turn up a steep hill.

Delcavo and the 5 runners were the only runs who ran the correct course...

The others runners only ran 6.1 miles.

Because they ran the complete course, Delcavo and the others runners all finished last in the race.

In a strange decision, the NCAA decided to go with the course that most of the runners completed..

And even though Delcavo had actually won the race, he ended up in 120th place in the official standings.

Delcavo had chosen the right way but had been punished for not going with the crowd.

Let me tell you this...

God is perfectly just.

There is no chance that God is going to change the rules to accommodate the masses headed to hell.

Peter tried to change the rules for Jesus ministry, but it had no effect, He still went to the cross.

And I will tell you this.

You may try to change the rules of how, but in the end, only those who have chosen the path of repentance and faith alone in Jesus will be rewarded.

Let us pray.