

Losing Life Mark 8:27-38 Lent 2, February 25, 2018

Peter answered him, "You are the Christ." And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.

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 and continues if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.

Dear friends in Christ, in our text today, Peter confesses Jesus as the Christ, the high point of Mark, coming very nearly at the middle, the first time a person says Jesus is the Christ in the gospel that, as it says as it begins, is about the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the point at which everything changes.

But while the gospel highlights it, Jesus tells her disciples to keep it hidden, to tell no one. And now that disciples see who he is, not only by word but also by deed, by observation, he tells them what it means that he is the Christ, the anointed one of God. That he will suffer, that he will be rejected by the elders, by the chief priests, by the scribes. That he will be killed. On the third day, he will rise. He makes it plain.

And he had to make it plain. Peter doesn't understand Peter takes him aside and tells him this can't be. That this would not happen to the Christ, to the Lord's anointed. Peter thought Christ must not lose his life. The Christ must not face the cross.

But Peter is wrong. So wrong that Christ rebukes him strongly. Get behind me, Satan. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man. Peter's Christ was man's Christ, not God's Christ. Man's Christ brings glory in this life, but God's Christ loses his life that he and all of us will live.

Now we know better than Peter. WE know that Jesus Christ came to suffer, to die on the cross, to take away our sins. We confess it every day. But do we really know better than peter?

When we here of war in the middle east, shooting or spread of sickness, how do we respond Do ask an accusatory why with the rest of the world, or do we look for how God is redeeming this situation and how we too are part of God's action?

When we have pain and suffering, both physical and mental, do we accuse God with why/ When we are called names at school, questioned by the boss,

unappreciated at home, do we ask why or do we remember God worked through the cross and see how he may work. How often we confess Christ and him crucified with our words and run from him in our life instead of inviting his presence.

Christ's words are a comfort for Peter as he explains the losing of the life Peter envisioned. The loss is not light nor painless, but works our good. "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it." We trust in Christ as we follow him with our words and we follow Christ as we follow him with our lives. He leads to the cross that many will live. He tells us the Joy of that life makes the sorrows of this life nothing. So speak of your pain, but speak of your Christ with you in the pain. God gives life abundantly through the cross.

Do you remember before you were married, when you thought you knew everything and had your marriage planned out. And people would say, just wait till you are married. They couldn't explain it, but they knew you would understand when you lived it. How did your plans go? Mine went differently than planned, and yet what I have is better than I could understand.

Parenting too. How much I knew before my children were born! Now I know better. And it is harder than I had ever thought. But it is also better than I had ever thought. And I believe those who give the surveys that those who rate parenthood highest are those dealing with disabilities, dealing with pain.

Peter knew better when he lived through the suffering pain and death. He and the other apostles praised God when they were considered worthy of suffering for Christ's name, that his suffering as much as his life extended to them. We too have seen his suffering. And his suffering as a man extends even to us. Take your cross gladly, testify to the death of your lord and the life that he brings.